

# Carl Wilkens - Speaker

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## About Carl Wilkens

As a humanitarian aid worker, Carl Wilkens moved his young family to Rwanda in the spring of 1990. When the genocide that eventually took over 800,000 lives was launched in April of 1994, Carl refused to leave, even when urged to do so by close friends, his church, and the United States government. Thousands of expatriates evacuated and the United Nations pulled out most of its troops. Carl was the only American to remain in Kigali, the capital city. Venturing out each day into streets crackling with mortars and gunfire, he worked his way through roadblocks of angry, bloodstained soldiers and civilians armed with machetes and assault rifles in order to bring food, water, and medicine to groups of orphans trapped around the city. His actions saved the lives of hundreds. For nine years now, Carl has been speaking in schools on nearly every continent about his experiences in Rwanda and how to build bridges with “the other”. To learn more, please go to [www.worldoutsidemyshoes.org](http://www.worldoutsidemyshoes.org). Here is also a website with clips from the PBS documentary, “Ghosts of Rwanda” that are relevant to Wilkens’ story – <http://vimeo.com/54387278>.

## Goal

The goal of each year’s speaking tour is to **inspire** and **equip** people to stand up against genocide, racism, intolerance and bullying.

## Presentation

STORIES and SERVICE are our most effective tools to build bridges, to build peace and eliminate ‘Us versus Them’ thinking. This message is not only conveyed through the sharing of Wilkens’ own experiences but also through the stories of others he met and worked with during the genocide.

Carl uses his own pictures and Google Earth to tell the story of what his family experienced during the genocide. He doesn’t focus on the horror and loss near as much as he focuses on those who stood up against the wrong. He also shares the amazing recovery process Rwanda has been going through for the last 19+ years, including pictures from his January 2013 trip. Carl’s purpose is to leave **tools and hope**, enabling those in attendance to make a positive difference locally as well as internationally.

## Support

World Outside My Shoes is primarily funded by donations made from schools where Carl gives his presentations. A donation is suggested, along with covering travel & accommodation costs.

“Rwanda’s Gifts For You:  
Learning Harmony 20 Years Out”  
Speaking Tour for the  
2013 – 2014 School year

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## Presentation Length

60 minutes - followed by Q & A (can be shorter or longer)

## Group Size

Can be the whole student body and/or classes specifically related to international studies, genocide, holocaust and other social justice issues.

## Other Resources

The following can help give some background:

1. 30 minute video clip - <http://vimeo.com/54387278>
2. At least the first 10 minutes of “**Sometimes in April**” - <http://youtu.be/IxEVcfOKzsY>
3. We can make 3 chapters of “**I’m Not Leaving**” available.

## Visit Statistics

When getting approval for a visit, a few statistics can be helpful. During the 2012/2013 academic year a total of 245 presentations were given to 31,636 people in 60 middle and high schools, 34 universities and 25 civic and faith groups.

## Equipment Needed

- \* Video projector
- \* Speakers/PA for laptop