

## The OneLove Project

My name is Jannika, I'm a pretty average 16 year old who lives in Port Moody B.C. I am in French Immersion, I love to dance on my point shoes, and I absolutely cannot understand the art of math. Like I said, I am just an average teen. I am an average teen who got a big idea. I am going to explain how I got that idea and what I did about it in the article that follows.

I applied to 2010 Legacies Now to attend the Spirit of BC - Altitude Youth Experience Leadership Camp expecting to gain some leadership skills and perhaps meet some interesting young people. What I gained was so much more than that. Although we slept in rather damp tents for two nights, listening to the constant rain pour down, the weekend retreat was a lot of fun! I met so many like-minded energetic people and their enthusiasm was contagious. What I ended up getting from Altitude turned out to be a lot more than a simple leadership seminar. I learned many creative new ways to express your passions.

During the weekend we had a workshop on the Heroes Live Here Project. This project sounded intriguing, and as the seminar continued my imagination began to run wild. The Heroes Live Here program is dedicated to discovering and highlighting unsung heroes in our communities. By creating essays, films or even a poem the Altitude youth were encouraged to honor one person that inspires us in one way or another.

I had always been very passionate about global issues and social issues worldwide, so it wasn't difficult for me to begin to make the connection between the two. I thought I could do something more with this idea, so I decided to expand on this one task and create a much bigger project. Instead of honoring just one hero, I decided to put together a performing art night to honor four youth heroes who are making positive change in their communities.

The idea was to honor youth heroes in our community and at the same time raise awareness of the plight of children and youth in Northern Uganda. I was already involved in the organization known as “Invisible Children,” a U.S. based non-profit organization dedicated to rehabilitating former child soldiers in Uganda. I considered these children and youth to be equally ‘unsung heroes.’ These children are caught amidst a horrible war, yet they still remain positive and resilient. For that reason I found it necessary to not only honor these children, but also give all proceeds from ticket sales to the Invisible Children organization.

I presented this idea to the Port Moody committee, and fortunately they liked my idea, and gave me a \$500 grant to put on the show. I then began to assemble all the pieces to create the “OneLove Project” show. As the creator and director of the show, I organized the performers, volunteers, stage crew and of course the heroes. Later I found three very different youth heroes, who fit the criteria of making positive change in their own way. The last hero honoree I decided to leave open, choosing to honor all of the future heroes everyone can become.

I was lucky enough to have to great help from a number of adults when organizing the budget and stage crew for the show. My Spirit of BC committee was very helpful with all the fine tuning of budget plans and stage co-ordination. I was also fortunate to have a committee of friends putting their talents to good use, making everything from poster design to the video presentations.

As I walked onto the stage on the night of the show, February 8, 2009, I remember looking out into the crowd. Such a fantastic feeling it was to see friends, family and countless other community members gathered together to celebrate the communities unsung youth heroes. Words can not even describe that feeling of seeing my once tiny idea being played out right in front of me. I know I may sound horribly cheesy, but I am so glad I took on this challenge, that I took the risk. Because all the hard work was worth it, to see the look on each hero’s face when they were honored, to see my peers coming together to celebrate local change makers was so worth it.

I am telling you this because I know your ideas and passions can become real accomplishments. That standing up for what you believe in is great, even if you are standing alone. For your ideas can turn into actions that can change our world, no matter how big or small. So this is my challenge to you, Canadian teens, the youth voice deserves to be heard.  
Yes You Can 😊