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## HELPING PARENTS HELP KIDS



# Children's Rights Council



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August 11, 2003

The Children's Rights Council in the United States ("CRC"), as Sponsor, invites participation internationally in Equal Parents' Week ("EPW"). This year, EPW takes place September 22 through September 28, 2003. Participation in EPW is achieved by wearing purple ribbons and tying them everywhere they can be seen in public. The objective of Equal Parents' Week is to publicly send the message that parental rights and responsibilities must be shared equally by unmarried parents.

EPW advocates that equality is not just a legal concept. EPW is a civil rights movement and a human rights movement. The right of both parents to function as a parent, the right of children to be raised and nurtured by both parents, and the right of families to exist and function as a family, are rights inherent and inalienable to all families. The request for equal parent status is a mandate for the time it takes to love, nurture, and teach our children our values the only way we can...a mandate for the ability to be a parent...and a mandate for justice. The CRC is soliciting participation of organizations internationally who believe that "the best parent is both parents" to unite the voices of people throughout the world to bring attention to family law issues affecting parents, children and family members.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** As an international event we are observing "*A Moment in our Hearts, A Moment of Solidarity*," by holding as many candlelight vigils as possible throughout the world. All candlelight vigils will be held on the same date & time: **Thursday, Sept. 25, 2003 at 7:30 p.m.** We are urging all people who cannot attend a candlelight vigil or who do not have one taking place near them to holding their own "*Home Vigil*" by lighting a candle in their home for at least 15 minutes, on Sept. 25, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. A "*Home Vigil*" can be held by anyone, by a single person living alone, and include as many people as you wish, so family and friends can be invited. **Home vigils are as important as public candlelight vigils, as they are very valuable in strengthening the message of EPW.**

EPW advocates that a 2-parent focus be established as an international priority, maximizing the involvement that both parents are willing and able to contribute in raising their children, and promoting the ability of both parents to meet all their children's needs without compromising or imposing financial impediments to nonfinancial forms of child support. The CRC's campaign, **JUST SAY YES!** to Joint Custody advocates that parents exercise their first responsibility as a parent...to "just say yes" to unconditionally loving and sacrificing for their children...and that means, "Just Say Yes!" to joint custody.

**Enclosures:** 2 Highlights sheets describing objectives & ideas for participation/activities, and (1) Sample proclamation for cities, counties, etc.; (2) Joint Statement; (3) Handout brochures for EPW and **JUST SAY YES!** (masters for copying as 2-sided brochures onto the paper of your choice). On the bottom of the first page, below the CRC information, extra space appears where you can add your name and telephone number as a **participating organization**; (4) "Five Candles Reading" for use at public/home candlelight vigils; and (5) Sample handout to publicize Candlelight Vigils

**Press release cutoff: Sept. 4, 2003** to provide specific information (complete address for each activity, your organization's address, telephone number and contact person), and names, addresses and phone numbers of persons holding "*Home Vigils*" to include in the international press release. Press releases will be distributed within a week of EPW. Visit the EPW website <http://members.tripod.com/epweek>.

The CRC would be especially grateful for your organization's participation in EPW. The participation of every organization and person internationally is warmly welcomed and truly invaluable. The power of our message and the power of this message being sent by purple ribbons all over the world will reach people everywhere. If every family member throughout the world who cherishes their love for their family unites their voices and joins in sending our message, we will send a message so powerful it cannot be ignored. If we could, we would surely move heaven and earth for our children. That is what unconditional love and sacrifice is about, and that is the message we are sending.

*Patti Diroff, International Coordinator, Equal Parents' Week*

A NON-PROFIT, TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATION STRENGTHENING FAMILIES THROUGH EDUCATION  
 AND ASSISTING CHILDREN OF SEPARATED, DIVORCED AND NEVER-MARRIED PARENTS

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