

Ryan Wakefield has made it his mission to instil in his students the belief that they can be a driving force behind change, both locally and globally. Most of the 500 students at Springvalley Middle School in Kelowna, B.C., come from low socio-economic areas and single-parent homes. Ryan has successfully engaged the students and helped develop a school culture into one of service and compassion.

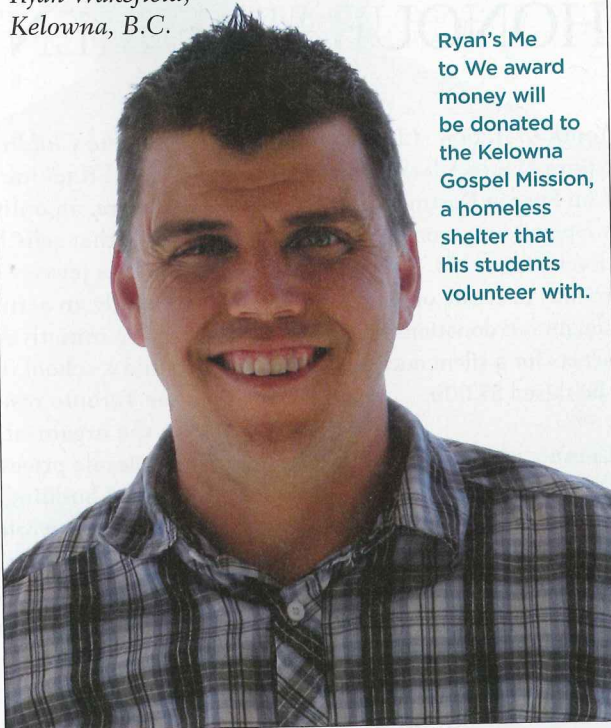
Ryan has been instrumental in developing the Builders Club, a social justice group at Springvalley that organizes food and clothing drives, and raises funds for organizations such as World Vision. Over the past three years the students at Springvalley have raised more than \$50,000 for World Vision through the 30-Hour Famine.

"The kids are so proud of their accomplishments," says Ryan. "The money is raised through hard work and personal sacrifice. We know that many of the kids could use the money that's raised, but instead they're giving up a little bit to help somebody else."

Ryan gives his students all of the credit for the success of these compassionate efforts. "None of this would happen in our school and community if we didn't have students who were really pumped about affecting change," he says. "They are such a powerful force when they set their mind to something. They have vision and purpose, and there's nothing they can't do."
 — Camille Llosa

EDUCATOR

Ryan Wakefield,
Kelowna, B.C.



Ryan's Me to We award money will be donated to the Kelowna Gospel Mission, a homeless shelter that his students volunteer with.

SOCIAL ACTION

James Kamau, Burnaby, B.C.

James Kamau grew up in Dagoretti in Nairobi, Kenya, which has given him an insider's perspective on what is needed to help reduce the cycle of poverty in Africa. Although he was fortunate and attended primary school, secondary school and college, he still experienced the confusion surrounding youth in his community: The media would tell him one thing and his parents would tell him something else. He found that his best escape was through sports.

Realizing there were few initiatives within his community that celebrated youth being youth, James developed Dagoretti Youth Development Organization (now called Dagoretti Amani) to help shed the assumption that young people are responsible for all of the crime and drug problems in Nairobi. "We brought a different picture of showing the potential that was in young people," says James.

In 2006, James moved to Canada and two years later established Youth Initiative Canada, an organization

that empowers youth in Kenya through three pillars: sports, education and entrepreneurship. He encourages Canadians to donate old athletic equipment so more African children can be involved in sports and experience the stability and support offered by a team. James organizes for uniforms to be purchased for African children so they can attend classes where school uniforms are mandatory. And he inspires African young people to share their ideas so that together they can develop ways to make their community recognize their potential. "There are a lot of young people that have great ideas," says James. He feels kids should be seen for their talent and encouraged.
 — Jaime Myslik

James' Me to We award money will be used to buy Youth Initiative Canada's first structure on their donated land, giving them a meeting room, office, resource centre and training room.