



Hello!

As some of you may know, the freshmen English classes are reading a book called "A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier," by Ishmael Beah. This book is an autobiographical work about the author's experiences as a child soldier in Sierra Leone, Africa. There are, at present, an estimated 250,000 children under the age of 18 serving in armed conflicts worldwide, and the majority of them—such as the author—do not participate by choice.

The freshmen at Mirta Ramirez have been learning about the plight of child soldiers, and are going to participate in an event called "Red Hand Day." Red Hand Day is celebrated on February 12 (the anniversary of the day on which the use of child soldiers was banned) all over the world to raise awareness (and donations!) to help fight the use of minors in armed conflicts.

We invite you and your class to come to the auditorium on Thursday, Feb 12, where we will present some information on child soldiers and what is being done to help them. We will also hold a bake sale and a station at which students can paint their hands red to stamp on our banner. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers has a goal to collect one million hand prints for 2009, and with your help, we can at least send a few hundred their way!

Since all freshmen are going to be taking part in this, we really only need the sophomore, junior, and senior teachers to sign up their classes, but we would LOVE to see advisors, administrators, and any other faculty and staff to come in when they can! Presentations last for approximately 40 minutes, and start 10 minutes after each period begins. Please email me at [cook@mrcscs.aspirail.org](mailto:cook@mrcscs.aspirail.org) to sign up!

Thank you for your time!

Linda Cook

