Focus on Child Labor

By Jake Massena

What is good in life can be taken away in a second. Don't take your life for granted...you never know how good you have it until it's gone.

What is Child Labor?

The question, if unanswered to you before, could shock you, but the truth is that it's in a lot of places around the world and it's pretty bad. Child labor is a world-wide practice that involves children being taken from their families or sold against their will to work in factories and sweat shops with no pay, no love, no future, and no hope.

You may also be shocked to know how many children around the world become child slaves. In 2008, it was estimated that 215 million children were working illegally as child slaves and the number is growing.

Where Does Child Labor Occur?

Believe it or not, child labor can be found everywhere around the world, but the majority are found in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. For example, in Pakistan, children are forced to make carpets and in China child laborers make bricks. Also, in the Ivory Coast of Africa, children harvest three quarters of the chocolate that we consume. In many other countries, children manufacture soccer balls that are used by people all over the world. In all of these situations, the children are promised quality care, an education, and good pay, but none of those promises ever come through.
How are Children Affected?

Children can get into child labor several different ways. Sometimes they are actually sold by their own parents to pay off family debt. They could also be told by the companies that they are being offered a good summer job where they will be taken care of and paid well, only to end up being a slave and a prisoner. Other kids are simply kidnapped. No matter how they get into it, it still ends up in torture and cruelty.

Unfortunately, the children receive no care. They are beaten when they work too slowly and they are chained and underfed. Once, in a house in Pakistan, when two kids asked to play, they got their legs broken and tied to their thighs so they wouldn’t mend properly. So, you see, these children never get to live a normal childhood.

How Does Child Labor Affect The American Consumer?

Because child labor costs much less for factory owners, products that use child labor are often less expensive than non-child labor products. Therefore, consumers usually spend less money when they purchase merchandise made by children.

What Can We Do To Stop It?

We can find the difference between child labor and non-child labor items and avoid buying those things. If we stop buying their products, maybe they would have to shut down their sweat shops. We can also raise funds to stop this practice or bring these things to the attention of government officials to make and enforce world-wide laws. It is not something we should continue to ignore...we CAN make a difference in the lives of millions of children.