



## Speech delivered by International Children's Peace Prize 2018 winners March For Our Lives on 20 November 2018 in Cape Town, South Africa

*Jaelyn Corin:* Thank you to the Kids Rights Foundation for this incredible honor. Emma and I stand here tonight to accept this award on behalf of the millions of young people that are a critical part of this movement, including the wonderful humans who are here tonight that we are so fortunate to work with -- Delaney Tarr, Matt and Ryan Deitsch, David Hogg, and Trevon Bosley. It is bittersweet to receive such an award, seeing as our work is fueled by the normalized gun violence that occurs regularly in the United States. Far too many stories of gun violence go untold or are forgotten back home as our society willingly moves on. Young people, specifically those who reside in low-socioeconomic areas, grow up with gun violence as their reality, days without gunshots as their background noise seem unusual. We are coerced by continual propaganda into believing that this reality cannot be changed, as guns have been completely and totally fused into our culture. But, we refuse to feel hopeless or defeated, because we know how to prevent this epidemic from continuing to plague our communities. We know what it feels like to fear for our lives, and therefore, we will continue to fight so that gun violence can be a thing of the past.

*Emma Gonzalez:* Before the shooting at our high school on February 14th, 2018, we were just normal American high school students living in a small town unknown to most. In just 6 minutes and 20 seconds, however, our town became the epicenter of the world as 17 hearts stopped beating one by one. Seventeen brothers, sisters, parents, friends, mentors, coaches, students were murdered in our classrooms and hallways. Another seventeen people were injured, with physical wounds that might heal, but with emotional wounds that will never. Manuel, Patricia, and Andrea Oliver are all here tonight for their son Joaquin Oliver who even though he didn't survive the shooting still is one of us to this day. The shooting in Parkland joined the list of the worst mass shootings in American history — a list that no one wants to be a part of. When the everyday news cycle of victims of gun violence started to show faces of people we saw everyday at school, we knew it was time to stop being silent. We were suddenly so aware that we were the ones who could break the cycle of gun violence in America.

*Jaelyn Corin:* We traveled to our state's capital and later our nation's, to speak to our elected officials face-to-face. In the last 9 months, we've helped to pass over 50 gun safety laws in different states in our country. We organized the March For Our Lives in Washington D.C., one of the largest youth-led protests in U.S. History, where about 1 million people joined us in our fight. It created a national uproar, making the issue of gun violence number one in importance among young people in our country. My friends and I from Parkland demanded justice side-by-side with students and young people from all walks of life, including our friend Trevon Bosley from the south side of Chicago who is here with us tonight. This fight is all of ours, and we could not have made history if it wasn't for these everlasting coalitions. The march in D.C. worked in conjunction with over 900 sibling marches all over the world, too, creating a sense of global solidarity against all types of gun violence. All children, no matter their country of origin, deserve to feel safe in their schools, their streets, and their homes.



*Emma Gonzalez:* March For Our Lives welcomes everyone, with a sense of unity; it's the first time in a long time that many people in our nation have felt hope, and we want to spread that hope as far as we can. Millions of students around the United States continued the conversation after the March, making it a priority concern of their community's, whether or not gun violence has ever even reached them personally. Remember that you can and should mobilize against something even if you haven't experienced it. As Martin Luther King Jr. says, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." We dedicated our summer to traveling to those communities on our Road to Change tour. We bussed to over 100 different cities in over half of the states in America. Speaking directly with communities filled with gun violence survivors and other incredibly brilliant youth organizers, we spread this life-saving conversation. In fact, our recent midterm election in America showed a revolutionary youth voter turnout, a turnout higher than it's been in a frickin' long time, leading to a more representative government than our country has ever seen.

*Jaclyn Corin:* Together, as a united front, we thrive. Gun violence is a universal problem, which is why the power of this movement spreads far beyond the borders of the USA. We invoked a flame in young people to fight for peace and take control of their futures; a flame that only continues to spread. We are a generation that knows that if a problem affects one of us, it affects all of us. A generation that advocates for a system that fights for us, not system that we have to fight. To anyone that is dissatisfied with a circumstance in your community, country or world, we urge you to band together with a group of friends, just like we did on our living room floor, and organize to change it for the better. Be bold in your call for change, intersectional in your demand for equity and safety, and relentless in your quest for justice.