

# 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>.

## Presentation

STORIES and SERVICE are our most effective tools to build bridges, to build peace and counter ‘Us versus Them’ thinking.

Carl uses Google Earth and his own pictures to tell the story of what his family experienced during the genocide. He doesn’t focus on the horror and loss nearly 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. Carl’s purpose is to leave **tools and hope**, enabling those in attendance to make a positive difference locally as well as internationally.

## Suggested Groups

- A general event partnering with departments including, but not limited to, peace studies, genocide studies, history, international studies, as wells as student groups - STAND, Amnesty International, LGBT, Invisible Children, etc.
- Classroom visits in the above departments and others such as journalism, ethics, anthropology, and theater.
- Informal conversations such as brown bag lunches.

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

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## 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 Length

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

## Other Resources

The following can help give some background:

1. 30 minute video clip - <http://vimeo.com/54387278>
2. We can make 3 chapters of “**I’m Not Leaving**” available.

## Visit Statistics

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

## Support

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

