

Invisible Children
by Nick Czajkowski
10th Grade, Littlestown Christian Academy



Invisible Children is a non-profit organization that aims to educate the world about the war that is happening in northern Uganda. Members of the Lord's Resistance Army, whose leader is Joseph Kony, kidnap children during the night and turn them into child soldiers. Children are being taken from their homes at night, and forced to be soldiers against their own will. This is not how children should be living their lives. This is where Invisible Children steps in.

Invisible Children was started in 2005 for the purpose of finding the peace that lies within all the terror in Uganda. Since its start, the people of northern Uganda have begun to find peace within their communities after 21 years of fear. The efforts of Invisible Children have exploded. They now have more than five campaigns running including Schools for Schools, the Bracelet campaign, Invisible Children the Movie, Teacher Exchange program, and the Invisible Children Band Tour.

All of these campaigns help with the furtherance of peace. Schools for Schools is an initiative created to raise the standard of education in northern Uganda. Schools around the United States can have movie screenings, and sell cookies and other promotional items to help raise money for a partner school that they are paired up with. With this program, schools can view their helping progress online. The Bracelet campaign helps with the unemployment of the northern Ugandans. Children and parents alike assemble bracelets that each have a story behind them. This is one of the most popular campaigns Invisible Children has running.

Reports from the Ugandan government say that they have never been closer to helping stop Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army. A peace treaty was assembled, but Kony failed to show for his final signature. A warrant was recently put out for his arrest on the grounds of kidnapping and child endangerment. Since the warrant was issued, no one but his followers knows where he is hiding out.

I chose Invisible Children as the organization to donate \$50,000 because they are helping children end the terror in their lives. I believe that they are dealing with an issue that will be resolved if they keep going at the pace that they are going. More people need to be made aware of the little-known war going on in northern Uganda through the running campaigns. The war will be won and Joseph Kony will be brought to justice.

ICPJ awarded \$100 to Nick Czajkowski for his winning essay plus \$100 to Invisible Children.