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Record Group/Collection: George H.W. Bush Presidential Records
Collection/Office of Origin: Speechwriting, White House Office of
Series: Speech File Draft Files
Subseries: Chron File, 1989-1993

OA/ID Number: 13512
Folder ID Number: 13512-011

Folder Title:
Commercial Appeal Volunteerism Event 11/22/89 [OA 3540] [2]

Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
G	25	6	6	4

(Lange/Blessey)
November 17, 1989
7:00 p.m.
[1000.DOC]

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: COMMERCIAL APPEAL VOLUNTEERISM EVENT
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1989
[12:00 P.M.]

((You know, back before the Civil War -- just after William Henry Harrison was elected President -- this newspaper was named the "Appeal."

The founder said he named it that, as an "appeal to the sober second thoughts of the people, to elect a Democratic president in the next election."

Well, with traditions like that, you can imagine how lucky I feel to be here today.))

But I do feel lucky to be here, to talk about something that's so important to our nation -- and our future.

Last June, I gave a speech about something called the "Points of Light" initiative. Our goal was to make community service central to the life and work of every individual and every institution in America.

I asked people and groups across the country to think about the special, unique contribution they could make to help others around them.

And I suggested just a few possibilities. Banks and utility companies could add community service information to their mailings. Real estate developers, contractors, architects and lenders could team up for decent, affordable housing for the

homeless. Every restaurant, grocery and convenience store could make surplus food available to the hungry.

For the news media, I had a special request because institution in America has more power over public opinion. The media has a unique ability to shape public attitudes, heighten awareness, and mobilize people for action.

So I asked members of the media to remind Americans that illiteracy, drug abuse, homelessness, hunger and other social problems **have** solutions. But only if people understand that these aren't somebody else's problems to solve. And the press has the power to reach every corner of America with that message.

A month after I announced the Points of Light initiative, The Commercial Appeal in Memphis responded. Along with reporting and commenting on problems -- which is every free paper's right and responsibility -- they took on an added responsibility.

They began pointing to solutions.

They started doing profiles of 1,000 individual and institutional "points of light" last summer -- at a time when a lot of people were still trying to figure out what I meant by a "thousand points of light." Well, you understood. And you've brought that idea to life.

Tomorrow is a day unique to America. A day where we pause, gather together, and give thanks. It's my hope that by this time next year, a growing national service movement will mean more Americans will have more to be thankful for.

Today I'd like to challenge every publisher, every broadcaster, every member of the American news media, to follow the lead of the Commercial Appeal. Many have begun to do so. Many more can.

By putting the spotlight on citizens who have made community service part of their definition of success, this newspaper is encouraging others to do the same. And proving that the volunteer spirit is alive and well in the volunteer state.

For the millions who want to help others in need, but wonder how, this newspaper and this community are showing that **there are at least a thousand ways to lead others out of darkness.**

I think of Fred Daniels, a retired salesman, starting what I hear may be the world's best catfish cooking team, formed to raise funds for charities.

He and his friends travel all over, towing an 8,000 pound cooker to company picnics, and donating the proceeds to causes like United Cerebral Palsy.

Or Kim McLaughlin -- 18 years old -- who volunteered for the Tennessee Outreach Program. She's been working in the hills rebuilding houses, painting, and laying down floors.

She says, "I like seeing the smiles on people's faces after we're done. When we were finished, they cried."

((Don't worry, Kim -- you should have seen how Barbara reacted the last time I tried to lay down a floor.))

I understand that Sam Cooper [who's here on the platform] has raised more than \$20 million for civic causes. Sam has just

been named the Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser of 1989 by the National Society of Fundraising Executives. ((We may want to put him to work on the federal budget...))

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She goes about 100 miles each way to the prison, every Wednesday, to teach inmates how to read. She's taught nearly 140 of them, and now she's training them to teach others.

"I'm a teacher of teachers," she says.

Lillie Belle Witcher -- now, **she's** only 79 -- she works hard for nearly half a dozen causes. She says, "If a day goes by and I haven't done something for somebody, it just seems like a wasted day."

Forget fortune, fame, glory, and glittering prizes: These are great American success stories. And they're powerful reminders that **everyone** can do something for someone else.

Mary Taylor spent 16 years on welfare. She says "I used it, and it used me." Now she is a community activist who helps the poor get back on their feet. "We all have a place to be part of the system no matter what level we are on," she says.

Along with a sense of pride, for others, volunteering is a source of great pleasure.

Cari McRae says her tutoring work "isn't a burden. It makes me feel satisfied." Danita Beck, who volunteers in a hospital, says "If you have extra time, why just sit around and not use it, when someone else needs it?" And Marian Himmelreich, who lifeguards autistic children, says "It's fun to be busy and involved. Besides, I'm not that wild about the soaps."

From disk jockeys to truck drivers to CEOs to children to the retired -- service to others can be a central part of American life. And it's never been more needed than it is now.

It ought to be talked about in board rooms and bowling alleys, factories, Rotaries, fraternities, sororities, farms, families, cities and union halls, suburbs and shopping malls --
Everywhere in America: Everyone has a gift to give.

Every one of us has a special talent that can help solve America's problems. And every institution in America can make the kind of commitment you've made here.

So following your lead, over at the White House, we're going to announce and honor individuals and groups across the country who are making a difference -- working to improve the lives of others -- **giving more Americans reason to give thanks.**

These "Daily Points of Light" won't be singled out because they themselves are the best. We honor them because they show what's best in all of us. What's best for all of us.

To honor their spirit and commitment is to honor yours -- and those like you. We will single out the few, because they represent the many.

We hope that by highlighting their achievements, and the ways they've found to serve, we can inspire others to serve.

So I want to close by announcing the very first White House "Daily Point of Light." It's an organization that has devoted itself to spreading the volunteer ethic in its community.

That organization is the reason we're all here today: They're the leadership and staff of the Memphis Commercial Appeal. \\\

Imagine an America where service to others is a fact of life. Part of everyone's everyday thinking. Imagine the impact if every newspaper, magazine, television and radio station and cable system found and recognized a thousand points of light.

We are nearing the dawn of a new decade. Let it be a decade with no dark corners. No forgotten places. No lost people.

So if you've got a hammer, find a nail. If you can read, find someone who can't. If you're not in trouble, seek out someone who is. **Because everywhere there is a need in America, there is a way to fulfill it. And everywhere there is a dream in America, there is a way to make it come true.**

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But I **do** feel lucky to be here, to talk about something *this so important* ~~crucial~~ to our nation -- and our future.

Last June, I gave a speech about something called the "Points of Light" initiative. Our goal was to make community service central to the life and work of every individual and every institution in America.

I asked people and groups across the country to think about the special, unique contribution they could make to help others around them.

And I suggested just a few possibilities. Banks and utility companies could add community service information to their mailings. Real estate developers, contractors, architects and lenders could team up for decent, affordable housing for the

homeless. Every restaurant, grocery and convenience store could make surplus food available to the hungry. ~~each day.~~

For the news media, I had a special request, ^{because} No institution in America has more power over public opinion. The media can ^{has a unique ability} shape public attitudes, heighten awareness, and mobilize people for action. ^{to}

So I asked members of the media to remind Americans that illiteracy, drug abuse, homelessness, hunger and other social problems **have** solutions. ^{But only if people understand that} ~~You know that these aren't just~~

^{these aren't} ~~somebody else's problems.~~ ^{to solve.} ~~And the press has more power to~~ ^{reach every} ~~convey~~ ^{corner of} ~~that message, than any president.~~ ^{America with}

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That can help solve
 Every one of us has ~~some unique power, some~~ ^a special talent ~~or angle~~ on America's problems. And every institution in America can make the kind of commitment you've made here.

So following your lead, over at the White House ⁽¹⁾ we're going to announce and honor individuals and groups across the country who are making a difference -- working to improve the lives of others -- giving more Americans reason to give thanks. ^{B.F.}

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We are nearing the dawn of a new decade. Let it be a decade with no dark corners. No forgotten places. No lost people.

~~If an offered hand can be rejected, it can be offered again. And if those you help don't thank you, they may be too young. Or too old. Or too angry. Or too sick. Some may only thank you with their eyes. And that just may be enough.~~

So if you've got a hammer, find a nail. If you can read, find someone who can't. If you're not in trouble, seek out someone who is. Because everywhere there is a need in America, there is a way to fulfill it. And everywhere there is a dream in America, there is a way to make it come true.

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WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 11/17/89 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 2:00 PM, MON., NOV. 20
 PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: COMMERICAL APPEAL VOLUNTEERISM EVENT
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
 SUBJECT: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1989
12:00 PM

	ACTION FYI			ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PETERSMEYER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANDERSON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

Please provide comments/edits directly to Chriss Winston, Room 122, x2930 by 2:00 PM, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, with a copy to my office. Thank you.

RESPONSE:

OK as drafted — JWC 11/18/89

NOTE: Check to see if members of congress will be participating in this event.

89 OCT 20 10:27 AM

James W. Cicconi
 Assistant to the President
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
 Ext. 2702

1989 NOV 17 PM 7:06

(Lange/Blessey)
November 17, 1989
7:00 p.m.
[1000.DOC]

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Pls. see comments

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 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
 Ext. 2702

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DATE: 11/17/89 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 2:00 PM, MON., NOV. 20
PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: COMMERCIAL APPEAL VOLUNTEERISM EVENT
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
SUBJECT: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1989
12:00 PM

	ACTION FYI			ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PETERSMEYER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANDERSON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

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RESPONSE:

No comment

89 OCT 20 2:29 PM

James W. Cicconi
Assistant to the President
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
Ext. 2702

1989 NOV 17 PM 7:06

(Lange/Blessey)
November 17, 1989
7:00 p.m.
[1000.DOC]

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MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
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SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>ROGERS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>WINSTON</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>PINKERTON</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PETERSMEYER</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>WRAY</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1989 NOV 17 PM 7:06

(Lange/Blessey)
November 17, 1989
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###

The first recipient is

A decade that will be marked by a renewed commitment to helping those in need. A decade of serving others and not ourselves

INSERT "B"

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VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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She says, "I like seeing the smiles on people's faces after we're done. When we were finished, they cried."

((Don't worry, Kim -- you should have seen how Barbara reacted the last time I tried to lay down a floor.))

I understand that Sam Cooper [who's here on the platform] has raised more than \$20 million for civic causes. Sam has just

been named the Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser of 1989 by the National Society of Fundraising Executives. ((We may want to put him to work on the federal budget...))

Maybe you read about Pauline Hord, 82 years old. ((Hope she'll forgive me for revealing that...)) Somebody at the Mississippi Penitentiary at Parchman had been talking about a prisoner there, saying he "couldn't read a bible if he'd had one." So Mrs. Hord stepped forward.

She goes about 100 miles each way to the prison, every Wednesday, to teach inmates how to read. She's taught nearly 140 of them, and now she's training them to teach others.

"I'm a teacher of teachers," she says.

Lillie Belle Witcher -- now, she's only 79 -- she works hard for nearly half a dozen causes. She says, "If a day goes by and I haven't done something for somebody, it just seems like a wasted day."

Forget fortune, fame, glory, and glittering prizes: These are great American success stories. And they're powerful reminders that everyone can do something for someone else.

Mary Taylor spent 16 years on welfare. She says "I used it, and it used me." Now she is a community activist who helps the poor get back on their feet. "We all have a place to be part of the system no matter what level we are on," she says.

Along with a sense of pride, for others, volunteering is a source of great pleasure.

Cari McRae says her tutoring work "isn't a burden. It makes me feel satisfied." Danita Beck, who volunteers in a hospital, says "If you have extra time, why just sit around and not use it, when someone else needs it?" And Marian Himmelreich, who lifeguards autistic children, says "It's fun to be busy and involved. Besides, I'm not that wild about the soaps."

From disk jockeys to truck drivers to CEOs to children to the retired -- service to others can be a central part of American life. And it's never been more needed than it is now.

It ought to be talked about in board rooms and bowling alleys, factories, Rotaries, fraternities, sororities, farms, families, cities and union halls, suburbs and shopping malls --
Everywhere in America: Everyone has a gift to give.

Every one of us has a special talent that can help solve America's problems. And every institution in America can make the kind of commitment you've made here.

So following your lead, over at the White House, we're going to announce and honor individuals and groups across the country who are making a difference -- working to improve the lives of others -- **giving more Americans reason to give thanks.**

These "Daily Points of Light" won't be singled out because they themselves are the best. We honor them because they show what's best in all of us. What's best for all of us.

To honor their spirit and commitment is to honor yours -- and those like you. We will single out the few, because they represent the many.

We hope that by highlighting their achievements, and the ways they've found to serve, we can inspire others to serve.

So I want to close by announcing the very first White House "Daily Point of Light." It's an organization that has devoted itself to spreading the volunteer ethic in its community.

That organization is the reason we're all here today: They're the leadership and staff of the Memphis Commercial Appeal. \\\

Imagine an America where service to others is a fact of life. Part of everyone's everyday thinking. Imagine the impact if every newspaper, magazine, television and radio station and cable system found and recognized a thousand points of light.

We are nearing the dawn of a new decade. Let it be a decade with no dark corners. No forgotten places. No lost people.

So if you've got a hammer, find a nail. If you can read, find someone who can't. If you're not in trouble, seek out someone who is. **Because everywhere there is a need in America, there is a way to fulfill it. And everywhere there is a dream in America, there is a way to make it come true.**

Thank you. God bless you -- and the work you do.

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WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 11/17/89 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 2:00 PM, MON., NOV. 20
 PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: COMMERCIAL APPEAL VOLUNTEERISM EVENT
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
 SUBJECT: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1989
12:00 PM

	ACTION FYI			ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PETERSMEYER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ANDERSON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

Please provide comments/edits directly to Chriss Winston, Room 122, x2930 by 2:00 PM, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, with a copy to my office. Thank you.

RESPONSE:

No comments.

James W. Cicconi
 Assistant to the President
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff
 Ext. 2702

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Memphis, Tennessee)

For Immediate Release

November 22, 1989

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
FOR COMMERCIAL APPEAL VOLUNTARISM

Commercial Appeal Building
Memphis, Tennessee

12:14 P.M. CST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Mr. Linder, Mr. Wilhelm, Mr. Williams, Jerry Friedheim, Loren Ghiglione, who came down with us, and Jerome Ryans; of course, the Governor of this great state, and Reverend Mowery, distinguished members of Congress, volunteers, ladies and gentlemen, and all you damp pre-Thanksgiving marvelous people. I didn't think anybody would be out here today. (Applause.)

You know, back before the Civil War, just after William Henry Harrison was elected President, this newspaper -- Mr. Linder's newspaper was named The Appeal. And the founder renamed it, and he said, as an "appeal to the sober second thoughts of the people, to elect a Democratic president at the next election."

Well, with a history like that, you can imagine how lucky I feel to be here today. (Laughter.) But I do really feel fortunate to be here, to talk about something that is so vital to our nation and to our future.

Last June -- Mr Linder referred to -- I gave a speech about something called the "Points of Light" initiative. And its goal is to make community service central to the life and work of every individual and every institution in America.

And I asked people and groups across the country to think about the special contribution they could make to help others around them in need.

For the news media, I made a special request -- because no other institution in America has the unique ability of the media to shape public attitudes, to heighten awareness, to mobilize people for action.

And I asked members of the media to remind Americans that illiteracy, drug abuse, homelessness, hunger and other social problems do have solutions. And soon after I announced the Points of Light initiative, The Commercial Appeal in Memphis responded. Along with reporting and commenting on problems -- which is every paper's right and obligation and responsibility in a free society -- they took on an added responsibility.

And they began pointing to solutions. And they started doing profiles of 1,000 individuals and institutional "points of light" last summer -- at a time when a lot of people were still trying to figure out what I meant by a thousand points of light. Well, you understood -- all of you. And you've brought that idea to life, dramatically.

Tomorrow is our special day -- it's a day unique to America -- a day when we pause and gather together and give thanks. And it is my hope that by this time next year, a growing community service movement will mean that every American will have more to be

MORE

thankful for.

Today I'd like to challenge every publisher, every broadcaster, every member of the American news media to follow the lead of The Commercial Appeal. (Applause.) And many have begun to do so. All three of the major networks have started regular features on volunteers in America -- and local papers and stations have become involved. And many more can.

For the millions across our great country who want to help others in need but wonder how, this newspaper and this community are showing that there are at least a thousand ways to lead others out of the darkness.

I think of Fred Daniels, a retired salesman, starting what I hear may be the world's best catfish cooking team, formed to raise funds -- there's Fred, right there -- formed to raise funds for charity. Look, he and his friends travel all over towing an 8,000-pound cooker to company picnics, donating the proceeds to causes like United Cerebral Palsy.

Or Kim McLaughlin, 18 years old, who volunteered for the Tennessee Outreach Program. And she's been working in the hills rebuilding houses, painting, laying down floors.

And she says this, "I like seeing the smiles on people's faces after we're done. When we're finished, they cried."

I understand that Don Stone, a bank president, decided that the best way to convince students to stay in school was to work with them, to talk with them -- one at a time. One on one.

And not long ago, Don saw one of those kids across the street. And he says, "I just walked over to him, walked over to hug him. He's been drug free for about two weeks." And he says, "We do a lot of hugging here."

Maybe you read about Pauline Hord, 82 years old. I hope she'll forgive me for revealing that. And somebody at the Mississippi Penitentiary at Parchman had been talking about a prisoner there, saying he couldn't read a Bible if he'd had one. And so that's where she stepped forward.

She goes about 100 miles each way to the prison, every Wednesday, to teach inmates how to read. She's taught nearly 140 of them, and now she's training them to teach others.

And here's what she says, "I'm a teacher of teachers," she says.

Lillie Belle Witcher -- she's only 79 -- and she works hard for nearly half a dozen causes. And she says, "If a day goes by and I haven't done something for somebody, it just seems like a wasted day."

Forget fortune, fame and glory, and glittering prizes. The people I've been describing to you, they are great American success stories. And they're powerful reminders that everyone can do something for somebody else.

Mary Taylor spent 16 years on welfare. And she said, "I used it, and it used me." Now she's a community activist who helps the poor get back on their feet. And she says, "We all have a place to be part of the system no matter what level we are on."

From disk jockeys to truck drivers to CEOs to children to the retired -- service to others should be a central part of American life. And it's never been more needed than it is now.

It ought to be talked about in the board rooms and the bowling alleys and the factories and the rotaries and the fraternities, sororities, farms, families, cities, union halls,

suburbs and shopping malls -- everywhere in America. Everyone has a gift to give.

And every one of us has a special talent that can help solve America's problems. And every institution in America can make the kind of commitment that you've made here.

At the White House we know a good idea when we see one, so we're going to announce and honor individuals and groups across the country who are making a difference -- working to improve the lives of others -- giving more Americans reasons to give thanks.

These "Daily Points of Light" won't be singled out because they themselves are the best. We honor them because they show what's the best in all of us. And they show that from now on in America -- now on in America -- any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

To honor their spirit and commitment is to honor yours and those like you. We will single out a few, because they represent the many. And we hope that by highlighting their achievements, and the ways they've found to serve, we can inspire others to serve.

So let me close by announcing the very first White House "Daily Point of Light." It's an organization that put the spotlight on citizens who have made community service a part of their definition of success and encouraged other people to do the same -- proving that the volunteer spirit is alive and well in the "volunteer state."

That organization is the reason that we're all here today, braving the elements to salute them. They are the leadership and staff of The Commercial Appeal. And I am proud to honor them in this way. (Applause.)

Just imagine an America where service to others is a fact of life. Part of everyone's everyday thinking. Imagine the impact if every single newspaper and magazine and television and radio station and cable system found and recognized a thousand points of light.

Imagine if every institution, from the airlines to dry cleaners to high schools to neighborhood softball teams, were to join us in regularly honoring as heroes those who are engaged in the war against drug abuse or illiteracy, AIDS, homelessness, hunger and the other problems.

We are nearing the dawn of a new decade. And so let it be a decade with no dark corners. No forgotten people. No forgotten places.

And so if you've got a hammer, find a nail. If you can read, find someone who can't. If you're well, do it like the volunteers I just saw at St. Jude's. Help someone who isn't well. If you're not in trouble, seek out someone who is. Because everywhere there is a need in America, there is a way to fill it. And everywhere there is a dream in America, there's a way to make it come true.

Isn't it fitting that on this chilly and wet eve before Thanksgiving, we pay tribute to those Americans who help their fellow Americans.

God bless you all. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving. I hope you haven't gotten ammonia and God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much. Thank you all. (Applause.)

END

12:25 P.M. CST