

Global Vigil Held for AIDS Orphans

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This past Friday concluded the first-ever Global Vigil for AIDS Orphans, which sought to honor and raise awareness of the mostly forgotten 6,000 children worldwide left without a parent every day due to the AIDS pandemic ravaging entire nations.

Sponsored by the Christian humanitarian organization World Vision, the vigils, which began in Toronto on Nov. 29, were held in 17 different cities around the globe before finally concluding in New York 24 hours later.

AIDS activists, musicians, students and other leaders joined to speak out about the children affected by the deadly disease.

“This disease is killing millions—and destroying the lives of millions more,” said World Vision employee and AIDS activist Bwalya Melu, who lost three of his brothers and their wives to the virus in his native Zambia. “But each of those millions is a real life. My brothers and their wives had real children who feel the tragedy of their loss every day. We must safeguard their futures as well.”

In addition to speakers giving their testimonies, musicians like the Brooklyn Youth Chorus and Shane and Shane ministered at events while volunteers helped assemble AIDS caregiver kits to give AIDS workers.

During the vigils, participants read the names of children who had lost a parent because of AIDS; by the last vigil 6,000 names had been read, representing the amount of children that

had lost a parent that day.

“This event is like nothing we’ve ever done before,” said Richard E. Stearns, president of World Vision. “But then this crisis is like nothing we’ve ever addressed before. A crisis like AIDS demands a response of enormous scale, both in our programs for those affected by the virus, and in our call to affect change.”

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Country:Uganda