

just by playing games on a website. The sponsor behind the website is Opportunity International, an organization dedicated to fundraising for and supporting small-scale entrepreneurs in developing countries. On a more direct level, student leaders plan six weeks of FUNdraising activities such as Toonie Tuesdays (bring a toonie for “Be the Change”, and dress backwards, or have crazy hair, or wear your pyjamas).

Naturally, there is no exclusion, and all students are welcome to participate in Spirit Days. The loonies and toonies are encouraged, but they are not mandatory. We held a bake sale on the night of the spring concert, and at the suggestion of one lively staff member, we dared the Special Education teacher to dress as a baker, raising \$160 in staff donations just for the photo opportunity. Popsicle sales were very popular on some hot June days, and a lucrative endeavour. You can imagine the joy of watching the school community work together towards a common goal: the building of understanding of world issues among staff, students and parents, and above all, the satisfaction of observing students as they grow in leadership, commitment to social justice, and

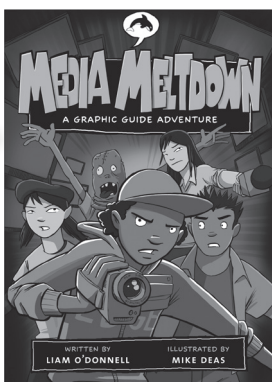
conscience—the awareness that each one of them has the power to bring about positive change in the world.

In the end, our little school, among the neediest in the Toronto District School Board, raised \$1,000. We proudly presented an enormous cheque to Opportunity International, in the presence of the assembled student body. We also presented a petition that we had written to Prime Minister Harper, asking him to lead our country to ensure that all children everywhere enjoyed the same rights, by honouring our Millennial Goals. Our petition stretched around the perimeter of the gym. Katie Smith-Milway, author of *One Hen* attended our event, and even TVO came to lend an air of gravity to the entire experience. So we have our happy ending.

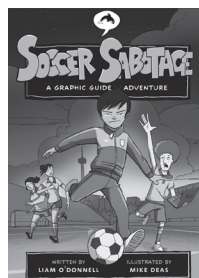
For me, personally, it is not an ending, but a continuation. The “Be the Change” initiative has become an integral part of who I am as a teacher. And the happiness for me lies in looking into the eyes of those kids who really get it. In those kids, the next generation of “Be the Change” leaders is born, and if that is all I ever accomplish in this career, it is more than enough. ■

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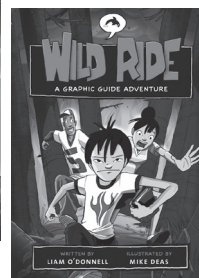
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