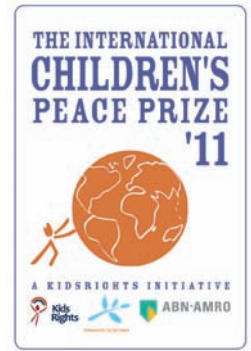


2011 International Children's Peace Prize Newsletter



The story
behind the
winner!

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‘Shine like
a child’

Read it on page 5



Winner is committed to the rights of disabled children in South Africa

Michaela Mycroft winner of International Children's Peace Prize 2011



On November 21st 2011 the International Children's Peace Prize 2011 was awarded to Michaela Mycroft (17) from South Africa. From the five nominated children, who were announced by Desmond Tutu at the end of October, the Expert Committee chose her as the winner. The prize was presented to her by Nobel Peace Laureate Mairéad Maguire.

Michaela, also called Chaeli, received this award for her commitment to the rights of children with disabilities in South Africa through her project: the Chaeli Campaign. This year was the 7th time a child was rewarded with the International Children's

Peace Prize. In a short period the prize has become the most prestigious international prize in the field of children's rights.

Emotional Ceremony

In the Hall of Knights in The Hague, more than 400 national and international guests gathered to honour this special girl. A number of representatives from the Dutch government, companies and non-governmental organizations were speaking at the ceremony, including State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport, Marlies Veldhuijzen van Zanten, Chief of Child Protection Section UNICEF, Susan Bissell and Nobel Peace Laureate Mairéad Maguire.

The Nobel Peace Laureate has been active for years, fighting for peace and human rights and during the ceremony she was noticeably touched by this young heroine. After the inspiring words of these speakers, Chaeli received the Nkosi, a special sculpture that shows a child moving the world. This sculpture symbolizes the impact this award has: in the last years, it has reached millions of people and it provides a global platform for Chaeli to promote her message and to tell her brave story.

Chaeli was born with Cerebral Palsy, through which the function of her arms and legs is limited. But where others see limitations, she sees possibilities; with her positive attitude, she is an inspiration to many.

“Hope is what keeps us going,” Chaeli said in her speech. “It’s what keeps us striving for the lives we deserve. I have hope for myself, but I also have hope for all other children with disabilities. I hope that my actions as an ability activist will leave the world more accepting and more accommodating for all people and not just people with disabilities, because we are all different and we all have the need to be accepted regardless of having a disability or not.”

At the age of 9, Chaeli and her friends and sister started a project to raise money for an motorized wheelchair for Chaeli. In just seven weeks they raised more than enough money, so Chaeli decided to help more disabled children. This project has become the Chaeli Campaign, a professional organisation that annually helps more than 3000 children with disabilities in South Africa with equipment, physical therapy and which defends the rights and acceptance of disabled children. Chaeli inspires other children to start projects and for that she has developed an ambassadors programme.

Meet Michaela Mycroft, a seventeen-year-old girl from Cape Town

The story behind the winner



Winner of the International Children's Peace Prize 2011: Michaela Mycroft. (photo: Dennis Brussaard)

On August 30th 1994, a very special little girl was born. When Michaela Mycroft, also known as Chaeli, arrived on this earth - her family knew there was something unique about her. But they had no idea how much she would change their lives, and the lives of many others ...

At the age of 11 months, Chaeli was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy which happens when not enough oxygen reaches the brain – causing bleeding and injury to it. This in effect causes distorted communication between the brain and limbs. For Chaeli this means that parts of her body are stiff and that some of her muscles go into spasms and she has limited function in her legs and arms. It also affects her speech.

The birth of a campaign

Although Chaeli is physically disabled and therefore different from other children her age, she focuses her life motto on what she can do rather than what she can't.

At the age of nine, Chaeli decided that she wanted a motorized wheelchair to become a more independent person. Until then, she constantly had to rely on others to help her move anywhere and everywhere. Unfortunately, such motorized wheelchairs are neither provided by the government, nor financed through the insurance policy and Chaeli's parents could not afford to buy it themselves. Chaeli did not resign herself to her unfortunate fate but instead, together with her sister and three close girlfriends, started selling self-made postcards, cookies and flower pots to raise funds to purchase the desired wheelchair. They accomplished this incredible goal within a mere seven weeks!

Chaeli could have stopped right there. Yet, the

wheelchair brought Chaeli so much freedom and independence that she also wanted to help other children with physical disabilities to experience this amazing self-reliance. And so did many other people as they kept on buying their products. Her determination persevered, and so the 'Chaeli Campaign' was born.

The Chaeli Campaign Continues

The Chaeli Campaign has moved onwards and upwards... and today, it employs 22 spirited people with and without physical impairments. The Chaeli Campaign has gone from selling flower pots and self-made cards to helping children with physical impairments attain assistive devices, receive occupational therapy, advocate for inclusion and the rights of children with disabilities in general, and fight against discrimination of people with

physical impairments. By doing so, Chaeli is helping more than 3000 children on a yearly basis. Not only does she help children with physical disabilities in her own community, she also focuses on underprivileged, black communities of South Africa.

Here, physically impaired children are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in the country. Many people in these communities still believe that being 'disabled' is a curse and therefore hide these children from society. Also, children have to wait for years for even the most basic assistive devices – and for most children custom-made devices are not affordable at all. The disability grants which families receive are barely enough to cover costs - and for most people not easily accessible. Lack of basic medical care leads to children's health being compromised from birth onwards – and children are not adequately stimulated in their development. Education, at every level, is a challenge – as caregivers,

teachers, and schools are not equipped and sometimes unwilling to accommodate special needs. Children can go through years of schooling without being able to read or write. As such, children with physical impairments are not sufficiently empowered and are more vulnerable to (sexual) abuse as well.

Creating a network of youth ambassadors to Pay-It-Forward

Knowing the difficulties children with special needs face on a daily basis, Chaeli wants to help even more children and she believes that all children can make a difference. The Chaeli Campaign strives to motivate all children, whether physically impaired or not, to Pay-It-Forward. They have created a youth ambassadors programme which encourages children from all parts of society to



photo: Dennis Brussaard

become passionate change-makers. Ambassadors learn how to convey their powerful messages and start social projects for other children, and by doing so, inspire even more children to take action. There are currently 42 ambassadors from 30 different schools, some physically impaired others non physically impaired, who have already started several social projects with Chaeli as an inspirational guide. Ambassadors have, amongst other activities, organized fishing competitions and sold artwork. They have even collected and recycled 50 kg of plastic bread tags to raise money for assistive devices, wheelchairs, guide dogs and more. The incredible work of the ambassadors has proven to be compelling and catchy; their network keeps on growing and growing.

An Inclusive Society

Chaeli, now seventeen years old, goes to a regular school and believes in 'inclusive education'. This means children with a physical impairment should go to a mainstream school, receiving the same education as any other child. Chaeli experiences on a daily basis how challenging this can be; she constantly has to prove that she is a very bright young girl and that she can accomplish the same as any other student. However, being the person she is, Chaeli tackles these issues with lots of determination and a sharp wit.

Chaeli continues to strive for children with physical impairments to be taken seriously and valued as worthy members of society. She fights against discrimination of physically impaired people by showing what she can do, instead of what she

cannot do. This positive mentality also exemplifies in other aspects of her life - she is a passionate and competitive wheelchair dancer too.

Chaeli has changed many lives for the better by paying her message forward and has encouraged many other children to think beyond their disabilities. She has given society a task for the future, a task she wants to accomplish together with us all, as we are all members of the same society.

Chaeli was nominated by the FW de Klerk Foundation.

Who are Chaeli's fellow nominees?

They are fighting for children's rights

Organisations and individuals from 42 different countries contributed 98 children to be elected for the International Children's Peace Prize. Out of the 98 children, the Expert Committee nominated five. Five young individuals, each in their own way committed to the rights of children. Chaeli Mycroft won the prize, but who are the other four?

1. Liza (17 years) – Palestine

Liza is a seventeen-year-old a girl from Palestine who is promoting peace between Israeli and



Palestinian youngsters through sports. She especially fights for the empowerment and participation of Palestinian girls and young women in a male dominated Palestine society. Using football as a tool Liza is committed to stop the cycle of violence and aggression and in this way she hopes to contribute towards peace between Israel and Palestine. She is successfully promoting a Peace Sport School programme; she started a girls football team and with that introduced women's football to the Palestinian society.

2. Malala (13 years) – Pakistan

Malala is a brave thirteen-year-old girl from Pakistan who fights for the right for education, especially for girls. During extreme Talibanisation in the Swat

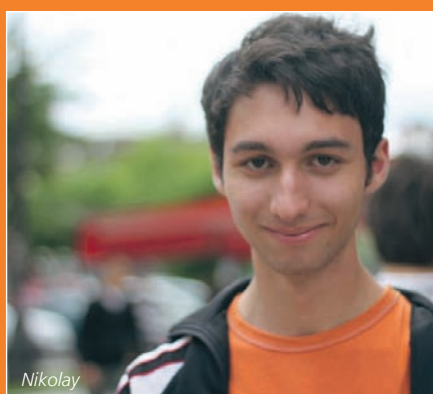
Valley where she lives (from 2003-2009), this was prohibited. She was one of the few people who



stood up for children's rights. When the Taliban banned girls education, she raised her voice through national and international media. She became an inspiring icon for the of children – and in particular that of girls – to education. All this when she was only 11 years old. She wrote a blog for the BBC during the most dangerous period of Talibanisation and volunteered to be on two documentaries by the New York Times.

3. Nikolay (17 years) – Armenia

Nikolay is a seventeen-year-old boy from Armenia.



He has participated in several trainings and workshops on human rights and democracy. He organises discussions and presentations for other children to share his knowledge and experience and to encourage them to do the same and by doing so make a significant change in Armenian society. With his workshops, Nikolay already reached 200 children and they share their knowledge again with others. Nikolay believes social media is a great tool for spreading the message. He therefore has developed a website and keeps a blog.

4. Winfred (14 years) – Uganda

Fourteen-year-old Winfred from Uganda is a young girl who fights against violence against children in schools and communities. She closely monitors the



situation of child abuse and neglect and documents cases of violence against children. To help children who have been abused she created the Kamuli Children's Counselling Club, where children receive counselling on various challenges they are facing. Winfred also started a Tree Planting Club to plan more trees and create a green environment for the school. Winfred also set up a Children's Court which settles disputes amongst children without interference of adults.

Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire presents the International Children's Peace Prize 2011

"A friendlier and happier world"

The Children's Peace Prize 2011 was presented by Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Maguire. The Northern Irish peace activist is co-founder of The Peace People and a critic of conflicts worldwide.

In 1976, Mrs. Maguire lost three young nieces and nephews, children of her sister Anne, when an IRA getaway car spun out of control and drove into the children after the driver of the car was shot and killed by a British soldier. Struck by the needlessness of this attack and following tragedy, she organized a series of marches in Northern Ireland together with Mrs. Betty Williams, who had witnessed the attack, and young journalist Ciaran McKeown. They became the leaders of a spontaneous mass movement. Through their demonstrations, the group peacefully demanded to end the violence in Northern Ireland.

After this, there was no going back: Together with Mrs. Williams and Mr. McKeown, Mrs. Maguire founded the Community of Peace People, or simply named the Peace People. This organisation was, and still is, dedicated to encourage a peaceful resolution for Northern Ireland's troubled state. Northern Ireland has been in a political and religious conflict for over 300 years. Although, the conflict has officially been resolved, communities remain to live in separation.

For their work aimed at creating a peaceful and safe Irish society in Northern Ireland, Mrs. Maguire and Mrs. Williams honourably received the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize. Mrs. Maguire stands strongly behind her beliefs, devoting her life to promote peace, not just in Ireland but also in other politically unstable countries around the world. She has committed herself to global

nonviolence, and social and political change.

Mairead Maguire had this year's honour to present the International Children's Peace Prize to Chaeli Mycroft:

"Chaeli shows we can all do something for peace and contribute to a world which is friendlier and happier," said Maguire.



The International Children's Peace Prize

The International Children's Peace Prize is an initiative of the KidsRights Foundation and was launched by Mikhail Gorbachev, Chairman of the Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates, during the 2005 Summit at the Capitol in Rome.

Since then, the prize has been awarded every year by a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

The prize is presented annually to an exceptional child, whose courageous or otherwise remarkable actions have made a difference in countering problems, which affect children around the world. The motivation behind the prize is to provide a platform to children to express their ideas and personal involvement in children's rights. KidsRights feels that children should be recognized, awarded and motivated in their fierce efforts to improve their own situation and that of the children in their environment and even the world.

Not only is the prize a sign of recognition for the young winners. Having won the award also offers the winners a platform to promote their ideals and further their work. With the newfound attention, these young heroes' messages have more impact, and reach a larger audience. The intention of KidsRights is to create international

attention for the problems that the winners are fighting. This attention will generate a higher level of cooperation and structural improvement in addressing these respective subjects.

Attached to the International Children's Peace Prize is the prize money of €100,000. The prize money is awarded by KidsRights to a direct aid project (or multiple projects) in the spirit of the young winner's efforts. The winner of the International Children's Peace Prize is awarded a statuette - 'the Nkosi' - and the platform of attention that the prize generates. In addition, the winner receives financial support for his/her studies. KidsRights sees education as a steppingstone to further development and therefore encourages and supports full and unlimited education of the winner.



The Children's Peace Prize and KidsRights can also be found on internet

News about Chaeli and the International Children's Peace Prize can also be followed online. The websites of the Children's Peace Prize and KidsRights are the central source of all information available about the prize. On the KidsRights website you will, for example, find a compilation of the Children's Peace Prize ceremony of 21st November 2011.

The latest messages can also be followed through our page on Facebook and on Twitter. On Facebook you can participate in discussions about the prize, share experiences and respond to messages from KidsRights and other users. On Twitter you can respond to every message that is placed by and about KidsRights.

The username of KidsRights on Twitter is @kidsrights and on Facebook we can easily be found by searching for 'KidsRights'.

www.kidsrights.org / www.childrenspeaceprize.org.



Thandiwe Chama passes torch on to Chaeli



Thandiwe Chama

In 2007, Thandiwe Chama from Zambia won the International Children's Peace Prize for her commitment to the right to education and the care for children with hiv/aids in her country. This year she passed on the torch to Chaeli Mycroft, another girl who has made an extraordinary effort for the benefit of children's rights.

When Thandiwe Chama was eight years old, her school was closed because the teachers were not being paid. Thandiwe gathered sixty other children and walked them to the next village where they demanded education. The protest walk was a success: she talked to the principal who allowed Thandiwe and the other children admission to the school.

Winning the Children's Peace Prize meant a lot to Thandiwe. It gave her a platform to share her ideas and worries about the situation of children, not only in her own community, but also in the rest of the world. She attended the UN summit in 2009 and met other Children's Peace Prize winners, who made her realize that in every country children are dealing with different problems.

Thandiwe is now attending secondary school where she is working very hard for her future. In her spare time she is a tutor to other children. She spends the larger part of her spare time helping other children, getting early start on her ambition to become a social worker.

Thandiwe is very happy with Chaeli being elected to be the winner of the International Children's Peace Prize 2011.

"She gives me strength through everything she does for the acceptance of disabled children in South Africa. If she can achieve so much, what is our excuse?"

For Chaeli she had a personal message:

"Welcome to the group of Children's Peace Prize winners. Don't ever feel alone because we will be here to support you. Together we will commit ourselves against discrimination. I will fight against discrimination of people who live with hiv/aids and you will continue the fight against discrimination of people with a disability. I am glad to have met you and look forward to everything we can reach together."



Thandiwe with Carla Bruni en Bono

The children's press conference was a huge success

Asking your own questions to the Children's Peace Prize winners, KidsRights' ambassadors Erik de Vogel and Caroline De Bruijn, and other founders of the Chaeli Campaign... It was all possible during the children's press conference.

As winners of a contest connected to the children's rights education kit published by KidsRights for Dutch primary schools, pupils of primary school the Klaver from Rotterdam could ask their most burning questions to Chaeli, Thandiwe, Erik and Caroline, and the other founders of the Chaeli Campaign. The pupils revealed themselves as true journalists. Well prepared as they were, no VIP was save to their curiosity. Are you curious about the answers to their questions?

Surf to the KidsRights Channel on YouTube and watch a compilation of the press conference. After the press conference, all the children had the possibility to take pictures with the speakers of the ceremony, and Erik and Caroline were handing out personalized signatures. It was a beautiful end to a very special day.



Inspiring speeches

"Shine like a child"

Also this year, the Ridderzaal was the décor for the presentation of the Children's Peace Prize. It was a ceremony full of inspiring and emotional speeches.

"We are all meant to shine, as children do."

Marlies Veldhuizen van Zanten-Hyllner, Dutch State Secretary of Health, Welfare and Sport opened the Children's Peace Prize ceremony. She expressed her admiration for the five nominees and emphasized their position as a role model, not only for other children but for adults as well.

Marlies Veldhuijzen van Zanten-Hyllner



Wietze Reehoorn, member of the Managing Board of ABN AMRO bank, and Thandiwe Chama, winner of the Children's Peace Prize 2007, underlined the importance of the Children's Peace Prize as well.

Susan Bissell, Chief of Child Protection of UNICEF New York, contended that the nominees are able to reach the heart of the matter and see what is required:

"Just like them we will have to make this our goal: all rights for all children, all the time."

Susan Bissell



Former Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mr. Balkenende spoke about his meetings with and his admiration for previous winners. He expressed his faith in Chaeli to become an inspiration to other children, just like the previous ones before her. On behalf of KidsRights and the Erasmus University, he also introduced the forthcoming development of the KidsRights Index, a meta-index which describes to what extend children's rights are upheld in different countries.

Jan Peter Balkenende



Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1976 Mairead Maguire held a personal and very emotional speech and presented the Children's Peace Prize 2011 to Michaela Mycroft.

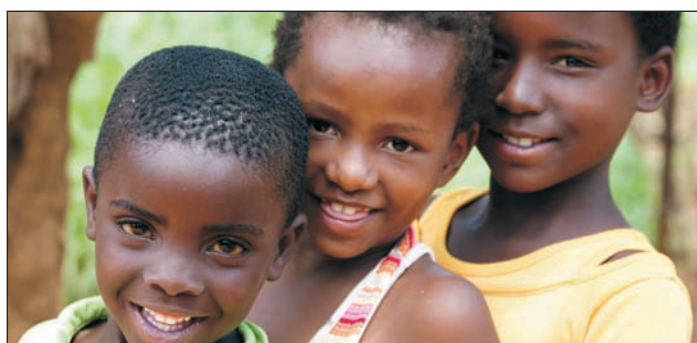
The 17-year-old winner expressed great words of gratitude and quoted author Marianne Williamson:

"We are all meant to shine, as children do. And as we let our own light shine, we subconsciously give other people permission to do the same." Chaeli proceeded: "I think that we should all make the conscious decision to see the light in everyone we meet. I think we have to be more positive about each other. If we see the light in one another, I believe we would be living in a brighter world."

About KidsRights

Every child has talents and dreams. KidsRights believes that all children should be able to realise the enormous potential they have within them.

That is why KidsRights stands up for vulnerable children everywhere, offering them direct support tailored to their needs and focusing attention on their position and their rights. KidsRights helps by financing existing, well-run local projects that focus on five basic requirements of care: health care, nutrition, education, shelter and attention. Often, some relatively simple assistance is all that children need to make tremendous progress, providing them with the opportunity to build toward a better future. KidsRights offers a platform to children who, without help, often find it difficult to make the world sit up and listen.



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