

KIDS-4CHANGE

SPEECHES FOR ALICE AND SHANIAH ST. CATHERINE

SPEECH FOR ALICE ST. CATHERINE

Hello. My name is Alice St. Catherine. My daughter, Shaniah, started Kids-4Change, and it is my pleasure and honor to introduce her to all of you today.

Before we begin, however, I would like to thank you for coming and showing your support. We live in such crazy and hectic times, and all of us are so incredibly busy, so I sincerely appreciate your presence here at this event.

When Shaniah first brought up the idea for Kids-4Change – back in the fall during the Presidential election – I thought she was just being a dreamy, good-hearted kid. I loved that she had this dream, and I wanted to encourage it. The seriousness with which she pursued this dream, however, has gently surprised me.

Shaniah’s concept has gone from being a good idea inspired by the volunteerism supported by President Obama to a full-fledged non-profit organization that now has the potential to directly and immediately impact the lives of our youth.

In just a few months, we have been very fortunate to receive the support of local residents, community leaders, and people around the country who truly believe in our movement for change.

Kids-4Change’s mission is to empower and encourage young people to participate and engage in community organizing and volunteer work. With kids supporting each other, we have the opportunity to produce something profound and organic.

The organization is not about adults telling kids what to do. Rather, Kids-4Change is about children inspiring their fellow citizens, inspiring other children who, though they may come from different cultural, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds, nonetheless share the common bond of childhood and adolescence. We cannot underestimate this bond, as it is deep and has tremendous power to influence and motivate.

Our objectives are multifold:

- To empower young people to become better citizens.
- To promote the idea of volunteerism.
- To raise public awareness for the plight of underprivileged kids.
- To encourage young people to incorporate green living in their daily lives.
- To promote cultural diversity.
- And to encourage self-development and awareness.

Our future plans include:

- The development and implementation of personal development training programs for youth.
- The publication of a Kids-4change monthly newsletter.
- Weekly volunteer campaigns in the local community and eventually nationwide.
- And, ultimately, expansion to a global level with focus on developing countries.

Yes, we have big dreams. But when it comes to creating a better world for our children, no dream can be too big. We are starting here in brotherly Philadelphia, and the seeds we plant in this historic city will help carry change to faraway places. Change that is from the hearts of kids, not from any sort of political agenda or platform.

With such energy and enthusiasm coming from youngsters who will be the future of our country, how can we not support them and equip them to succeed? When our children proactively tell us that they want to help their friends and other kids across the country become better citizens and to become better prepared for tomorrow, how can we not encourage their efforts? As adults with resources, it is our obligation and honor to help children who have the inspiration and mindset to give back to their communities. This is a rare circumstance in our times, so when it happens, let us all jump and that bandwagon help these kids create genuine change.

If Kids-4Change is lucky enough to find support and momentum, we can follow our mission and help forge a vision of a better world. But as Shaniah says, "It starts with us kids." So with that, I will end my introduction, and now I proudly present to you Shaniah St. Catherine.

SPEECH FOR SHANIAH ST. CATHERINE (A 5TH GRADE STUDENT)

Hello. My name is Shaniah St. Catherine, and I started Kids-4Change.

A few months ago, I was in my living room with my mom watching President Obama win the election. He is an inspiration to me and to many of my friends. President Obama stands for everything that we can do in this great country, for everything that is possible. During his speech, he talked about giving back, and about each of our roles in the community. This got me thinking . . .

So many good people throughout this country volunteer their time and money to help kids – kids from every type of neighborhood, every race, every background. But, in just my little part of the world, I know a lot of kids who would love to help other kids. Who would love to give their time and energy to make the world a better place for other youngsters. I'm sure there are many, many 5th graders just like me who may not have the same opportunities. I know what it's like to be their age, to go through what they're going through.

With this in mind, we started Kids-4Change. Our web site says, “working as a team with other kids locally and around the world can make a difference and help change the world to be a better place.” I completely believe in that statement. With the example being set by the White House, kids like me can help underprivileged youth succeed in school, in their communities, and in life in general. We can help kids everywhere become better citizens for today and for tomorrow.

We have lots of big plans for this future. With Kids-4Change, and with the help of adults like you, we hope to increase volunteering in the local community and across the nation. We hope to create programs that will help youth become more successful, have better skills to make it in this competitive world, and be more environmentally friendly and aware. And we hope to one-day reach out to kids in other countries across the world. We have big dreams, but we know we need to start out small. So I think we're going to start with a monthly newsletter and take it from there!

The most important thing, though, is that this is something we truly want to do. We weren't put up to this by our parents, or teachers, or principals. We're not doing this to get popular and win more friends at school. No, that's not the case. We are doing this because we can relate directly to kids across this country. We are doing this because we want to create a better world for our friends and ourselves. We are doing this because we care.

So, please help us in any way you can. We are kids who want to make a difference. If we get a little support and guidance from adults like you, we can achieve anything. And, maybe one day, one of us will in that White House in Washington D.C., and maybe we'll be able to inspire the next generation of kids.

Thank you.