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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

MICHAEL J. MILES

847/909-1446

Michael@MilesMusic.org

www.MilesMusic.org

ATTN: EDUCATION AND POLITICS

SEND A SONG TO THE PRESIDENT

**Three thousand 3rd grade students from Chicago sing out,
“If I were the president here’s what I’d do!”**

ATTACHMENTS:

1. *Categorized summary of student ideas.*
2. *DVD of one class’s rendering of the song*
3. *Sheet music to “If I Were The President”*
4. *List of participating Chicago schools.*

Led by composer/musician Michael Miles, and in cooperation with the Old Town School of Folk Music and the Chicago Public Schools, a very special project has been underway for the past few years. Miles has surveyed more than 3000 3rd grade students in 17 different schools. A list of participating schools is included here. In his workshop, Miles emphasized songwriting as a means of expressing yourself about your world.

The centerpiece of the workshop was a song called, “If I Were The President.” Miles had the song partly written but needed the students ideas to finish the work. Week after week, Miles drove all across the city gathering more and more student ideas. The students would literally sing their ideas out loud by answering this simple question:

**“If you were the president of the United States,
what would you do to make the world a better place?”**

The answers are at once extraordinary, rich, hopeful, and realistic. The students were delighted to find out that they could communicate directly with the president and the candidates—that they too had political voices, and that their ideas were important enough to be sent to the president.

Miles encouraged them by saying that “these ideas start with you, go up to the blackboard here, and then right to Washington D.C.”

With hope and heart, here are the ideas from over 3000 nine-year-old citizens of Chicago.

COMPASSION FOR POVERTY AND HARSHIP

Help poor kids and families to have a better home
Give the poor an education
Find homes for animals in shelters
Give everybody a chance to go to school
Help poor people get jobs and houses
Donate clothes to people who don't have any
Lower the prices for clothes and cars and trucks and houses and rent
Help homeless people get homes
Get more books for schools
Get books from people who don't read them and give them to the poor
Help their parents get good jobs
Help factory owners give better opportunities to their workers
Help Native Americans
Give \$50 to each poor person
Change people's misery into happiness
Give money to old people who have no home
Give money to hospitals so they can find cures for diseases
Give the teachers more money
Make camps cheaper for poor people
Build shelters for victims of hurricane Katrina
Buy a lot of toys and give them to the poor people
Help people learn English if they want to
Help drug addicts get rehab
Make sure people are treated equally and everybody has a home and food
Stop people from killing animals to make fur coats
Lower prices on food, gas and computers and electric stuff and houses
Help the teachers relax
Send blankets to hurricane victims
Make sure that all people and poor people get vacations
Hospitals would be free
Make wigs for people who have cancer
Help children who are hungry

LEADERSHIP IDEAS

Talk with the people
Tell stores to make more food
Tell people to not be bad, be happy
Give more money to people who work hard
Make the world a better place to live in
Help people who get beat up learn to stand up for themselves
Make people do the right things in the right way for the right reasons
Pay people more for the jobs they do
Make sure everybody can do their job well
Support people in the service
Tell people to be nice to one another and stop hurting one another
Make rules like "No hating" and "Help people who need help"
Go around the world and talk to other people about what's right and wrong
Have the president go see for himself the bad things that happen
Take care of things here in America

WORLD AFFAIRS

Bring the diamonds back to Africa
Make fair laws for immigration
Give medicine to people in Africa with AIDS
Stop slavery in other countries
Talk to other countries and ask them to stop fighting because it's a waste of time and people
Join North Korea and South Korea into one Korea
Send clean water to Africa
Make sure all people have civil rights
Go around the world and help the kids
Have people play together even if they're white or black or pink or blue

SPECIAL KIDS CONCERNS

Stop kidnappers from taking children
Give money to children's hospitals
End child labor wherever it happens
Give schools more supplies for gym and give us recess too
Help kids who have a hard time in school
Build pools in the park for kids
Help all the kids who can't walk
Tell the teachers to give the students more homework
Make more after school programs
Give 20,000 stuffed animals to children's hospitals
Help kids who don't have mothers or fathers
Pay teachers extra to help kids more
Provide jobs for people so they can buy food

ISSUES OF WAR AND PEACE

Help injured soldiers
Stop wars, because it's not a good idea
Figure out how to stop the war
Give right equipment to soldiers
Send the troops home and make peace with the Iraqis
Bring peace to the world
Take soldiers out of Iraq, they probably want to see their families!
Stop World War III before it happens
End the war in Iraq
Stop sending 18 year olds to war
Stop putting kids in the war
Send all the soldiers back home to live with their families
Stop making nuclear bombs

URBAN LIFE AND SAFETY

Change the community and make it safer
Take off all the violence in Chicago
Stop people from killing others
Put gang members in jail for the rest of their life
Say no to drugs
Make schools safer and make it safer for kids to get home
Stop robbers from stealing things
Make better laws about safety
Help America clean up its communities
Make bad drugs illegal
Hire more policemen
Put in more cameras so the cops know what's happening
Keep the streets safe at night
Take guns away from everyone but cops
Tell the police to keep people safe
Stop using lead paint on baby's toys
Shut down the stores that sell guns except for hunters, because innocent people get hurt
Put cameras on street lights so people don't steal
It would be against the law to be in a gang
Take the guns, knives and drugs out of the world
Take away things that people could kill each other with
Clean garbage so there won't be rats
Make the cities safe so no one is afraid
Stop selling guns and stop gangbangers

SAVE THE EARTH

Stop cutting down the rainforest
Make factories stop polluting
Protect cities from too much garbage
Protect endangered animals
Stop polluting – tell the right people
Protect the Earth – be smart about it
Turn off the lights when you don't need them
Plant lots of plants so the world could look beautiful
Clean the environment, especially old buildings in our neighborhood
Clean the streets once a week
Make recycling a law
Stop people from throwing garbage in the water
Use solar energy, not gasoline
Make it easier for people to recycle
Tell everyone to treat the world better and don't litter
Don't use fossil fuels that will melt the Arctic
Don't use hairspray and protect the environment
Have an Earth day every season
When you cut down a tree, plant a new one

UNIVERSAL IDEAS

Put the kids in charge
Stop saying curse words
Let kids vote at age 9
Make cheap chocolate
Have a law for no bad words
Let third graders vote
More folk music
Close down bars and clubs and put up health centers
Build more churches
Students could wear what they want
Build better cars
Allow anyone to be president, even if they weren't born here
Stop kids from throwing eggs at every school bus
Rebuild the twin towers
Make it so teachers could spend more time with their families
Encourage people to have better imaginations to build things
Make vegetable and nachos for school lunches
Change laws so that whites and blacks could be friends
Put education not wrestling on TV
If things weren't right, I'd change them
Take down raggedy houses and put up new ones
Find cures for cancer and arthritis
Make sure that friends and families stick together
Provide work for people so they can buy food
Change the faces on the dollar bills
Make schools stay open for more hours for kids can learn more to have a great family and have a good job
"If I was president I don't know what I'd do but it will be a lot different from what you do"
For people who have cancer I would build a special room in their house, that way their family won't have to miss them
Make everyone happy and not miserable by allowing those that can't have kids to be able to adopt one easily

Participating Chicago Public Schools

Murphy School
3639 W Grace

Oscar Mayer School
2250 N. Clifton

Carson School
5516 S. Maplewood

Nixon School
2121 N. Keeler

Beaubien School
5025 N. Laramie

Ruiz School
2410 S. Leavitt

Burroughs School
3542 S. Washtenaw

Hanson Park
5411 W. Fullerton

Webster School
4055 W. Arthington

Shoesmith School
1330 E 50th St

Queen of Angels
4520 N. Western

Nettlehorst School
3252 N. Broadway

Dever School
3436 N. Osceola

Ravenswood School
4332 N. Paulina

Legacy Charter School
4217 W. 18th St.

Stone Academy
6239 N. Leavitt

Chappell School
2135 W. Foster

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