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POINTS OF LIGHT INITIATIVE:
A NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE TRUST

I. Introduction

- At a time when much of our nation is enjoying one of the longest periods of economic prosperity on record, an increasing number of people are beset with more painful characteristics of poverty than ever before. They must deal with joblessness, drugs and violent crime, homelessness, teenage pregnancy, youth suicide, illiteracy, broken families, the indignities of welfare and the disconnection from society. Others are affected by ill health and loneliness. Quality of life is also threatened by our many environmental difficulties, from polluted air to waste-strewn streets.
- At the center of many of our worst domestic problems are good people living in almost totally disintegrated communities. They are disconnected from a healthy, close-knit, caring, strong and supportive community and family. As a result, they are desolate, alone, alienated, disoriented, powerless, unloved, insecure and unhappy. Most debilitating and immoral of all, they are left without the self-esteem that empowers a person to act in his or her best interest.
- As problems have overwhelmed communities, it has become clear that the Federal government by itself is a critical but insufficient resource to solve a large number of the nation's social and environmental problems. Throughout the country, however, we are seeing glimmers of hope as a result of creative initiatives by Americans concerned about America and other Americans.
- As we prepare for the Twenty-First Century, the President has a unique opportunity to issue a challenge and a call to service to all the people of our country, young and old, urban and rural, public sector and private sector, corporations and churches, foundations and schools. However, since it's their country to inherit, we should be led by our youth in this effort.
- This should be a challenge to make a difference, to give of oneself for the betterment of another, a call to serve the community and in doing so, serve the nation, with the hope that as we approach the year

2000, the cycles of poverty and hopelessness will be broken by the selfless efforts of the people who care and that the environment will be on the road to restoration, insuring purity and beauty for generations to come.

- The long-term economic impact of such a national commitment could ultimately result in helping to solve the budget imbalance by encouraging and training to become productive those who would otherwise be dependent on the Government, by mentoring, and tutoring our youth toward the goal of maximum education and thereby, optimum productivity and reconnecting those who are lost to society and to jobs and fulfillment.
- Considering that our nation began with a commitment to country, community and each other, it is timely for us now to make those values more meaningful in our lives.

II. Analysis

A. Foundation

- To assist in that effort, it is recommended that that a foundation be established, to be called the Points of Light Initiative Foundation. It is expected that the Foundation would be funded from both the private sector and the Federal Government. The President would serve as Chairman of the Foundation and be personally involved with its activities.
- The President would be joined on the Board of Directors by twenty-four innovative and creative leaders with proven accomplishments in community service representing business, foundations, education, religious groups and other service organizations. There would also be an Advisory Board consisting of twenty-five additional persons involved in various aspects of community service.
- There would be a President of the Foundation and an Executive Staff. However, it is contemplated to be small with the intention of avoiding the creation of a large bureaucracy.
- The Foundation's overall objective would be to enhance community service generally, and augment its potential as a means of addressing critical social and environmental needs in our country.

1. The Foundation should fully recognize the abundance of voluntary activities already to be found in communities across the nation, and embrace the natural pluralism and diversity of aims in these efforts;
 2. The Foundation should seek to raise awareness of existing efforts, and enlist wider participation in them by the nation as a whole;
 3. The Foundation should strengthen these efforts, supplementing them with new approaches where appropriate, and demonstrate their ability to address pressing social and environmental needs;
 4. The Foundation should identify and bring into wider use new techniques and initiatives that make effective use of those of all ages engaged in community service.
- To translate these principles into effective action will require an agenda with two major aims: a sustained national appeal for wider participation by all citizens in existing and new efforts, and specific initiatives designed to showcase best practices, new ideas and programs.

B. Continuing National Call to Action

- With the bipartisan support of leaders in government, business, churches, charitable organizations and education, it is recommended that the President:
1. Lead a national media campaign whose key point would be to motivate people to community service. It would be designed to complement and reinforce the diverse range of national, state and local community service campaigns that currently exist. It would urge all Americans to become more involved in local activities, support community service efforts wherever they are found, and raise the "level of effort" of existing voluntary activities across the country.

2. Suggest that since they will be our successors, it is most appropriate that our young people lead this effort to give original values a greater role in American life.
3. Suggest to state leaders that community service be incorporated into elementary and high school curricula and that much like in Atlanta, Georgia presently, a minimum number of hours of community service be recommended as a condition precedent to high school graduation provided that time spent on such service would be in addition to, not in lieu of, time spent studying.
4. Suggest to college and university presidents that applicants be judged on the basis of quality and quantity of community service in addition to standardized test scores and high school class ranking, that students be given degree credit for approved community service and that certain institutions recommend a semester of community service as part of their degree program.
5. Suggest to businesses and corporations that community service be considered in assessing job applicants, that career advancement of employees be influenced by community service and that employers encourage employees to devote an average of five hours per week in community service. As an inducement, consideration might be given to allowing one-fifth of that service to be on company time. This service would appear to work best in conjunction with a program developed by the corporation in which the employees could work as a team. We suggest that Federal, State and local government employees adopt similar practices.
6. Suggest that corporations, churches, and other non-profit organizations work with welfare recipients to reconnect those individuals to society and to guide them into community service in accordance with the provisions of the Family Support Act (Welfare Reform) of 1988.

75 hrs.

C. Existing Programs and New Initiatives

- As the response to the President's challenge creates a significant number of new volunteers, it is important that these newcomers to community service have a role to play and a need for their services that would be both stimulating and fulfilling.
- The President's challenge should encourage citizens to identify social problems most concerning them and to attempt to find an organization working on a solution or to develop a solution themselves.
- It is important that corporations, churches and organizations seek to mobilize their constituency to community service. These institutions should identify the most pressing social problems in their area and develop program structures seeking solutions. Utilizing teams from these organizations to execute the programs can be a most effective way to motivate individuals and to inspire continuity. People working together can have a greater impact.
- Inquiries to the Foundation from interested persons should be directed to existing organizations. For example, Volunteer and its 380 offices are apparently able to register new volunteers and match them through their data system with appropriate organizations.

The Foundation would help by:

1. Encouraging the television networks and local stations to feature creative and innovative community service initiatives so that other individuals, institutions and groups would be inspired to replicate those programs in their local communities or, indeed, be inspired to community service in general.
2. Developing a National, State and local system that would recognize unusual initiatives, programs that have succeeded in solving social problems, and extraordinary dedication and present awards to those responsible. The medium of television again and the involvement of the President could be most effective in maximizing recognition.

3. Working with corporations and organizations to help them establish a system that would identify potential community service leaders and then train them.

- It is hoped that over a period of time corporations, educational, social and religious organizations will assume the role of institutional leaders and be at least as effective in many efforts as individual leaders. Those institutions are anticipated to be the most significant extension of the Foundation and its objectives, thereby negating the need for a large staff.
- Moreover, it is hoped that the Foundation can help connect the many existing non-profit organizations with the new institutional leaders and initiatives to avoid unnecessary redundancies and to maximize the effectiveness of this movement.
- It is planned that the Foundation will, in conjunction with certain existing organizations, develop prototypical initiatives in certain communities each year with the hope that if successful they will be replicated on a national scale. These may include the combination of Enterprise Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, Cities in Schools, COOL, and similar organizations.
- Such experiments will also encourage entrepreneurial creativity that will hopefully spread throughout the movement and ultimately reduce the dependency on external funds. An example of this principle would be a local initiative owning a fast-food restaurant or other type of service establishment manned by volunteers and youth in training. The profits generated therefrom might be used to seed many new initiatives.
- It is hoped that with the call to serve issued in a continuous manner by the President, together with an effective follow-up plan by the Foundation, enough individuals and institutions will come to community service so that they will, indeed, have a positive impact on the quality of life and economic profile of our nation.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 31, 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR ROGER PORTER

FROM:

GREGG PETERSMEYER *GP*

SUBJECT:

OFFICE OF NATIONAL SERVICE INITIATIVES

Attached for your review is the draft of the YES to America initiative. Also attached is the initiative for the foundation in which YES to America will be housed, the Points of Light Initiative: A National Community Service Trust.

I look forward to our 1:30 p.m. meeting today.

YES TO America

I. PURPOSES.

- To call all young people to action so that by the year 2000, every young American will be engaged in community service.
- To empower young people with the sense that the nation is theirs to inherit and that it is therefore in their interest to improve the lot of their fellow citizens.
- To expand the capacity of existing service organizations to absorb young volunteers in meaningful service opportunities.
- To promote community service through the means of existing programs in their communities and the creation of new programs.
- To improve the quality of life in America by attacking the most fundamental socio-economic problems in the country at their source: the disintegration of communities and families and the resulting sense of loss of self-esteem among young people. Each young person should be made to feel a part of the "social compact," with an obligation to do his or her part to better his or her community.
- To ennoble young Americans and enrich their lives by instilling in them a sense of concern, compassion and obligation to others.

II. PRINCIPLES.

- All young people have gifts to give.
- All young people between the ages of kindergarten to 25 (students, drop-outs, minorities, poor, affluent, disabled and delinquent) should engage themselves in community service.
- Young people have as much ability as adults do to evaluate their own community needs and to devise and implement strategies to meet those needs.
- It is critical to the nation's future and to the character of a young person to instill at an early age the notion that service to others is a necessary part of any definition of a "successful" life.

- Young people currently engaged in community service should be honored and regarded as role models.
- Existing outlets for community service should be amplified and also honored.
- Ultimately, the bulk of youth service programs should be devised and implemented by young people themselves through existing or new organizations.
- YES should tap and channel the energy and enthusiasm of America's young people and awaken the public to the value of community service.
- "YES to America" should provide a framework around which the young people in America will feel united in a collective effort to improve the quality of life in their respective communities.
- Service to others builds self-esteem. Lack of self-esteem is at the very heart of many of the problems of youth.
- Young people should not be financially compensated by the federal government for their service; however, their service should be rewarded by awards, commendations and other forms of recognition.
- Citizenship is an integral part of a good education. The nation's educational goals and the notion of community service are complementary. Efforts will be made to "weave" the notion of community service into existing curricula.

III. POINTS OF LIGHT INITIATIVE

- The YES initiative will be administered and coordinated nationally by a Foundation, The Points of Light Initiative, Inc. The Foundation will be chaired by the President and its work will be directed by the Office of National Service in the White House.
- The Foundation will serve as a "strategic planning center" constantly surveying the dynamic service scene so as to keep abreast of developments and implement a national plan.
- The Foundation will initiate and lead a public dialogue on the issue of service through presidential speeches, public hearings, forums, conferences, town meetings, etc.
- The Foundation will study and evaluate diverse existing service programs with a view toward replicating effective programs across the country.

- The Foundation will serve as a central clearinghouse for national service information.
- The Foundation will provide technical assistance to people and organizations, both public and private, who propose to start programs.
- The Foundation will publicly recognize and honor outstanding YES participants.
- The Foundation will set clearly defined, meaningful and sound standards for YES programs.

IV. STATE LEVEL.

- The President will ask each Governor to appoint a YES liaison to oversee and coordinate community service programs and awards throughout the state. Such person will serve as the liaison between his or her state and the Foundation and will advise the Foundation of statewide community activities.
- The liaison will report to the Foundation on statewide youth-oriented community activities and receive recommendations from the Foundation for statewide initiatives.

V. LOCAL LEVEL.

- Membership in YES will be open to all young people from kindergarten through age 25.
- Every young person will be encouraged to participate, including students, drop-outs, the poor, the affluent, disabled and the delinquent, because every young person has his or her own unique gifts to give.
- Programs and activities will be specifically designed to maximize the particular skills and capabilities of discrete age groups.
- Membership in YES will require a substantial commitment to national service by all age groups. Examples of national service programs include:
 - High school based, part-time programs both during school and after school, for credit or as an extracurricular activity.
 - Full-time summer service programs for both high school and college students.

- College-based programs both for credit and as an extracurricular activity.
- Full-time youth corps programs state and locally sponsored or, sponsored by a public-private partnership in a variety of modes such as:
 - Urban corps;
 - Conservation corps;
 - Specialty corps (Literacy Corps, Teacher Corps, Health Care Corps).
- VISTA, the Peace Corps and the Military.
- Internship-type programs.
- Post-Graduate School Opportunities (Legal Aid, Teaching, recent graduates of Medical School serving in Low-Income Clinics).

A. YES CENTERS.

- All community-based organizations (e.g. schools, religious institutions, businesses and civic organizations) will be challenged to establish their own YES centers funded by local resources and principally directed and staffed by young people.
- The Foundation will provide packets and guidance on how to set up local YES centers.
- YES Centers will:
 - Encourage young people to devise their own programs and policies to suit their own unique needs and capabilities.
 - Identify community needs and match those needs with the talents and energy of the young people affiliated with such centers;
 - Direct young people to groups and projects which are in need of services and will employ the young person with a meaningful challenge;
 - Arrange transportation where necessary;
 - Train volunteers, mentors and team leaders where appropriate;
 - Attract members of the adult community as mentors, co-workers and team leaders;

- Create and support new ideas for youth service;
- Evaluate service projects to assure that young people have a meaningful service experience;
- Ensure that young people make a significant contribution to their community;
- Award membership in the national organization;
- Encourage all community entities to recognize and publicly honor the most outstanding efforts of youth of every age in their communities;
- Stimulate local fundraising efforts.

B. THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOLS.

- Schools will be encouraged to weave community service and citizenship into existing curricula.
- Community service builds self-esteem, leadership and, when connected to classroom learning, increases student interest in classroom education.
- The original mission of schools is to teach academic skills, citizenship and leadership. A premium should be placed on devising service programs that complement the learning of basic educational skills (e.g., 3rd graders reading to kindergarten students).
- School-based service can be a successful strategy to re-engage students in learning. Students become more interested in school when they are actively engaged in a meaningful service project which reinforces classroom learning. This is especially relevant to young people re-entering school after dropping out or students lacking self-esteem, motivation or students on the verge of dropping out.
- The success of a school-based community service initiative is dependent upon the participation of parents, students, and education leaders. The principal, faculty champion(s) (member(s) of the faculty responsible for the project) as well as the remaining faculty and parents, are all imperative to a successful service experience for the student.
- The education leaders and parents must constantly evaluate and monitor programs to assure that the programs adequately train the student for the community service experience and account for what is being taught to ensure that the community service project is meaningful and has the maximum

impact possible on the student and the student is making an important contribution to the community.

C. KINDERGARTEN - 6th GRADE.

- Activities of elementary school children will be organized through their local schools. Elementary school teachers will be asked to design activities appropriate for each age level, such that each grade level participates regularly in some community service, from drawing pictures to be sent to children's hospitals to charging 4th graders to read to kindergartners.
- The Foundation will make a YES education packet available to teachers containing suggestions for programs and activities for students as well as posters and teaching supplements for the classroom.

D. 7th - 12th GRADE.

- Junior high and high school students will focus their activities in YES centers and existing community organizations. Such students will be expected to involve themselves in these organizations or, alternatively, to create new programs specifically tailored to their individual interests and aptitudes.
- A teaching supplement will be available at these grade levels as well as a means of further instilling the notion of service in the consciousness of the young.

E. THE YES SUMMER INITIATIVE (Summer between 8th and 9th grade).

- During the summer between 8th and 9th grade, young people will be given an opportunity to work in a program jointly designed by students, local governmental leaders and civic leaders to harness the enthusiasm, creativity and energy of young people and focus them on specific local problems.
- The aim of this summer initiative is to expose young people to critical local needs and challenge them to find creative ways of addressing them as a rite of passage to young adulthood, a shared experience that would create an esprit de corps among the young, as well as go a long way toward alleviating pressing community problems. From this point forward, the student will focus community service activities beyond the school and into the community.

F. HIGH SCHOOL - AGE 25.

- Young people in this age group will be asked to be team leaders and mentors in local Yes Centers or to serve in existing college or community-based programs or new programs created by them to suit their individual needs and gifts.

VI. THE PRESIDENT'S YOUTH CORPS.

- The President, on the advice of Governors, will select two college-aged young people from each state with a demonstrated record of achievement in the field of community service.
- The mission of the President's Youth Corps will be to travel around their respective regions for one full year calling other young people to action and suggesting ways that they too might become involved in community service.
- Members of the Corps will be models to whom the President can point in explaining what role he envisages for young people in community service.
- The President's Youth Corps can also go into communities to assist in program development and implementation where needed.
- The Foundation will provide living expenses for the Corps during their year of service.

VI. AUTHORIZATION.

- \$25 million a year for four years to the YES to America Foundation which will be matched by private funds.

Use of Funds.

1.	Design, Marketing and Promotion (e.g. television and radio spots, videos, pamphlets, posters, etc.).	\$11	million
2.	Technical Assistance and educational materials (e.g. fundraising counsel, curriculum supplements).	\$ 4	million
3.	Clearinghouse and Volunteer Network (e.g. toll-free number, computer system, volunteer data base, newsletter).	\$ 3	million
4.	Recognition of Outstanding Initiatives and Individuals, and Communication of their Achievements through Mass Media.	\$ 2	million
5.	Administrative Costs (e.g. staff salaries, equipment costs, stationery, printing, postage).	\$ 3	million
6.	Presidential Youth Corps (living expenses only).	\$ 2	million
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	TOTAL	\$25	million