

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release - March 16, 2008

World Leadership Day - Canada

World Leadership Day: Inspire Youth Leadership

The theme for *World Leadership Day* (WLD) on March 20, 2008 is “Inspire the Youth of the World.” Wilmer A. Gonzalez and Renée Hodgkinson join Terrill Welch, WLD Ambassador for Canada, in the Canadian celebration of this special day.

Wilmer A. Gonzalez with Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific

“Youth are inspired by the work of other youth and it is with great pleasure that I bring attention to the work of Wilmer A. Gonzalez” says Terrill Welch.

Wilmer A. Gonzalez, a nineteen year old student of Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, has directed and produced a documentary video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntjCiVQzS5U>) to celebrate *World Leadership Day - Canada*. Mr. Gonzalez is in his final year at the College. He was born in Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua; he made his first film-documentary “La Sultana del Norte,” and won the National Competition of Science and Technology for two consecutive years (2004, 2005).

Established in 1974, Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific promotes the cause of international understanding by creating an environment in which students from one hundred countries and cultures are brought together to study and to serve the community. The College stands as a memorial to the life and work of the late Canadian Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson.

Renée Hodgkinson with Leaders Today

“We inspire youth by believing in what they do and supporting their success. *Leaders Today* is exemplary in its efforts to inspire youth leaders. I am thrilled that Renée Hodgkinson of *Leaders Today* has provided their “Volunteer Now” video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhdeNqobmMs>) in celebration of World Leadership Day – Canada” comments Terrill Welch.

Renée Hodgkinson is the Chief Operations Director for Leaders Today. Ms. Hodgkinson’s education and efforts as a social worker have equipped her with both local and international experience. By reaching out beyond borders in the service of others, she has travelled to over 25 countries and cultivated friends and partnerships built on solidarity. Recipient of the Canada’s Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award, she lives with determination and conviction, demonstrating the Leaders Today slogan: *we are the generation we’ve been waiting for*.

Leaders Today is a world renowned youth leadership organization, delivering innovative local and international training experiences to more than 350,000 youth every year. Founded in 1999 by two international spokespeople for change, brothers Craig and Marc Kielburger, Leaders Today is now the worldwide leader in empowering youth with leadership education, inspiration and action tools.

Media contact: Terrill Welch, World Leadership Day Ambassador - Canada, at tawelch@shaw.ca or phone 250-539-5877.

Background: World Leadership Day



OUR VISION

A world that recognizes, engages and nurtures the expression of the innate leadership in every person.

OUR MISSION

To **celebrate** World Leadership Day as an annual, growing, international event to *inspire*, *connect* and *transform* leadership thinking and development across the globe.

To **inspire** processes worldwide to recognize, engage and nurture the innate leadership dimension and leadership skill development in every person to give them the courage and confidence to step into the unknown territory of leadership.

To **unite** leaders across generations and nations to engage in real meaningful dialogue for collective learning and inspired leadership actions that address the critical issues facing us in the 21st century.

OUR VALUES *Authenticity - Integrity - Contribution*

OUR HISTORY

World Leadership Day will be celebrated in Canada for the first time March 20, 2008. World Leadership Day was founded and launched by Elisabeth Gortschacher on 20 March, 2007. The idea of establishing World Leadership Day was born during a discussion with her US publicist, Nancy Mills, in September 2006.

With extensive real-world management experience and a life-long passion and commitment to leadership development, Elisabeth has made the leadership development of employees a priority in every position she has held. Over the past five years authentic leadership development has become the core business of her international coaching and training company.

By founding World Leadership Day, Elisabeth has turned her personal passion into a global initiative to inspire, connect and transform leadership thinking across generations and nations.

Now in its second year, World Leadership Day 2008 will be celebrated concurrently in six countries around the world: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Singapore and South Africa. A conference event with 40 delegates will be held in Sidney, Australia on March 20, 2008.

To learn more about World Leadership Day go to <http://www.worldleadershipday.org>.

About Terrill Welch, World Leadership Day Ambassador - Canada

Terrill Welch's life-long objective is to facilitate equality, diversity, and community through action-oriented opportunities.

As the founder of *Terrill Welch - A Woman Behind Women*, Terrill provides leadership and executive coaching services in a holistic and integrated approach for achieving success. Terrill believes that we all have the capacity and ability to live our lives with synergistic, fluid intent. She believes this will happen through our ability to recognize and act on our opportunities to lead.

Publications: *Protocols in Response to Violence Against Women in Relationships* (1994). A resource for communities, used internationally. *Leading Raspberry Jam Visions: Women's Way—An Inside Track for Women Leaders* (2005). A book for women leaders about leading that is colourful, defiant and charged with contradictions, complexities and toughness.

Terrill Welch has more than twenty years of Leadership including: Director, Stopping the Violence and Regional Programs Branch, (BC government's former Ministry of Women's Equality); President, International Coach Federation Vancouver; Executive Director, Women's Resource Society of the Fraser Valley; Member of Leadership Team, Pedder Bay Residents.

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**About Wilmer A. Gonzalez, Director and Producer, WORLD LEADERSHIP DAY
/Pearson United World College**

Wilmer Alfredo Chavarría Gonzalez was born in Nueva Segovia, Nicaragua on February 24 of 1989. Before the age of 12 he had been the winner of several local and regional competitions including Grammar and Spanish Literature, Best Nueva Segovia's student in primary school, as well as being part of many children's organizations in the country.

During his secondary school he was the winner of more than five different competitions in the same year and was selected the best student of the region in 2005. At the age of 15 he produced his first film-documentary "La Sultana del Norte," and won the National Competition of Science and Technology for two consecutive years (2004, 2005). Later he would receive full scholarships to attend to the most prestigious universities of the country.

All his achievements were the reasons for the country's National committee to select him as the student to represent Nicaragua at the Lester B. Pearson United World College in Canada. In 2006 his video "The War Against War" was officially presented in several cities and represented the College's ideals in very important events that year.

Currently he is the leader of the International Dance group at Pearson College, and is preparing his art exhibition (examination) for April where his work during the last two years will be presented. His video for World Leadership Day, and will be part of his exhibition as well.

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World Leadership Day Video link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntjCiVQzS5U> 5:34 minutes.

About Renée Hodgkinson, Chief Operations Director, *Leaders Today*

As Chief Operations Director of Leaders Today, Renée oversees International Volunteer and Leadership Trips, the Volunteer Now! program, North American motivational speaking tours, and the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (a Toskan Foundation partnership that has distributed more than \$1,000,000 to grassroots charities).

Renée's education and efforts as a social worker have equipped her with both local and international experience. In 2001, she volunteered teaching music and home science at a secondary school for girls in the heart of Tanzania's Usambara Mountains. Afterwards she returned to Canada to pursue a career in social work, focusing on assisting women in transitional housing, to access independent living. Renée has also led International Volunteer and Leadership Trips to Ecuador, Arizona/Mexico, Kenya and India, and she has facilitated Global Leadership Seminars across North America and in the Middle East. By reaching out beyond borders in the service of others, she has travelled to over 25 countries and cultivated friends and partnerships built on solidarity. Always keeping her heart open to philanthropy of any kind, she continues to work and volunteer at a local women's shelter in Toronto.

Recipient of the Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award, she lives with determination and conviction, demonstrating to youth that we truly are the generation we've been waiting for.

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World Leadership Day Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhdeNqobmMs> 3:18 minutes.