



Jonathan Walton

Activist, Poet and Speaker



When Jonathan was 16, a motorcycle accident changed everything. He miraculously was not hurt, and says “it was a big, big wake-up call” that made him think about his life. That day he wrote “By Grace,” one of his best poems yet. He has since devoted his life to writing poetry and advocating for underprivileged youth. He spreads a message of purpose, compassion and justice, rooted in his Christian faith.

Teachers and others discovered his gift for poetry while he was growing up in rural southern Virginia. Living there, he saw the struggles of the poor. “I didn’t have much. I’ve been working since I was 9. People shouldn’t have to do that. You should have a childhood.” His compassion and sense of justice show up in his poetry, such as “Poem for Jacob,” about a former child soldier in Uganda.

Jonathan recently graduated from Columbia University with a major in creative writing. He has written two books of poetry, with a third coming out soon.

His speaking engagements often include poetry readings in the tradition of spoken word and performance poetry, which has gained increasing popularity among a wide range of audiences, especially youth. His performances are described as “dynamic and rhythmic readings.”

His poetry is entertaining, but also informative and inspiring. He finds poetry opens people up to his message. “I can have a whole lot of walls up when I go in, but if somebody stands up and does a poem, it’s like entertainment — but at the same time it’s informative.” When topics such as children suffering in Africa show up in a poem, people start to listen and are inspired to do something.

Jonathan began working with World Vision in 2006 and has since raised more than \$200,000 in donations and sponsorships for children in crisis all over the world, particularly in Gulu, Uganda. Jonathan’s efforts are contributing to many campuses and churches in the greater New York area joining the fight to save a generation.



Jonathan has spoken at more than 200 venues, from youth events and colleges to nursing homes and prisons. He has an easy smile but also conveys passion as he takes a stand against injustices such as child labor and trafficking. “Somebody thinks this stuff is all right, and I don’t. I have to flip over the tables in the temple. That’s what we’re called to do.”

Jonathan inspires and points people to ways they can help. He says, “By showing people concrete, concise points of entry into the battle against extreme poverty, AIDS, malaria and systemic injustice, we can begin to make considerable headway in our struggle for a better world.”

Jonathan Walton is based in New York.

For speaker availability, please contact:

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