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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. letter	Lissa Muscatine to Melissa Levine re FLOTUS' column (partial) (1 page)	09/23/1997	P6/b(6)
002. fax cover	Melissa Levine to Michael O'Mary (partial) (1 page)	nd	P6/b(6)
003. fax cover	Darcy Bacon to Michael O'Mary (partial) (1 page)	nd	P6/b(6)

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Clinton Presidential Records
First Lady's Office
Speechwriting (Noa Meyer Subject Files)
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Speech Candidates Column [2]

2012-0869-S
kc919

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

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P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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[001]

faxed on 9/24 @ 1:50

THE WHITE HOUSE

September 23, 1997

Melissa Levine
P6/(b)(6)
St. Louis, MO 63112:

Dear Melissa:

Thanks for your continued interest in helping with Mrs. Clinton's column. Enclosed are some background materials for a sample column on charter schools. (Included are the President's speech last weekend about charter schools, with some brief remarks by the First Lady; a somewhat rambling and discursive speech Mrs. Clinton gave in Chicago last winter about education; and the education chapter from her book). Feel free to conduct your own research as well.

The idea is to convey Mrs. Clinton's strong advocacy of charter schools as a realistic, cost-effective and rational solution to some of the problems we face in today's public schools. The tone should be conversational, yet substantive, persuasive without being preachy. You are welcome to use personal anecdotes from her book and other sources. Keep in mind that the audience consists principally of readers of small and medium-sized papers in the United States. About half of the subscribers are newspapers and magazines overseas.

The column should be approximately 750 words. Please do not put your name on your draft. We want to read them blindly. Completed drafts should be faxed to me no later than Friday morning at: 202-337-0589. Don't hesitate to call if you have questions or concerns. I can be reached at 202-337-3171.

Finally, we appreciate your discretion and confidentiality during this process.

I hope you find this exercise interesting and enjoyable!

Yours truly,

Lissa Muscatine
Special Assistant to the President and
Chief Speechwriter for the First Lady

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release February 18, 1997

REMARKS BY THE FIRST LADY AT THE CHICAGO CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Chicago, Illinois

MRS. CLINTON: Thank you very much. I am always glad to be back in Chicago and today I'm especially pleased to have a chance to be here at this museum on this auspicious occasion of the first Annual Manilow Lecture. I want to thank Lew Manilow for inviting me to be here, and I want to convey my appreciation, and I'm sure that of many of you here, to both Lew and Susan for their generous support of the cultural and civic life of this city, and particularly their support of institutions such as Chicago Children's Museum and others which do so much for children.

I was delighted that Dianne Sautter could give me the tour, and she had many helpers -- very small helpers -- who showed me around. And I was able to meet some of the staff and could see on their faces the enthusiasm they have for the work they do here. I am pleased that we could be joined by your senior Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, and I thank her for being here. And I thank Congressman Danny Davis also for joining us.

And I want to add my word of appreciation to Bernice Weissbored and to Irving Harris, because there are not, I believe, two people who have done more to raise awareness about the importance of families and children anywhere in the United States. And I share the pride of all of you that they have done this work and have led on behalf of children from right here in Chicago.

I hope that as we sit here in the midst of this museum and as many of you who have had the chance to tour through here to see the exhibits that are designed carefully to provoke children of every age, that we realize we stand on the brink of an extraordinary opportunity and challenge. And that opportunity and challenge is that we now know -- we know what works for children. We know what children need. We understand that from the very earliest days of life a child is constantly learning. We now know what it requires for the brain to develop. Science has opened up all kinds of information to us that good mothers and fathers and grandparents knew instinctively for generations, but now we know for sure.

And that knowledge imposes grave responsibilities on all of us. Whether or not we are parents, we all, as adults, have an obligation to refuse to make any more excuses about what our children need.

And so I come today to reflect upon what I have learned and seen here at Chicago Children's Museum and around our country, because I have been privileged to visit many places like this museum where we are taking what we now know about children and putting it into practice; where adults are banding together to build communities and strong families that will enable as many children as possible to live up to their God-given potential.

And yet, at the same time, we know that in this great city, as in every city and every suburb and every small rural town in America, there are too many of our children who will not reap the benefit of this opportunity and challenge that we face. We can pick up the newspaper, turn on the television, listen to the radio every single hour and hear too often of the lost life, the missed opportunity, the tragedies that befall our children.

So this is a good news, bad news report. The good news is we know what works. We know what every child needs. We know what they need in their families, what they need in their schools, what they need in their communities. We know what parents require to feel that they are able to give the time and energy that children require. We know what makes for good schools and good teaching and active learning. And we know that in countless places around America everything that we know that is good for children is happening. And we also know that in countless other places what we know will destroy the body, the mind, the soul of a child is also happening.

Now, there is no way for anyone to write a prescription or pass a law that tells people, be good parents, be loving grandparents, be caring teachers, be sensitive employers, be thoughtful public leaders, and always consider first and foremost what children need to develop and grow. But we know that in many ways we have the tools at our disposal, and they don't require laws, and lots of times they don't even require a lot of money. What they require is a different attitude and a set of expectations, both about our children and about ourselves.

Now, my husband says that we live in an age of possibility. And by that he means a time of great promise as well as uncertainty; an age that requires us to think in new ways about how to meet old and new challenges; an age that offers few guarantees for the future, but many opportunities. And though change is certain in this age of possibility, progress is not. Progress depends on the choices we make today and tomorrow, and whether we meet those challenges, particularly to our children, and protect our values.

We can start by admitting that we have to recommit ourselves to making America a level playing field for all children; by coming together as one community committed to helping all children lift themselves up to better lives; by making sure that the tools of opportunity are available to every person who is willing to work hard and take responsibility. Those tools are

obvious ones -- obviously, education, health care, access for adults to jobs and credit, legal protections where necessary, the ability to participate fully in the civic and political life of our country. But more than those tools of opportunity, we have to think about the attitudes and expectations that must be joined together in order for those tools to be used effectively.

Just today, here in Chicago, I have seen how the tools of opportunity and those higher expectations and positive attitudes can make a difference. This morning I saw at the Kinsey School on the South Side a school that works -- a public school of pre-K through 8th grade where the principal empowers the teachers, where the teachers collaborate and cooperate with one another, where the children who are older mentor and tutor the ones who are younger, a school where when you walk in the door you know that learning is occurring.

Now, are the children at Kinsey the brightest children in Chicago? Were they genetically chosen to go to the Kinzie School? Were the teachers singled out because they were the best and most sensitive, charismatic teachers in Chicago? No. Instead, what happened at the Kinzie School can happen at any school. People were given the support and the motivation and the tools required to change how a school worked.

So there I was in a class of pre-K children, some of them with disabilities and particularly hearing impairments because those children are being included at the Kinzie School -- watching as little boys and girls talked and did their work together; and in a kindergarten class, watching as they determined what floated or sank -- much as I saw in the Waterways exhibit here -- and I could see very clearly that what we had at that school is what we need at every school, but what we still don't have at enough schools.

Later this morning, I visited the Women's Self-employment Project, not far from here -- a non-profit organization created a decade ago to provide training and assistance, peer support and loans to low-income women who were interested in starting small businesses and becoming economically self-sufficient. These women are seldom thought of except in stereotypical terms. They're not considered independent -- many have been or still are on public assistance. They're certainly not considered entrepreneurial. The majority have household incomes of less than $15,00 a year.

And yet, in every case, higher expectations for themselves and about them combined with tools of opportunity were changing lives. Women were telling me about the businesses they had started, how they had moved off of welfare. And over and over again, they said to me, I'm doing this for my children; I'm setting an example for my children. Because they understood how important expectations and attitudes and tools of opportunity are, not only for them, but for their children.

Today I want to focus on one of those tools and a particular set of expectations, and that concerns education. The President issued a national call in the State of the Union, a call to action for American education in the 21st century. This call for action outlines 10 proposals that the President believes if implemented would make a significant difference in our schools and in our children's futures.

We know that to prepare America for the next century we need strong, safe schools with clear standards of achievement and discipline, and we need talented and dedicated teachers in every classroom. Now, what have we learned over the last years because of work by people like Berniece and Irving and others of you in this audience that would enable us to meet that goal?

Well, the President believes that we have learned enough to support each of the 10 points that he is advocating: First, that we have to set rigorous national standards with national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics to make sure our children master the basics.

Now, there is controversy about national standards and national tests. I understand that. But I also understand that in the absence of a national ---(inaudible)----- results, and we will be unable as a nation to say that we have met the challenge that modern education poses to our children.

What this proposal calls for is voluntary national standards to be implemented at the local level, but to use tests that are created at the national level to determine whether or not children in Chicago or New York or Los Angeles are actually learning what they need to know.

This process will enable us to be sure that we have set benchmarks of excellence for our children -- not to put any child down but to enable all of us to lift children up. There is no difference between algebra in Chicago and algebra in Boston. There is no difference between reading in Los Angeles and reading in New York. How we get the best results in working with our children will be left to the local level, but we have to conclude, as the Mayor here in Chicago concluded when he took the courageous step of taking on the responsibility for the public schools here, that we cannot have any more excuses. We cannot pretend that we all live in Lake Woebegone, where all the children are above average, and where they are socially promoted and where they are not expected to do well because of who their parents are or what their address happens to be. Setting those national standards will, for the first time, say to every child, we have high expectations for you.

Secondly, we have to be sure that there are talented and dedicated teachers in every classroom. That means we have to do a better job with preparation for teachers and with in-service training for teachers. And we have to be honest about teachers who do not measure up. And we have to reward teachers who go above and beyond the call. And we have to enable more teachers to succeed by staying in the classroom and not being promoted into administration and taken out of the classroom. In order to maintain the kind of core of excellent, dedicated teachers, we need to make teaching, not administration, the primary goal of educators.

Third, we have to help every student to read independently and well by the end of 3rd grade. Now, for those of you who have worked with and studied children, you know very well that if a child is not reading well on his or her own by the age of 8 or 9, it is going to be very difficult for that child ever to catch up.

The President has called for a national effort, with volunteers helping teachers, with parents becoming involved, with tutors who are willing to give their time, to make sure that every child is able to read. If we could focus on that one goal as a nation and put our hearts and hands to work on it, we would not only help many children to read, we would involve many adults in the lives of our schools, because as I go in and out of schools today all over the country, I see clearly that our schools need more partners. They need people who will be there to assist in the classroom, to help solve problems, to provide resources. And the more Americans we have involved in our public schools, through tutoring and mentoring and in other ways, the stronger community support will become for our schools.

Next, we have to expand preschool and early childhood education, and challenge parents to become involved early in their children's learning. Irving Harris has been a pioneer in our efforts to focus on the earliest years of life and learning. And now, with what neuroscience is telling us, he is a man ahead of his time, because we now know that it is not only an important way to prepare a child for school by reading and talking with that child, stimulating that baby, we now know that it makes a physical difference in the way that child's brain develops.

Now, we can't take this the wrong way. I've had friends of mine ask me, you know, now that I know all about this brain research that's going on, do you think I read enough to my child? We can't go overboard about this. Most parents who ask that question have done just fine. What we have to do is to reach out and take this powerful information and enlist every parent and empower every parent.

Oftentimes, parents will say to me, why would I talk to the baby; he can't talk back. Or I don't feel comfortable reading to my daughter because I'm not a very good reader. And my response always is that for a baby it doesn't matter how good a reader you are. It even doesn't matter how good a talker you are. Just having that interaction on a regular, ongoing basis, pretending to read the book until the child is older, doing whatever it takes to enlist that child's active learning is what will make a difference.

And it's not only the family that has to take early childhood education seriously. We all do. We have to be more committed to programs like Head Start and Early Start and pre-k programs so that we give every child a chance to be exposed to stimulating educational opportunities as early as possible.

Next, we have to expand choice and accountability in public education. The President's plan for charter schools is one of the best ways that any state or community can begin to provide other options within the public school system. As I have been in and out of charter schools around our country, I have seen dramatic differences. I think of the charter school in the San Fernando Valley outside Los Angeles that was in a neighborhood where literally on the school property drug deals were happening. There was a crack house across the street. And parents and community members got fed up with having their complaints about the safety of the school fall on deaf ears at the downtown administration. And they banded together to form a charter school. And they drove out the drug dealers. And they closed down and destroyed the crack

houses. And they created opportunities for parents to become actively involved in their child's schooling. And the difference is as clear as it could be, to walk into that school now and see the learning that is taking place.

Accountability such as that that is being imposed here in Chicago will turn schools around. And again, we know what works to make schools accountable and effective. It's a matter of will whether we will be sure to implement those changes.

We have to make sure our schools are safe and disciplined and drug free, and instill our basic American values. That's where programs like uniforms, such as I saw at the Kinsey School today, come in, creating an atmosphere of structure and routine, particularly for children who come from situations that are chaotic. They need that external structure in order to begin to internalize structure. And curfews and uniforms and strict disciplinary codes -- all of that begins to send the signal that this is how we expect you to behave and how we're going to enforce our discipline in this school so that you will be able to grow and learn while here.

We have to modernize our school buildings and help support school construction. Many of our schools around our country, particularly in urban areas, are in deplorable condition. This morning, I heard from Gary Chico of the school system here in Chicago about the numbers of schools that have serious repair and maintenance problems. Many other schools in fast-growing districts have no space for children. If we expect our children to learn, there needs to be a partnership between the federal government, the state and local school districts to make sure our schools are safe to learn in.

We also have to hold something out to kids who are in school so that they will stay in school. And that's why the President has emphasized why we need to open the doors of college to all who work hard and make the grade. We need to make college more available after high school to many youngsters. Now, some people say, well, not every youngster needs to go to college. I wouldn't argue with that. But sometimes the youngsters who don't go to college are ones who would like to, who think they need to, but who for financial reasons are unable to.

Also, we now have in our community colleges the most extraordinary array of vocational and technical programs that will be available to assist young people and those who go back to school after having been in the work force to acquire skills that will make them more employable in the future. So college is not just about the four-year degree, although we should make sure that any young person who works hard and is willing to study has a chance to compete for that. But college is also about our community colleges and the preparation that they can provide to all Americans for the future of their work lives. We have to help adults improve their education and skills by transforming the tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant so that the individual can make the choice about where to go to get the training that that man or woman needs.

Focusing on the learning needs of adults is one of the most important ways we can help the children of those adults. Making it possible for Americans to increase their skills and their employability will provide more security in the future for the entire family. And that is good

news for children who live in poverty in America -- far too many of them -- and for working parents who are always struggling about where they're going to be able to find that paycheck or that college tuition or that rent money in the future.

We also have to be sure that every classroom and library is part of the Information Age. And the President has urged that every single one be connected to the Internet by the year 2000 and that we help all students become technologically literate. Again, technological literacy is not a magic panacea, but it is certainly something that those of us in this room are providing for our children. And if we don't provide it for all children, we will create two classes of young people in our country: those who are able to navigate the Information Age and those who can't get off the shore. So it's a matter of simple fairness to expose every child to the kind of technology that we provide for the children in our own families.

Now, if you look at these points in the President's plan -- standing alone or even passing them in legislation is not all that we need to do. Yes, we need every one of them if we're going to create the conditions required for making it possible for us to feel that we are educating our children. But we also have to change our attitudes and expectations as a society. We have to begin looking at the promise of every child.

Now that we have ended the entitlement to welfare, let us also end the stereotype about welfare. Let us begin to recognize that in Cabrini Green, in the Robert Taylor homes, there may be children who are just as able as any child of ours, and that it is in our interests to do everything we can to find and foster that potential, to see that child as a gift to America, and to recognize that we have a lot of ground to make up.

But if we change our attitudes, then we also have to expect more from every child and every parent. We have to try to make it clear that parenting is the most serious responsibility that anyone can assume, that it cannot be entered into lightly or irresponsibly, that it is a lifelong obligation. We have to do all we can to make sure that only those young men and women who are ready for that obligation assume it.

We also have to be prepared to speak very clearly to every young boy and girl. You will not succeed in America if you cannot speak English. You will not succeed in America if you do not take schooling seriously. You will not succeed in America if you do not believe you can succeed. You will not succeed in America if you engage in self-destructive behaviors or violence toward others because there will be no place for you in the kind of America we are trying to build for everyone else.

So, yes, we have a lot of work to do. And we have a lot of attitudes to change among all of us. But we also have to expect more from every American, and we have to enable every boy and girl to feel that he or she can succeed.

I think a lot about what the 21st century will be like because it is hard for me to believe that I will be living in a new century and a new millennium. I don't know if any of you are in millennial shock yet, but I am. And I wonder what this century holds for my daughter and for her

friends and for all the children I see. And I know deep in my heart that my husband and I have tried to do all we can for our daughter and give her every advantage we knew to give her -- starting from the time she was a very small baby. I also know that there is no predicting what life holds for her or for any of us.

But I want all of us to live in a country where the future's unpredictable pattern can be met by every child being as well prepared as we have tried to make our daughter. There is no guarantee, but we have to give every child that basic, fundamental confidence about who she or he is. And that's a job that can't just be left to parents. It's a job that all of us have to do. It is a job that is being done in Chicago Children's Museum. It is a job that all of us have to recommit ourselves to.

I think that America is ready for that job, that challenge, that opportunity. And I'm hoping that every one of us will do our part in the next years to make it possible for us to say, we have no more excuses for what happens to the children in America and we don't need any because we have done our best.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

END

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(San Francisco, California)

For Immediate Release September 20, 1997

OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT IN ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON CHARTER SCHOOLS

San Carlos Charter Learning Center
San Carlos, California

11:19 A.M. PDT

Thank you very much. First, thank all of you for coming here today and sharing your Saturday morning. I thank the Superintendent for his really marvelous remarks. He talked about all the things that we have in common -- I saw a living symbol of his dedication to education above all else, and one thing that we have in common that he didn't mention -- if you look closely at his tie you will see it is a pattern of golf balls and tees. (Laughter.) And on this beautiful Saturday morning he's here with us. (Laughter.)

Let me thank your instructional coordinator, too, for being here, leaving her 11-day-old baby. I would like to see the 11-day-old baby, but I think it's -- where's the baby? A wise mother leaves the baby outside. (Laughter.)

Hillary and I are delighted to be here. And I want to spend most of my time just at this panel today. But I thank all of you for coming because I believe in charter schools and I believe they are an important part of helping us to lift our standards and renew our schools and achieve the kind of educational excellence that all of our children need as we move into the 21st century.

I congratulate the San Carlos Learning Center for being the first of its kind in California, which obviously makes it among the very first in the United States.

Let me just give you a little, brief personal history here. When I was governor of my state for 12 years, I spent a great deal of time working on school reform -- and so did Hillary -- spent lots of time in the schools, talking to teachers, talking to parents, talking to students, dealing with issues of curriculum development and teacher training and all those things. And when we were active in the 1980s, the state of Minnesota became the first state in the country to pass a public school choice law, to give parents and their children more choice among the public schools their children attended. I think we were the second state to pass that law. And we used it quite a lot.

Then when I began to run for President in 1991, Minnesota became the first state in the country again to pass a charter school law, recognizing that sometimes it wasn't enough just to give the parents and the students choices, but that we needed to give the educators and the parents and the students with whom they worked options to create schools that fit the mission

needed by the children in the area; and that if you gave them options and held them accountable, we might be able to do something really spectacular. Then five years ago today, I think, California became the second state in the country to adopt a charter school law, and then you became the first of those schools.

In 1994, I passed legislation in Congress to help us support more charter schools. By the end of 1995 there were about 300 charter schools in the country. Today there are 700 charter schools in the country. Many of them have been helped by the program we passed in Washington in 1994.

The historic balanced budget agreement that we just passed into law includes the largest commitment to new investment in education since 1965 -- among other things, expansion of Head Start programs, more funds to support computers in the schools -- I'll say more about that in a moment -- our America Reads initiative to help make sure every 8-year-old can read independently, and the biggest increased investment in helping people go to college since the G.I. Bill passed 50 years ago, tax credits for the first two years of college, credits for the remainder of college, IRAs, Pell Grants, work-study positions. All these together mean that for the first time ever we can really say, if you're responsible enough to work for it, no matter what your income or your difficulties, college is now a real option for you in America -- for every single American. And I'm very proud of all of that.

But one of the things that was in this balanced budget that didn't get a lot of notice is enough money for us to help to set up literally thousands more charter schools in America. Because excellence in education is more than money. And from my point of view, having spent years and years and years working on this, we need two things -- we need a set of national standards of academic excellence that will be internationally competitive in basic subjects. And then we need grass-roots, school-based reform, because education is the magic that takes place in every classroom, and indeed in every student's mind, involving every teacher, every student, and also, hopefully, support from home.

So that's why these charter schools are so important to me. And that's why we've tried to help a lot more schools like San Carlos get started on the path that you've been on now for some years.

For people who don't know exactly what they are, let me say that charter schools are public schools that make a simple agreement: in exchange for public funding, they get fewer regulations and less red tape, but they have to meet high expectations, and they keep their charter only so long as their customers are satisfied they're doing a good job.

As I said, we've gone from -- the day I took office, there was only one charter school in America, January of '93. Then a couple years ago we were up to 300; now there are 700. And what started as a movement in Minnesota and California now encompasses 29 states; 27 more states have passed charter school laws.

These funds in our budget, as I said, should allow us to set up several thousand more over the next four years. Today I am pleased to announce that we're going to release $40 million in grants to help charter schools open. Start-up costs are often the biggest obstacle. And in states that can't afford to help, it's a terrible problem. I see a lot of people nodding their heads out there who have had experience with this.

So we have curriculum development costs, teacher training costs, new technology costs -- all these things can help. The $40 million we're releasing today, of which about $3.4 million will come to California, will help us to establish another 500 charter schools in 21 states. So

we'll go from 700 to 500 in one pop here.

And as I said, pretty soon -- and if all the states will join in, we obviously can help all of them -- we'll have well over 3,000, perhaps even over 4,000 by the year 2000, which is enough to have a seismic echo effect in all the public school systems of America. So that's what we are trying to do.

Let me say that there are a couple of problems that we're going to face. Last week, the U.S. Senate, by a very narrow margin, supported an amendment that would make these charter schools funding that I just announced the last such announcement that would ever be made, because it would lump all the education funds together and arbitrarily distribute them to the state without regard to whether these programs were continued or not. And in the process, it would abolish very specific and highly successful education reform programs like the charter schools, where we work with local communities and school districts. It would abolish our highly successful effort to put computers in the classrooms -- I'll tell you how much movement has happened on there in just two years -- and to create safe and drug-free schools. I think that would be a mistake.

The House of Representatives recently passed, although the Senate opposed them, an amendment that would prohibit us to pay for -- not to develop, but to pay for -- a non-political, private organization to develop voluntary national tests of excellence in mathematics and reading. I think that would be a mistake. This is the first time, last year, in history that our students in elementary schools scored above the international average in math and science. We're doing much better in America, but we don't test all of our kids, we just test a representative sample. I think we need to know how we're doing based on a common standard.

So we have these problems in the Congress, and if either one of these provisions makes it into the final bill I will have to veto it. So I hope that we can continue to work on moving forward in the right direction. And in that connection, I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, who I think is one of the -- absolutely -- even I would say this if I were in Washington -- she really is one of the finest, most forward-looking members of the United States Congress, and she's made a big difference in our country today. (Applause.)

Now, running these charter schools, as we are about to hear, is not easy. It's not self-evident how to do all this. It sounds great to say we'll cut you free of red tape and bureaucracy; you have to perform at a higher level, you've got to get the parents involved. There are all kinds of practical problems, and we'll hear about some of them.

The Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, is going to convene a national conference on charter schools in Washington this November to bring together teachers, administrators, parents, others who are interested in this to share best practices and look to the road ahead. But just think about where we can go with this. If we go -- we've gone from one to 700, to 500 more, with a budget that calls for funds for 3,000 more -- just this year's budget alone that will be funded starting October 1st, if we get the funds for it, will give us enough funds for another 700 -- or 900 to 1,000 schools.

So this movement can sweep the country and can literally revolutionize both community control and standards of excellence in education if we do it right. That's what the panel is about.

And before we start, let me just thank some of the business leaders who are here today for their commitment to educational excellence -- Regis McKenna, David Ellington, Brook Byers, Terry Yang, Paul Lippe. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Larry Ellison who

is up here on the platform. He's the chairman and CEO of Oracle Corporation.

Two years ago this week, I met with Larry and a number of other high-tech executives to talk about another one of my passions, which is to connect every classroom and library in every school in America to the Internet by the year 2000. And that, like everything else, it turned out to be more complicated. It sounded great, but we not only had to connect them, we had to make sure we had the hardware, the software, and the trained teachers to do the job.

So we got this group of business people who knew about all this, who are working very hard to try to make sure that we can do that, give all the support services to every school. We got the Federal Communications Commission to give what amounts to a $2.25 billion a year subsidy to schools, to lower the rates they have to pay to hook on to the Internet. But to give you an example of what we can do when we work together, since we made that announcement two years ago, California has 65 percent of the schools connected, which is twice the percentage you had two years ago, and four times as many classrooms connected as just two years ago. That shows you how quickly we can move.

And Larry has not only sponsored the San Carlos Learning Center, but yesterday he announced Oracle's promise to spend $100 million in a foundation to help schools across America who need support to get the kind of connection to the future through telecommunications technology that we all want. So thank you, Larry, for doing that. (Applause.)

So this is a good news day. but what I want to do now is to turn it over to the panel and let's get into the facts of the charter school movement and see -- hopefully, by being here today, this will encourage the 21 states who do not have charter school legislation to adopt it. It will encourage the Congress to fully fund the charter schools program for the next four years. And it will help us to take what you have done here and spread it all across America in a way that will guarantee international standards of excellence in the education of all of our children.

Thank you very much.

* * * * *

MRS. CLINTON: Well, I want to thank all of you for sharing your experiences and success stories about charter schools. And I think that there are just a couple of general points that I would make. First, what the Congresswoman just said is critical, when she talked about test kitchens, because my husband I have said together and often that there is a good public school in every community in America, but the problem is they don't learn from each other and they don't get to scale in the sense that we know what works, but for too many years we have not been motivated sufficiently to do what worked in every school.

And so we are now seeing, with the charter school movement, an effort to do just that -- to take these, in some

ways, old-fashioned ideas that are now married to technology and very much motivated to be successful by the demands of the new economy, and put them into action in schools across the country.

When we talk about parental involvement, that is a very old-fashioned idea that we have had to relearn. When we talk about empowering teachers to design curriculum, that, too, is something we know will work if we unleash the creative energies of teachers. When we talk about giving students a chance to explore and learn and develop their own capacities, that's what many of us try to do with our own children, but which we deny to other children because of the bureaucratic structures and expectations of the old system.

So there are many aspects of what we heard today which would be very familiar in any setting 30 or 40 or 50 years ago in many parts of America, but which we somehow lost track of as we got bigger and bigger and schools became impersonal and anonymous, and really we lost our way in the very important connections that have to be made between homes and schools, students and teachers, and the understanding of how community has to support that magic.

Secondly, I think that the charter school movement should not be seen as a threat to public schools. It should be seen as a liberation of public schools, and particularly teachers and administrators who for many years have known what should be done, but have felt unable to do so. (Applause.) And there is certainly nothing hidden about the President's agenda on this. He wants every school, whether it is formally called a charter school, or not, to act like a charter school.

And that is our real objective in the charter school movement -- not only to create thousands more charter schools, but to take the lessons from the charter school movement and literally infect every public school in America, so that parents are standing at the door of principals' offices, so that teachers will not feel so oppressed in their classrooms, but will join together to demand from administrators and school boards what they know their children need, and for businesses, which have in many ways the greatest stake in the future of our public school system, to be constantly be prodding for academic excellence as in may communities they now prod for athletic excellence.

So the charter school movement is really a rallying

cry that we hope will not only create more charter schools like the ones we have heard about today, but encourage and give courage to public school patrons, teachers, and students around the country to say, well, you know, if Jose could find a home in a new charter school in San Francisco, why can't all the Joses in our public schools feel similarly welcomed and supported? And if Gregg can go into competition with Oracle in the 6th grade, why can't all the Greggs in America feel similarly encouraged to pursue their own intellectual excitement?

So we're very much appreciative of what all of you

on the front lines are doing from San Francisco to South Central, LA, to San Diego, to right here in this community. And we really do appreciate the zeal with which you have expressed your excitement about this, because we do want it to infect and to be contagious so that, as Yvonne said when I saw firsthand visiting her school, every child will feel that that child is special and valued and appreciated. And that's really what we're hoping to achieve with this kind of effort.

So thank you for doing what needs to be done in American public education. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, let me say I agree with everything she said. (Laughter.) I'd just like to make a couple of brief point to build on what Hillary said. I want to say, first of all, I have no hidden agenda here; I believe the only way public schools can survive as the instrument by which we educate our children and socialize them and bring them together across all the lines that divide us is if all of our schools eventually -- and, hopefully, sooner rather than later -- are run like these charter schools. That's what I believe. I am not running for office anymore. I have no political interest in this. I am think about what our country is going to be like 20, 30, 40, 50 years from now.

And you know what Tom said about the industrial model -- that's part of the problem. A lot of our schools are organized on an industrial model -- a lot of our middle schools are almost -- are organized for when families were like Ozzie and Harriet, instead of like they are today. There are a lot of organizational problems. It's also true that our schools get money from a lot of different places and have to suffer rules

from a lot of different places, and a lot of people think if they give up their rule-making, they won't matter anymore. And in some way, the most important person here is the Superintendent because he's here supporting this instead of figuring out how he can control it. And I think that's important. (Applause.)

And so Hillary and I have been working at this business for a long time now -- seriously since 1983 -- really seriously. There has been a dramatic change in the attitudes of the teacher unions, which is positive. There have been dramatic advances in the attitude of administrators, which is positive.

But I just want to say, we cannot -- there are a lot of people who believe in the information age, with things changing as fast as they are and with standards needing to be as high as they are, that we ought to just basically send everybody

money and let them do whatever they want to about education, and forget about the public education network -- let it sink or swim. The problem with that theory is that the short-term costs to people who got left behind would be staggering.

But if we want to preserve excellence and the socially unifying impact of public schools over the next generation, I am telling you, every school in the country has got to become like this one. The power needs to be with the parents, with the children, with the teachers, with the principals. And those of us who are up the lines somewhere, up the food chain, what are we interested in? We're interested in what Kim said --we're interested in results. We don't need to make rules. We're interested in results and we want to be able to measure them. We want to know our kids are going to be all right and our country is going to be all right.

Let them make the rules in the schools. Let them figure it out. And then education will be something that will get bright young lawyers to leave their more lucrative law practices to do something that doesn't pay as much, but makes them feel good when they go to bed every night and get up in the morning. That's what we want. And until every school is run like that, you and I should not rest.

Thank you. God bless you. (Applause.)

END 12:35 P.M. PDT

Education = Expectations

Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them.

LADY BIRD JOHNSON

I HAVE NEVER met a stupid child, though I've met plenty of children whom adults insist on calling "stupid" when the children don't perform in a way that conforms to adult expectations.

I remember a six-year-old girl I tutored in reading at an elementary school in Little Rock. I'll call her Mary. She lived in a tiny house with six siblings, her parents, and an assortment of other relatives, who came and went unpredictably. There was so much commotion in the evenings that she was rarely able to sleep for longer than a few hours, and she always looked tired. She seemed uncomfortable talking, but she didn't want to read, either. Sometimes her eyelids would droop and she would lay her head on the desk.

One day, desperate for a way to hold her attention, I asked Mary if she liked to draw. Her brown eyes lit up and she nodded eagerly. Her colored-pencil drawings of people and animals were technically advanced and rich in detail. Awkward as she was with words, Mary com-

municated vividly through her art. Her pictures of small house crowded with many people and lacki space for her to draw or to play provided us with a way begin talking about her life. When I complimented h on them, though, she repeated what other adults mu have said to her: The drawings were just silly "baby" stu and not very good.

When her teacher observed what we were doing, s cautioned me that my purpose was to help Mary learn read, not to play. I suggested that encouraging Ma to express herself in her drawings and then helping h to write stories about what they conveyed could le her to reading. But the teacher could only see that Ma and I had failed at our assigned task, which was to re stories in the class workbooks.

Mary was obviously intelligent, but her intelligen was expressed in the pictures she drew and not by tryi to read from a printed page. Yet her artistic interest a talent were not being praised at home or in school. wasn't surprising that she often seemed withdrawn unhappy. How could she not notice that her talents we ignored, even penalized? It does not take long for chi dren like Mary, whose intelligence is expressed in a wa that is not customarily recognized or appreciated, to lo a sense of how valuable their particular gifts are, an along with it, their confidence and sense of self.

When this happens, teachers, parents, and other adu often write them off as "slow" or "unmotivated" and cor to expect less of them in the way of academic perfo mance. Tragically, the children are thus deprived of t opportunity to master the basic skills they will need realize their particular gifts. This is a loss not only

them but to the entire village, which could benefit from all our talents.

In his 1983 book, *Frames of Mind*, Howard Gardner outlined the theories about multiple intelligence that he had formulated while working with gifted children and children who had suffered brain damage. He discovered that the loss of certain mental capacities, such as language ability, was accompanied by an enhancement of others, such as visual or musical abilities. These findings prompted Gardner to explore how parts of the brain seem to promote different abilities. He uncovered what he describes as the capacity people have to express themselves through various forms of intelligence.

Even within the same family, it's easy to see that different children are good at different things. From very early on, some seem to be drawn to words and learning from books, although the abstract, logical reasoning mathematics requires may come less easily to them. Other children excel at math, because their minds travel most easily in the worlds of numbers and symbols, but they may have difficulty expressing themselves in words.

Verbal and mathematical abilities stand children in good stead in most classrooms. Other kinds of intelligence may go unrecognized. Children who think in visual images may not thrive when limited to words and symbols. An early knack for music, like my husband's, might be ignored if it is not accompanied by more conventional skills. So might the strong intuitive skills that allow people to read the moods and temperament of others. We have all known children who seemed to think with their bodies—who can rapidly learn a new sport, for example—and yet seem restless and uncomfortable

when they are forced to sit still at a desk. The brilliant choreographer Martha Graham once said, "If I could say it, I wouldn't have to dance it." Yet rather than celebrate our children's multiple forms of intelligence, too often we elevate one form over another or caricature kids accordingly, labeling them "jocks" or "nerds."

Howard Gardner's list of intelligences takes into account verbal, mathematical, visual, physical, and musical intelligences as well as psychological skills like the ability to understand and interact well with others. These forms of intelligence are not mutually exclusive. Every one of us has all of them to some degree. Their particular constellation may determine not only what we are good at but how we learn—if we are given the encouragement and opportunity to develop them.

Whatever the range of intelligences includes, it is increasingly clear that standard IQ tests capture only a fraction of it. The tests were originally designed to measure only the aptitudes that fall within Gardner's first two types of intelligence, verbal and mathematical. Yet much classroom work engages only that part of a child's potential. Schools often categorize children's intelligence according to their performance on IQ and other narrowly conceived tests and adjust their encouragement and expectations accordingly. Even "slow" children are quick to catch on to the categories schools have put them into, and learn a simple equation: If adults don't think I can achieve, I can't and I won't.

The philosopher Nelson Goodman suggests that we would do well to learn to ask *how* rather than *whether* someone is smart. That question would shift the emphasis to helping individuals realize their potential, rather

than whether they have potential in the first place. The main point I want to make here is that virtually all children can learn and develop more than their parents, teachers, or the rest of the village often believe. This has great implications for how we approach our children's educations.

One of the striking differences international studies have repeatedly turned up between American parents and students and their counterparts in other countries, particularly in Asia, is the greater weight our culture currently gives to innate ability, as opposed to effort, in academic success. I don't know all the reasons for this preoccupation, which seems to be linked to an obsession with IQ tests and other means of labeling people, but some possible explanations are not particularly flattering to us.

Believing in innate ability is a handy excuse for us. Too tired to read to a child or enforce rules on TV-watching or phone use? Too preoccupied to seek out extra help for a child who needs more practice with math or a foreign language? Why bother, if none of that really makes much of a difference anyway? More concerned with how a daughter looks than whether she's reading at grade level? More interested in a son's jump shot than in how he conjugates verbs? If that's what gets our attention, you can bet it's what kids will think is important too. But how can we parents see the connection between effort and appearance, or between effort and athletic prowess, but not between effort and academic success?

The bell curve lets the rest of us off the hook too. What's the sense of reforming schools, especially if it costs any money? What is the point of figuring out how

to tailor teaching to the unique ways children learn? Why puzzle over what they should learn, and why bother to articulate it to them? Cream will rise to the top no matter what we do, so let nature take its course and forget about nurture.

If we are permitted to write off whole groups of kids because of their racial or ethnic or economic backgrounds, then the occasional academic shooting star will be seen as a fluke. And when whole groups of kids succeed despite the odds, like the poor Hispanic high school students Jaime Escalante coached to succeed on the Advanced Placement calculus examination, their success can be ascribed to a unique brand of charismatic teaching and motivation that can't be replicated anywhere else.

I began to work on behalf of education reform in Arkansas in 1983, when my husband asked me to chair a committee that would make recommendations for improving Arkansas's education system. That was also the year that "A Nation at Risk," the landmark report about our schools, was issued. I couldn't begin to describe in a single chapter all the effort since then that has gone into promoting preschool and kindergarten programs, raising academic standards, establishing accountability, professionalizing teaching conditions, improving vocational and technical education, and many other changes. But after a dozen years of involvement in education reform, I'm convinced that the biggest obstacles many students face in learning are the low expectations we have of them and their schools.

I've mentioned the impact President Eisenhower's post-Sputnik call for higher math and science performance had on my generation. Performance standards were upgraded; new classroom equipment was purchased.

Our parents and teachers demanded more from us. Nearly forty years later, though, education is more important to success in the global village than ever. Now we have no clear and immediate enemy to frighten us into improving education for our own children; we have to do it for ourselves. But the starting point is the same: High expectations begin at home.

MY PARENTS made learning part of our daily activities, from storytelling and reading aloud to discussing current events at the dinner table to calculating earned run averages for Little League pitchers. They taught me and my brothers in all sorts of informal ways before we started school, and they continued teaching us in partnership with our teachers at school.

When I was in fourth grade, I was having trouble with arithmetic. My father said he would help me if I got up as early as he did each morning. The house was cold, because the furnace was turned off when we went to bed. I would sit shivering at the kitchen table as the house slowly warmed up and my father drilled me on multiplication tables and long division.

Some parents do not easily assume the role of teacher. They may lack the confidence, be unwilling to devote the time, or simply not know, for example, that reading aloud to babies and toddlers is the single most important activity we can do with children to ensure that they will read well in school. But the village has found ways to help parents start teaching children when it counts most, in the preschool years.

In Arkansas, I introduced a program that had been

developed in Israel. Called HIPPY—the Home Instruc tion Program for Preschool Youngsters—it works lik this: A staff member recruited from the communit comes into the home once a week and role-plays wit the parent (usually the mother), demonstrating for he how she can work with her child to stimulate cognitiv development. Along with special activity packets, th program employs common household objects to illus trate concepts. For example, a spoon and a fork might b used to demonstrate differences in shape or sharpness, o the volume control on the TV might be turned up an down to teach the concepts of loud and soft. The mate rial in the activity packets, designed for parents who ma not read well themselves, is outlined in straightforwar fifteen-minute daily lesson plans arranged in a develop mental sequence. The usual starting age is four, and mos children participate for two years. Some programs add third year, so children can begin the program at the ag of three.

When we brought HIPPY into rural areas and hous ing projects in Arkansas, a number of educators and oth ers did not believe that parents who had not finishe high school were up to the task of teaching their chi dren. Many of the parents doubted their own abilitie One mother whose home I visited told me she had a ways known she was supposed to put food on the tab and a roof over her children's heads, but no one had ev told her before that she was supposed to be her son's fi teacher.

Not only did the program help kids get jump-start in the right direction; it also gave the parents a bo in self-confidence. Many of them became interested learning for themselves as well as for their childr

going back to school to get a high school equivalency degree or even starting college. This is a particularly important development, because researchers cite a mother's level of education as one of the key factors in determining whether her children do well in school. It stands to reason that when a mother furthers her own learning, she becomes more engaged in her child's.

There are similar—and similarly successful—efforts going on elsewhere, such as the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program started in Missouri, which also uses home visits to coach parents on preparing children for school.

The importance of early learning is also one of the driving ideas behind Head Start, the thirty-year-old federally funded preschool education program that has consistently helped to prepare disadvantaged children for school. But Head Start doesn't reach children until they are four, when we now know from research that many of them are already behind their peers. So when Congress reauthorized Head Start in 1994, at the President's recommendation it established Early Head Start to target low-income families with infants and toddlers.

So far, however, Head Start reaches only about 750,000 of the estimated two million children who need it, and Early Head Start is just getting under way. Despite the proven success of investments like Head Start, it and many other preventive programs are caught in the battle over federal budget priorities. Our nation can afford to invest in early childhood education and balance the budget. There are few more important investments at the federal, state, or local level than programs focused on helping parents to develop the confidence and skills to teach young children.

We work at home to prepare children for learning, in

anticipation that much will be demanded of them when they reach school. Too often, however, expectations are undermined by a piecemeal approach to educational change. Nearly every problem in education, including the plague of low expectations, has been tackled successfully somewhere. Leading education reformers like James Comer, Theodore Sizer, Ernest L. Boyer, and Deborah Meier have diagnosed our ills, prescribed strategies for recovery, and put them to work. They usually boil down to a few crucial ingredients: clear expectations that all children can and should learn; manageable school and class size; an orderly classroom environment; the close personal involvement of at least one teacher with each child; a commitment to tailoring instruction to how different children learn; active parental participation. Reciting this wish list is easy. Figuring out how to put it into practice in the face of bureaucratic opposition, parental qualms, some teacher resistance, and the host of other obstacles reform faces is another story.

I once spoke to a group of school superintendents about model programs that had been effective in transforming poorly performing students into motivated achievers. I asked if anyone in my audience had visited any of the programs I mentioned. A long silence fell over the room. Finally, one superintendent confessed that he couldn't see himself explaining to his school board that a nearby school was solving a problem that had stumped him. There wasn't anything new in education anyway, he added, so he couldn't see the sense in getting worked up about some "experiments."

That superintendent would doubtless brush off as "experimental" Reading Recovery, a program started in New Zealand, which is considered among the most

literate countries in the world. Reading Recovery has demonstrated consistent success in getting nearly nine out of ten first graders who read poorly to grade level in a few months. In 1984, a group of educators at Ohio State University's College of Education launched a Reading Recovery pilot in selected Columbus, Ohio, public schools. The program was astonishingly successful, and gradually it won widespread support. Reading Recovery teachers are now being trained in school districts in forty-seven states. Yet many schools continue to pursue remedial reading methods that are not nearly as effective. Why?

The first problem is money, especially in urban school districts, which generally have less money to begin with and more students in need of help. Even though children move through the Reading Recovery program quickly and, after leaving it, usually do not need additional help, saving money in the long term, a front-end investment is needed to train teachers in the strategies that make the program a success: one-on-one tutoring, with an emphasis on phonics and language skills. The failure to make a sufficient initial investment creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: When large numbers of first graders still can't read at the end of the year, the program will be judged a failure.

Concerns about career advancement sometimes work against innovative programs, too. The success of a program like Reading Recovery may not be enough to outweigh the preconceptions of teachers and administrators who have long affiliated themselves with other approaches or are intent on preserving their budgets, staff, and political clout.

Such misplaced adult priorities divert our efforts and energies from where they are most productively spent—on paying attention to how children learn and doing our

best to personalize the learning process so that each of them can meet high standards.

It is precisely this concern that motivated social psychologist Jeff Howard to create the Efficacy Institute in Lexington, Massachusetts. The Institute has trained twenty thousand teachers in school districts throughout this country to rethink their assumptions about children's intelligence. In Tacoma, Washington, where two thirds of the teachers in the district have gone through Efficacy training during the past three years, results of this new approach are already visible. On standardized tests, the scores of fourth and eighth graders rose significantly in just two years. Part of the reason for this increase in achievement is that teachers go back into the classroom and share their new knowledge about learning with the students, explaining to them how important it is for them to work hard so they can "get smart." Students absorb the message that smart is not something you simply are, but something you can become.

Another innovator who has pioneered a more effective approach to learning is Bob Moses, who is revered for his efforts to mobilize black voters in the South during the civil rights movement. Thirty years later, he has brought the same passionate commitment to a different kind of work.

Helping his own daughter to struggle with her algebra homework in the early 1980s, Moses, who had been a teacher before he became a civil rights leader, began volunteering at her school, trying to get students to be comfortable with numbers and more engaged in the process of problem solving. He knew that without strong math skills poor children would be at a disadvantage in the highly competitive world of higher learning. His deter

mination gave birth to the Algebra Project, which addressed the crisis in math education among minority students through a middle school curriculum that was designed to bridge the conceptual gap between arithmetic and algebra.

Moses developed a five-step model that mimicked the natural learning process he had observed in children and brought abstract concepts down to earth. When working with students in Boston, for example, he treated a route on the subway as a number line, assigning negative and positive values to various stops. After the kids rode the subway, they returned to the classroom to test out their concepts. In the early 1990s, Moses returned to Mississippi, this time to crusade for the right to learn algebra, early and effectively.

Moses's method of teaching students mathematical concepts through real-life examples seems as if it should be an obvious one. But in many classrooms, teachers still treat the subject in purely abstract terms, assuming that some students are "naturally" able to grasp the concepts, while others—girls and minority students, for example—cannot. The methods Moses pioneered demonstrate that most students can grapple with advanced math. They have been so successful that programs like the Algebra Project are being instituted in schools around the country.

Such programs are particularly important because studies show that the strongest single indicator of whether students will go on to college is whether they have taken both algebra and geometry. Armed with this knowledge, the College Board's Equity 2000 Project is working to ensure that students receive at least two years of college preparatory mathematics before graduating from high school. So far, the program has been adopted in six urban

areas around the country. Preliminary results show a
in teachers' expectations for students' performance an
dramatic increase in student enrollment in algebra, w
only a small increase in course failure rates.

Forward-thinking teachers and school administrat
across the country are creating a whole range of alt
natives to cookie-cutter teaching and evaluation metho
such as the use of student portfolios and exhibitions
addition to conventional exams to assess students' pr
ress. Such educators also put a premium on getting p
ents involved in kids' learning.

Schools are frightening places for many pare
When Bill and I went to our first parent-teacher con
ence when Chelsea was in kindergarten, we were app
hensive. For the first time, another adult was going
pass judgment on our child, and our many years
schooling did nothing to ease the anxiety.

If a child's parents have not finished school or w
poor students themselves, they may be even less at e
in a school setting. Many parents stay away except wh
a child gets into trouble. Knowing how important pare
involvement is to their success, however, more scho
are making efforts to involve parents actively as their p
ners in educating children.

Dr. James Comer, a child psychiatrist at the Yale Ch
Study Center, created the School Development Progr
as a means of reducing barriers between home and sch
More than six hundred schools in twenty-one states h
adopted Comer's approach, which teaches parents h
to help their children learn, encourages parents to h
plan academic programs, and brings parents, teach
and other school staff together in relaxed settings.

In Camden, New Jersey, the idea of "family scho

emerged in the early 1990s. As in other communities where family stability is threatened by drugs, violence, and abuse, school must be a safe haven for the family as a whole if children are to prosper. As Annie Rubin, principal of Coopers Poynt, one of Camden's family schools, says, "For every child at risk, there's also a family at risk."

At Coopers Poynt, parents and guardians find an array of social services. Nurses provide prenatal screening and conduct classes in parenting and child development. The presence of a full-day parents' center encourages parents to volunteer as classroom aides. Coopers Poynt opens its doors early each morning—before classes begin but not before many students' parents start their workday—and doesn't shut them until late afternoon. "We don't have any magic formula," Rubin says. "We just care. I just feel that if [families] are touched by us, they're all going to do a little better."

A number of independent programs exist to strengthen parents' involvement in their children's schooling. The Family Math program, based in Berkeley, California, was developed to give parents the confidence and skills to help their children learn math. Parents and children come together for weekly classes, held in four- to eight-week cycles at schools, community centers, and libraries. Teachers and parents who have been trained as Family Math instructors demonstrate math activities that parents and children can do together at home, none of which require more than pencil and paper and ordinary household items like beans, buttons, and toothpicks. The program has been so successful that it has been replicated in a number of communities around the country. As with HIPPY, it has inspired some parents to return to their own education.

Kent Salveson, an Orange County–based developer i
Southern California, has offered an innovative examp
of how businesses can help to promote an entire com
munity's involvement. In conjunction with the Unive
sity of Southern California, he created a low-incom
housing project called EEXCEL Apartments. (EEXCE
stands for Educational Excellence for Children wit
Environmental Limitations.) Salveson's idea was t
strengthen the ties between home and school, and t
make education, child and health care, and family coun
seling more accessible to the poor. Explaining the think
ing behind his brainchild, Salveson said, "If we want t
change a neighborhood, a community, our country, w
have to change the home. I don't care if it's in Beverl
Hills or in South-Central. Children are being neglected
A nation is the sum of all its homes."

The original forty-six-unit complex has spawned othe
EEXCEL buildings in California, and more are in th
works in several other states. All of them are in low
income areas that don't generally have access to the fam
ily support services they need. Each has space set aside f
classrooms, which are equipped with computers, book
and school supplies. In exchange for course credit, loc
university students are available four hours a day, fo
days a week, to provide one-on-one tutoring to childr
who live in the complex. At the end of each semest
EEXCEL holds a banquet for the parents, children, a
tutors to celebrate the children's school achievemer
and awards gift certificates from local bookstores to ch
dren who get good grades. The complexes also spon
other activities and services designed to bring neighb
together—résumé and job training programs, Campf
Girls and Boys, bookmobile visits, a food share progra

literacy and art classes, and community holiday parties. Salveson says that one of his goals is to "break down the massiveness of the city to a smaller community of people who live in the building."

NOWHERE IS the partnership of parents and the rest of the village more crucial to the schools than in the expectation that discipline and order are necessary for learning to happen. One spring morning, my brother Tony came downstairs for breakfast and found my father in his customary place at the kitchen table, reading the sports page. Instead of talking sports, though, as they usually did, my father began to quiz Tony about what he had done in school the day before. Tony answered with vague descriptions of a day like any other at his junior high. Only then did my father show him the photo in the sports section. Prominently featured in the bleachers were my brother and several friends who had skipped school to join the crowd celebrating the Chicago Cubs' opening game at Wrigley Field. That day, the boys got in trouble both at home and at school.

Skipping school is one thing. Today drugs and violence lead the list of offenses foremost on parents' and teachers' minds. How do we reassert adult authority?

First, we parents have to back up school authority and quit making excuses for our kids when they misbehave. Does that mean teachers and principals are always right? Of course not, but they deserve to be given back the presumption that they are.

Schools have to do their part by stating the rules clearly and punishing violators. Habitually disruptive

students should be removed from regular classes until they are able to attend without interfering with other students. Standards of conduct should be explained and enforced, and parents should say "Hallelujah" instead of "I'll sue!"

Schools could take a big step toward improving discipline by sending kids the clear message that school is their work and they are expected to behave and dress accordingly. I agree with those who advocate dress codes and even uniforms in some school districts because they appear to diminish the frictions caused by brand-name consumerism and gang identification. I'd much rather have students worrying about their homework for the next day than whether they have the right clothes to wear or who might attack them if they wear the wrong color sneakers.

In 1994, the Long Beach School District in California became the first district in the nation to mandate uniforms for its elementary and middle school students. That year, school violence decreased to half the rates of the previous year. Other districts are taking note and beginning to follow suit.

Long Beach leaves the precise details of the uniform to each school's principal so long as the elements fit the overall dress code. The school system has sought financial assistance to enable low-income families to purchase the uniforms, but a group of parents and students has filed suit anyway, claiming they cannot afford the costs and that the school district has not helped. Without going into the merits of the case, I find it hard to understand why energy is being spent litigating that could be used to raise money for uniforms or to tackle some other school problem. Other schools with voluntary uniform

codes, like those in Fulton County, Georgia, have used school funds to subsidize uniform purchases and have started an exchange program for outgrown uniforms.

Robert E. Lee High School in Houston, Texas, provides a good example of the effect community-wide involvement can have on curbing violence in schools. Several years ago, the school set out to enlist the support of families and community members in dealing with a serious gang problem. The city of Houston initiated a school-day curfew, imposing a two-hundred-dollar fine on parents if their children were found on the street when they were supposed to be in school. At the same time, the high school implemented a "zero tolerance for gangs in the school" policy. Bilingual administrators combed the neighborhoods the school serves, speaking with families and "cutting contracts" with them to enlist their help in enforcing the policy. A core group of teachers, administrators, police officers, and school district security guards worked to identify gang members and to take steps to evict them from the school if they became violent. Since then, the climate in the school has changed dramatically, and students' scores on state exams have steadily improved. An honors English class has been established for the first time. As the principal said, "We can now concentrate on our academic problems, not our sociological ones."

ULTIMATELY, though, what schools need most from the village are high standards to live up to. Some people disagree, claiming that even voluntary standards interfere with local control, permitting outsiders to determine what

children are taught. I have never accepted that argument which confuses what standards are for: They establish what children should know, not how they are taught or measured. Algebra is algebra, from Little Rock to Atlanta, from Seattle, Washington, to Washington, D.C. And even before I started working on standards in Arkansas, I knew of many schools, particularly in poor areas, that needed help designing appropriate curricula.

Education is fundamental to our country's future and to the future of our children, who will have to be prepared to compete in a national and global economy. High standards will help ensure that all of them—no matter where they live—will have access to quality education.

I think often of a young man I met at an annual reception for high school honors graduates and their parents that Bill and I started hosting at the governor's mansion in 1979. He told me he had long dreamed of becoming a doctor. But when he went for an interview at the local college, he was told that, although he was his graduating class's salutatorian, his school had not adequately prepared him for the rigors of a premed course of study. What he had been taught as "algebra" was arithmetic with a few *x*'s thrown in. He was advised to take a fifth year of high school somewhere with more challenging classes or go to college prepared to take remedial courses. What a rotten choice to be confronted with after he had kept his side of the bargain by studying and performing well!

When I worked on education reform in Arkansas, the proposals we made for a standardized curriculum and course content recommendations to accompany it encountered opposition from administrators who claimed in all sincerity that their students didn't want or need higher

standards. One superintendent told me that very few of "his kids" went to college, so he couldn't see what difference it would make. Another superintendent ushered me into his office and pointed at a sign on his desk that said, "This too shall pass." He told me that was what he thought of my husband's efforts to reform education. Standing in front of the new gymnasium they had built, he and the school board solemnly assured me that they knew the kids in their district, and none of them were interested in taking foreign languages, art, or advanced sciences.

Thankfully, their attitude was not representative of the majority of citizens or legislators, and Arkansas passed a sweeping education reform in 1983 that has changed the expectations—and lives—of thousands of students. But all too often, in too many places, the concept of "local control" is still used to justify having low expectations of students, particularly poor ones, and to resist holding all students and schools accountable for their progress in meeting explicit goals.

In 1989, President George Bush convened the nation's governors in Williamsburg, Virginia, to kick off an effort to establish national goals for education, a movement that received support from all but one of the assembled governors and that quickly took on national momentum. My husband represented the Democratic governors at that gathering, only the third such working meeting in our nation's history. As President, he and Secretary of Education Richard Riley, who had championed effective education reform as Governor of South Carolina, brought the goals-setting process to fruition in 1993 when they

presented to Congress the Goals 2000: Educate Americ Act, which passed with strong bipartisan support and the backing of almost every major national parent, educa- tion, and business organization.

The genius of Goals 2000 is that it marries the idea of high standards for *what* children should learn, loca control over *how* children learn, and accountability fo *whether* children learn. The act reaffirms the traditiona principle of local control of education, acknowledgin that each community is the best judge of what will work in its schools. But it also recognizes, as I learned in Arkansas, that many parents and schools need guidanc in setting goals that will prepare children for future chal- lenges, as the Information Age changes the ways we liv and work.

Under the legislation, states are expected to establish their own academic content standards and assessment of student performance. Goals 2000 gives schools help in determining where, amid the daily flurry of demands they need to focus their attention and what skills student need to acquire. The National Assessment of Educa- tional Progress, administered by the federal government acts as a report card, a tool for charting the results o state and local reform efforts.

As soon as Goals 2000 passed, it was attacked by ex tremists, who stirred up anxious parents with visions o totalitarian control over their children's minds and of "sec ular humanists" stealing their children's souls. One teache told me that a local church had protested when she move the chairs in her classroom into a circle for discussio purposes, citing the insidious influence of Goals 2000 be cause "everyone knows that's how witches' covens meet. The incident would be laughable except that her princi

pal ordered her to put the chairs back in their neat rows.

What are these goals that promote such passionate reactions?

By the year 2000:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.

2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

3. All students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, the arts, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy.

4. United States students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

6. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

7. The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.

8. Every school will promote partnerships that wi increase parental involvement and participation in pro moting the social, emotional, and academic growth c children.

These goals are hardly the stuff of revolution—and ar not likely to be fully achieved easily, or by the year 200c We cannot expect to reverse decades of declining stan dards in a few years. A recent report showed that th country has made progress in some areas, such as mat and science achievement. There has been little or n progress in areas such as reading achievement. And ther have been greater problems with respect to juvenile dru use, especially marijuana, and classroom disruption.

But the whole point of goals is to encourage a proces in states, school districts, and individual schools that wil set standards and offer real guidance as to what shoulc be taught and how student performance should be mea sured so that progress toward the goals can be assessed Why should we accept goals, standards, and perfor mance measures in business or sports but not in ou schools? Can you imagine a successful CEO telling stockholders that their company has nothing new tc learn from anyone and that it can't be expected to im prove in any case, because, after all, look who its employ ees and customers are?

I was privileged to know the late Sam Walton, the leg endary founder of Wal-Mart. He regularly visited Wal Mart stores, literally dropping in unexpectedly in the small plane he piloted with his bird dogs in the back, landing in a nearby field if necessary. He would walk up and down the aisles, asking employees what they thought could be improved. Until he became too recog

nizable, he also walked the aisles of competitors' stores, asking employees there the same questions. He was never too proud to take an idea from anywhere if he thought it would improve customer service and value.

Children and their parents are customers of public education, but they are rarely asked what could be improved. Teachers are the lifeblood of any school, but they too are often ignored or marginalized when decisions are made. All citizens have a direct stake in how well our schools perform. The process of setting—and meeting—goals is one way to make sure all stakeholders in public education are involved.

SOME critics of public schools urge greater competition among schools and districts, as a way of returning control from bureaucrats and politicians to parents and teachers. I find their argument persuasive, and that's why I strongly favor promoting choice among public schools, much as the President's Charter Schools Initiative encourages. I also support letting public schools determine how they can best be managed, including allowing them to contract out services to private firms.

Charter schools are public schools created and operated under a charter or contract. They may be organized by parents, teachers, or others from the community. The idea is that they should be freed from regulations that stifle effective innovation, so they can focus on meeting goals and getting results. By 1995, a total of nineteen states had enacted charter school laws, and about two hundred schools had been granted charters. The amount of autonomy and flexibility the schools have been

granted varies from state to state. Some are authorized t operate independently from the outset, while others hav to appeal to their local districts to waive individual rules

The O'Farrell Community School is a charter schoo in San Diego, California. It has a racially diverse studer body of fourteen hundred sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Students are clustered in "families," with a hea teacher who stays with them all three years. Cutting th red tape and regulations has freed teachers to work to gether. They have implemented a code of conduct know as "the O'Farrell way" (which includes community ser vice as a graduation requirement), built course require ments around portfolios of students' work, and arrange for a health and counseling center to help students with nonacademic problems.

The Improving America's Schools Act, passed in October 1994 with the President's strong support, provided federal funds for a wide range of grassroots reforms, including launching charter schools. In addition, some states are using Goals 2000 funds to support charter schools like O'Farrell. Federal encouragement and funding are necessary in many places to break through bureaucratic attitudes that block change and frustrate students and parents, driving some of them to leave the public schools.

OUR REFUSAL to recognize diverse forms of intelligence and to uphold standards for all are most unfair to the majority of students who do not go on to obtain a four-year college degree. One in seven students does not

even get a high school diploma or obtain a GED by the age of twenty-five.

From 1986 to 1988, I participated in a study sponsored by the William T. Grant Foundation called Youth and America's Future. The title of its report, "The Forgotten Half," referred to "the young people who build our homes, drive our buses, repair our automobiles, fix our televisions, maintain and serve our offices, schools, and hospitals, and keep the production lines of our mills and factories moving. To a great extent, they determine how well the American family, economy, and democracy function. They are also the thousands of young men and women who aspire to work productively but never quite 'make it' to that kind of employment."

Speaking plainly, we don't do much for these young people, and the consequences—for them and for us all—are severe. The 1990 Census showed that young people without college degrees earn significantly less on average than those with degrees. Those who go out into the job market with a high school degree or less are at a much greater disadvantage than they were fifteen years ago. Even if they performed well in school, few employers will even ask to see their transcripts.

In 1994, the President, again with bipartisan support, signed the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, aimed at improving the odds for those forgotten kids. The legislation offers incentives for improving vocational education in high schools and community colleges, and it enables more states, cities, schools, and employers to set up apprenticeship programs that lead to good jobs.

The key to helping students at risk of dropping out to stay in school is to make learning relevant in their lives

by linking their schooling with "real world" experience. The Oakland Health and Bioscience Academy in Oakland, California, is one example of how that can be done. With the help and support of an interested community, the academy prepares students for a wide range of health and bioscience careers. Academy teachers work closely with staff from local community colleges and area hospitals to design relevant curricula, and one community college is developing a program that will grant credit to students at the academy and other area schools for the anatomy and physiology courses they take. Formal clinical apprenticeships at area hospitals are also in the works.

School-to-work programs like this one are providing students who are often disregarded in traditional classrooms the chance to learn specific skills. They are also improving academic performance. A recent report noted that the Oakland Academy students scored significantly higher in reading, language, and math than other students from similar backgrounds. School-to-Work programs are a chance for the whole community to get involved in educating our youth, by opening up internship opportunities and workplace visits.

AS A NATION, we are at a crossroads in deciding not only what we expect from education, but what education can expect from us, individually and collectively. The degree of our commitment will determine whether we graduate to a new era of progress and prosperity or fail our children and ourselves. Like education itself, our decision involves something beyond pragmatism. It is also a test of our values.

Do we believe children can learn if they are taught in a way that takes account of their particular talents and holds them to high and clear expectations? Do we believe all children deserve an orderly learning environment? Are we willing to set national goals for educational performance and provide incentives for teachers, schools, and students to meet them? Are parents ready to become partners with schools again, for the benefit of their own—and other—children? And how about the other members of the village, those who are childless or whose children have passed school age? Are they—are all of us—ready to join this partnership?

If we can answer yes to questions like these, we can be successful in educating children to move confidently into the future, carrying the village with them. The root of the verb "to educate," after all, means "to lead forth."

VAUGHN NEXT CENTURY LEARNING CENTER

Background

The Vaughn Next Century Learning Center in Pacoima is one of the leading charter schools in the country. The school -- which achieved its charter status in 1993 -- has earned a national reputation for its innovative approaches to education, particularly its strong emphasis on parental involvement. Yvonne Chan, the Vaughn Center's iconoclastic principal, is largely credited for the school's transformation from the lowest-achieving elementary school in the San Fernando Valley into one of the most promising charter schools in the nation.

At the heart of the Vaughn Center's approach to education is its onsite Family Center, which works to alleviate some of the social obstacles to education facing Vaughn's predominantly poor, Latino and Asian American population. The Family Center serves as a one-stop referral center, helping families of Vaughn students obtain a range of basic health and social services, from primary health services like immunizations and dental care to child care, parenting classes and family counseling. In return for services, the Center asks parents to spend time volunteering at the school. The Family Center also offers a number of programs for students, like after-school tutoring and gang prevention programs. The Family Center is a good example of a public/private investment in education -- in addition to state dollars, the Center receives funds from the United Way and the Los Angeles Educational Partnership, a coalition of local businesses that support educational reform.

The Vaughn Center has found other innovative ways to encourage parental involvement -- for instance, when some parents told Principal Chan that they could not attend parent teacher association meetings because they lacked access to child care or transportation or had inconvenient work hours, Chan drove to their neighborhoods and met with groups of parents in their homes. The school has also instituted a policy of calling students' homes whenever they are absent -- a policy that, according to Principal Chan, has resulted in a daily attendance rate of 99%.

Located in one of the poorest areas of the San Fernando Valley, the Vaughn Center faces an array of challenges -- until last year, for example, the school was located next to several broken-down houses that Principal Chan said were inhabited by crack dealers. At that point, the school was so overcrowded that it needed three rotating schedules to accommodate its students, so the school fought for state funding to bulldoze the crack houses and build new classrooms. In August, the school celebrated the opening of 14 new classrooms and other facilities. During the construction, Principal Chan also obtained permission from the school district to lengthen the Vaughn Center's school year to 200 days, 20 days more than the statewide standard, so that all 1,150 Vaughn students could attend school simultaneously. This year, the Vaughn Center also became the first public elementary school in the Los Angeles Unified School District to institute a mandatory uniform policy.

Recent Controversy

In December, the Los Angeles Unified School District reported the findings of its first comprehensive review of the district's nine charter schools. The review showed marked

improvement in student attendance, minority integration and parental involvement, but found no corresponding increase in student test scores. According to the district review, the Vaughn Center's standardized test scores improved the least among all of the local charter schools, with declines in reading, math and language. Principal Chan has attributed this decline to a new policy of testing all of the school's students, including those who are traditionally exempted from standardized tests (for instance, students who have been recently mainstreamed from bilingual classes). In general, supporters of California's charter schools have objected to measuring academic achievement solely on the basis of test scores, particularly in light of the short time the state's charter schools have been in operation.

In a recent financial review of the Vaughn Center, the L.A. Board of Education found that the school saved a total of $1 million in 1994 (although Chan claims more savings.) While some of the savings have been attributed to more cost-effective management, the Board of Education calculated that most of the school's surplus came from financial breaks that the district gave the school. Principal Chan is particularly proud of the surplus, and has publicly disagreed with the Board's assessment. Dr. Chan is using the surplus to reinvest in the school.

Principal Chan

Principal Yvonne Chan's innovative efforts at the Vaughn Center have been lauded on both sides of the political spectrum -- Senator Boxer has honored Chan at her "Women Making History" luncheon; and Mayor Riordan donates computer equipment to the school through his private foundation. Chan is, however, a controversial figure who has had her share of clashes with the school district bureaucracy. She has made her disdain of government regulation well-known, and has been a vocal advocate of dismantling the Los Angeles Unified School District. She has also expressed her support for a block grant approach to the federal school lunch program. Chan's detractors say that she does not give enough credit to the teachers, parents and other administrators who are working to improve the Vaughn Center, and that she is overly concerned with her own publicity. Even Chan's critics, however, acknowledge that she is tremendously committed to the Vaughn Center and its students.

California and Charter Schools

In 1992, California became the second state in the nation to pass a charter school law, permitting a limited number of public schools in the state to operate independently of their school districts while continuing to receive district funding. The Vaughn Center was the second of nine charter schools established in the Los Angeles Unified School District. As you know, you discuss the President's Charter Schools Initiative and the Improving America's Schools Act in *It Takes A Village* (pp. 263 - 264). See attached background paper for budgetary status and talking points on charter schools.

Format

You will be greeted at the Vaughn Center by Dr. Chan, who lead you on a short tour of the school's "Write to Read" computer lab, where kindergarten and first-grade students will be working on computers, followed by a drop-by to a classroom of second-graders. After the

tour, you and Dr. Chan will join a group of about 10 parents, teachers and students in the school auditorium for a discussion on the Vaughn Center, and the important role it plays as part of the village. An audience of approximately 100 students, faculty and parents will observe the discussion. Dr. Chan will moderate.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

GLIDE MEMORIAL CHURCH

As you know, Glide Memorial Church is an important cultural landmark in San Francisco -- known for its spirit of inclusiveness and diversity, Glide attracts more than 6,000 congregants from a wide range of backgrounds and lifestyles. Glide Memorial is a good example of a church that has expanded its religious and social roles to become an important foundation in the community. The church offers services ranging from job training classes and drug recovery programs to food and clothing drives and support groups for battered spouses, AIDS patients and others. The church also has programs for at-risk children and youth, like after-school tutoring, life skills classes, substance abuse prevention programs and others (as you know, you discuss the expanding roles of churches and other religious institutions in *It Takes A Village* on pages 173 - 178.)

Glide Memorial also provides more than 3,000 free meals every day -- more than a million every year -- to hungry and homeless people in the surrounding neighborhood. Last November, President Clinton called Reverend Cecil Williams to thank church volunteers who served a record 6,500 meals on Thanksgiving Day. As you recall, you visited Glide Memorial during the 1992 campaign, when the President gave a Mother's Day speech there.

Over the years, Glide Memorial has attracted a number of well-known artists and performers to its congregation, including Maya Angelou. In 1993, Glide Memorial dedicated a "Maya Angelou Living Room," which provides counseling, workshops and HIV prevention programs for young women and teenage mothers.

Format

Thursday's event at Glide Memorial Church will follow the standard format for auditorium events. Mayor Willie Brown will give opening remarks and introduce you, Reverend Cecil Williams, and Janice Mirikitani, Reverend Williams' wife, onto stage. Rev. Williams will give remarks and introduce you. Following your remarks, there will be a receiving line with approximately 1,000 audience members. About one-quarter of the tickets to this event were sold to the public (for the price of a pre-signed book) by a group of local independent booksellers; the church distributed the remaining tickets for free on a first-come, first-served basis.

A group of local independent booksellers will be selling copies of *It Takes A Village* at Glide Memorial. San Francisco has one of the most active groups of independent booksellers in the country.

MASONIC CENTER AUDITORIUM

Your speech at the Masonic Center Auditorium Thursday night has been billed as an "evening reading and talk" by City Arts & Lectures, Inc., a local non-profit organization. You will be introduced by Reverend Williams, and then have approximately 30 minutes to give remarks and read excerpts from the book if you choose. Following your remarks, there will be a 30-minute Q & A session with the audience (rather than a receiving line). Sydney Goldstein, executive director of City Arts and sister-in-law of Justice Stephen Breyer, will moderate the Q & A session.

City Arts & Lectures is charging $20 a ticket for this event, all of which will be donated to Oakland Children's Hospital. The ticket price does not include a copy of the book. However, a group of about 30 local independent booksellers will be selling books at the event. The booksellers plan to donate all of the proceeds from book sales to the literacy grant program of the Northern California Children's Booksellers Association and to children's programming at Glide Memorial Church.

Friday, February 9th

DALLAS, TEXAS

Taylors Bookstores

Taylors Bookstores in Dallas is a small, local bookstore chain with longtime ties to the Dallas community. In recent years, Taylors has been particularly hurt by competition from the superstore chains, and last week announced that it would be forced to close many of its Dallas-area stores. The Taylors Bookstore you are visiting in Prestonwood will be one of the only remaining stores in Dallas.

The book reception at Taylors will be modeled on the standard bookstore event -- the first 1,000 customers who purchase a pre-signed copy of *It Takes A Village* will join the receiving line. Taylors plans to donate a portion of its proceeds from sales of *It Takes A Village* to the Children's Medical Center in Dallas and Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, which you visited with the President in 1994.

ADDITIONAL BRIEFING MATERIALS FOR THE TATTERED COVER BOOKSTORE:

-"Buying the Book at the Tattered Cover," *Sales & Marketing Management,* May 1995

SPEECH CANDIDATES

1)

2)

3)

Draft – Community Service Speech

I think it's fitting to begin my remarks with a few words about a public figure who recently died. A woman whose life personified the public service that we are here to honor today: Mother Teresa. She will be missed by the thousands for whom she personally cared each year, as well as by the millions who were inspired by her selfless acts of charity and caring. I had the privilege to spend some time with Mother Teresa over the years and I can safely say that she was one of the most powerful people I have ever met.

Her power didn't come from any of the sources we commonly point to when we talk about power in the United States. It didn't come about from her skill at political wheeling and dealing or her graduation from an Ivy League school. It didn't come from making the right connections and shaking the right hands; nor from possessing a large bank account. Mother Teresa was a supremely powerful person because she understood the importance, the tremendous rippling impact, of personal action.

She knew that while government and other institutions are important in creating a prosperous and well-run society, ultimately government and institutions can only provide the blueprint for such a society. But we don't live within a blueprint. The greatest of accomplishments can only be achieved – and the greatest of problems can only be solved – by individual action. One simple, courageous, step at a time.

These simple steps are the bedrock of our democracy. Over two thousand years ago, when the principle was in its infancy, Greek lawgivers arrived at the notion that the strength of any democracy depends on the sum of the people involved. It is that notion that fuels our own experience today.

Imagine if the sum of our democracy included more people like Mother Teresa. Imagine if we were fortunate enough to include within our vast borders more committed women and men like those gathered in this room.

People like Willie Brown who has spent his entire life working to better the place in which he lives, whether by building a park community center or by bringing people together to bridge the racial gaps between our people. People like Marilyn Segal whose lifelong mission has been to better the lives of children. People like Bill Colson who has helped bring together the county's diverse leaders. And Susan Reyna, who, not content to let the needs of migrant Hispanic families go unanswered, formed MUJER to work for their benefit. People like Joseph Pinon, a former police officer, a Cuban refugee, who today works with numerous civic organizations.

These are people who embrace the biblical golden rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. They embrace it not only as a principle of faith, but as a principle of democracy and service.

Two years ago, during a summer heat wave, something terrible happened in Washington, DC. A four-year-old little girl and her two-year-old brother wandered away from their home and, apparently looking for a place to play, climbed into an unlocked car in a nearby lot. A couple of hours later, both children were found dead of suffocation.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, some neighbors pointed out that for years they had tried to get local authorities to build a playground so that kids in the area would have someplace safe to play. And the local government should have done that. But the neighbors bear some of the blame for what happened that summer, too. If they had understood and accepted their own personal responsibility, they might have taken it upon themselves to take turns watching the children; to clean up the yard the children ran in; and to chip in to buy a few outdoor toys that the children could all share.

A few months after this tragedy, a community service organization stepped up to the plate. With volunteer labor, a few contributions and a whole lot of planning, they created something incredibly important, yet exquisitely simple: a place for children to play.

It is through service like this that people together are able to achieve what alone they could not.

I know service was an important part of my upbringing as a young girl. It helped me appreciate the life I was born into, and enabled me understand the lives of others who seemed so different. I remember volunteering to baby sit for young migrant children while their older brothers and sisters joined their parents working in the fields. Taking care of those children not only gave their parents a little piece of mind for the few hours I was there, but it gave me a way to connect with people who spoke a different language and who ate what looked to me to be pretty exotic food. It gave me an opportunity to see that those foreign-seeming people had hopes and dreams for themselves, and care and love for their families, just as great as any I'd encountered in Park Ridge, Illinois.

It's important that we introduce our children to service, early, so that it becomes a way of life for them. Many schools and cities throughout the country, agreeing with that notion, are beginning to establish frameworks that make it easier for children to volunteer.

Schools like Washington Elementary School in Mount Vernon Washington have integrated service into its curriculum. Students there create classroom projects as well as perform individual acts of service, like tutoring younger children and acting as safety patrols. Here in Florida, North Miami Beach High School helps organize volunteers with its own web site and (ADD MORE EXAMPLES HERE).

I am proud of many of the accomplishments made by my husband's administration, but one of the things of which I am most proud is my husband's dedication to the Corporation for National Service, the public-private enterprise that includes AmeriCorps.

Around the country, young AmeriCorps members are devoting themselves to making our nation more secure for the future. They are doing this by tutoring children, and helping to raise reading scores; by immunizing hundreds of thousands of children; and by working with police departments to keep neighborhoods safe and to fight against drugs.

At the Summit For America's Future, held earlier this year in Philadelphia, thousands more Americans, young and old, took a pledge to participate in community service – committing themselves to help two million children by the year 2000.

But America's embrace of the service ethic came long before my husband's presidency. Long before AmeriCorps and its predecessors, the Peace Corps and Vista were even dreamed of. It was early in the 19th century when Alexis de Tocqueville observed that voluntary organizations had become a hallmark of American citizenship and a distinctive part of our national life. It's this unique trait that makes me most proud to be an American.

There comes a moment when many of us hear the call to serve. The call comes in various ways and takes many different forms. Some march in armies; and others stand in front of classrooms. Some will place sandbags against a rising flood; and others will volunteer to fight fires. We can't all do the same thing – I certainly wouldn't expect anyone to do what I do – but there is a place for everyone in community service.

Martin Luther King Jr., inspired our entire nation with his acts of service, reminding us that service is not something just for "other people" – it's for us all. He said: "You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't need to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. And you can be that servant."

He was right.

The greatest challenges facing us in the 21st century will not be solved by government alone. Our most daunting challenges will not be how to create greater technologies, bigger weapons, faster computers. No. We will need to figure out how we can live better in the midst of the technological and social changes we've already undergone. To understand how to retain a meaningful connection to our community when our communal interactions might be fewer. Our challenge will be how to maintain our most precious gift – our democracy – when so many Americans are feeling alienated from each other and their government.

It seems to me that in this area of our lives we have to go back in order to come forward. A robust economy is not enough. Smart trade policies are not enough. We have to renew our ties to our community and our country in order to derive the satisfaction we need from the wealth we have. Because I know that we as a people will be defined not only by the riches that we reap – but by the kind of society we build with our riches.

It takes more than money to achieve the things we most care about. It takes more than government. It takes commitment and time. It takes constant nurturing and vigilance. It takes the involvement of our people – the sum of our democracy – to fulfill our greatest goals.

Robert Kennedy said: "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

The people we are celebrating today in this room are sending forth those tiny ripples of hope. I hope you inspire others to follow your example. Because just as it is our privilege to live in a society for the people and by the people – it is also our fate.

End

REMARKS FOR THE CHARLES WHITED SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD
SEPTEMBER 30, 1997

It is a great honor to join you tonight in this world-class city to celebrate the better angels of our nature and our nation.

President Kennedy once said that "a nation reveals itself not only by the men and women it produces, but also by those it honors, by those it remembers." Tonight our nation reveals itself by the leaders we honor with the 13th Annual Charles Whited Spirit of Excellence Award. We honor heroes who reach across the lines that too often divide us. Heroes who, in good times and bad, lift up South Florida's vulnerable children and families. Heroes who, every day, make us proud of who we are and who we can become. But when we honor these dedicated Americans, we paint a picture of more than community service in South Florida. We show a model of citizenship in our democracy, a model that this generation -- like all generations -- must refine and redefine for its time.

I was thinking about community and citizenship while the President and I were back home in Arkansas. We just spent a wonderful weekend visiting family and friends and attending Bill's high school reunion. But our thoughts kept returning to the reunion our nation held Thursday at Little Rock Central High School. Forty years ago, when I was a young girl growing up outside of Chicago, I remember seeing pictures of the Little Rock Nine as they walked up the steps of Central High, escorted by the 101st Airborne Division. I will never forget watching them brave the hatred outside and the fear within in order to seize the opportunity that all children deserve, the opportunity to live and learn and reach their God-given potential. And I will never forget the look on their faces, 40 years later, as the President opened up the door for them again, only this time to the welcoming sound of thunderous applause.

Remembering that historic day in 1957, one of the nine, Melba Pattillo, wrote that she had "crossed the threshold into that place where angry segregationist mobs had forbidden us to go." Today, at Central High, students of all races freely cross that same threshold, which is now protected not by the National Guard, but by four strong statues emblazoned with these words: Ambition, Personality, Preparation, and Opportunity. It is up to us as a nation to make sure that all children have the ambition, personality, preparation and opportunity -- yes, opportunity -- they need to walk through those doors into the new century.

Notice that I said it is up to our nation, not just our government. Throughout our history, there have been those who claim government can do it all and those who insist government should do nothing at all. As usual, the real truth lies somewhere in between. Because when we think about our on-going struggle to build an American house that cannot be divided by race or religion, we are reminded of both the power and limitations of government. For while government can pry open those doors, while government can enforce our constitutional rights, and while government can help our citizens keep out of harm's way, it cannot heal our racial divide or reweave our frayed communities. It cannot make sure that involuntary segregation is not replaced simply with voluntary separation. It cannot change a heart or mend a spirit. It cannot make us feel connected to one another or allow us to enter the new century together. But citizens can. And as you have shown in South Florida, citizens do.

When Alexis de Tocqueville looked at our democracy, he described a nation that was truly special. Not just because of our system of limited government. Not just because of the individual initiative that thrives in our free-market economy. What has always made America special is the space between our government and our economy. Social scientists refer to it as our civil or civic society. All of us know it as the roles played by our families, our churches, our Boys and Girls Clubs, by all of you. We see it in Marilyn Segal's exploration of early child development and her fight to give the children of Broward County the right start in life. We see it in the Miami Herald's Holiday Wish Book, which brings community support to families in need. We see it in the three words that launched our nation: We the People, and in the three words that adorn our national seal: *E pluribus unum*, which tell us that out of many we are still one. This is not big government, it is shared government.

What all of this says, and what all of you have shown, is that good citizenship in a democracy means more than paying your taxes, casting your ballot, obeying our laws, and earning an honest living. Good citizenship means internalizing democratic values in our hearts and minds. It means realizing that we are responsible for one another, each of us our brother's and our sister's keeper. And, it means understanding that none of us got to where we are without someone opening the door for us, and none of us will ever get to where we need to go without reaching back to keep the door open for someone who comes after us.

Those ideals remain, but how we meet them must continue to change. Because for more than 200 years, we have been guided not by a document, but by a democracy, a living, breathing democracy. Every generation has sought to perfect it, without any real assurances that we ever will. Every generation has sought to balance the power of our government, our free market and our citizenry. Every generation has sought to meet its new challenges by redefining what it means to be a citizen in this great country. My parent's generation was asked to save our nation from economic collapse and world tyranny. Thirty years ago, my generation was challenged to fight for civil rights, explore space, and carry the American dream to every corner of our country and our world.

As we enter the 21st century, our families, our nation, and our world are all facing new challenges that will once again force us to redefine the role citizens play in our democracy. In our homes, parents are under more pressure as they try to balance work and family, and raise their children in the face of media messages that teach them that smoking is cool, and a consumer culture that tells them to value the logo on their sneakers more than the generosity in their hearts. Across our nation, new patterns of work, technology, and mobility have changed how we view our connection to and responsibility for our local and national community. And around the world, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the rise of new democracies create not only new responsibilities to build alliances of shared values, but also new opportunities to inspire and learn from them.

When Congressman Tony Hall met the late Mother Theresa a few years ago, he asked her how she was able to accomplish so much. She replied, "I did the thing that was in front of me." What is clear is that today, the thing in front of us is no longer just in our neighborhood or our local school. It is national, and it is global. And yet, while our concept of community continues to evolve, our age-old commitment to it must not.

I was pleased to hear that the Miami Herald and NBC have been hosting events called Community Circles to talk about how to solve the problems facing our most vulnerable children. If we are going to redefine citizenship for the new century, I believe that we need to foster a commitment and connection to ever-widening circles of community, from our home to our world.

To do that, we must first recognize that citizenship is a lifelong job and commitment. Not all of us will have children or work in an office. Not all of us will graduate from college or buy a house. But, all of us will be citizens in our democracy. We also know that teaching good citizenship must begin with our children. And that goes far beyond the time we must take to read to children, play with them, talk with them, and nurture them as they grow. It even extends beyond what we teach our children about cleaning up their rooms, or helping out around the house. What I'm talking about here is really our obligation to inspire children to serve others, to help them see service -- including political participation -- as a privilege, as an everyday fun activity, and as a way to find common ground with others by respecting – not just tolerating – our differences.

I was thinking about one of the ways my mother did this as I read about Susan Reyna's extraordinary work with migrant families. For a few weeks every autumn when I was growing up, migrant families worked the fields around Chicago and their children went to classes with us. One of the these kids took to bullying me and my friends on the playground. Were it not for my mother, I might have wallowed in my anger and fear. I might have judged an entire group based on the poor behavior of one individual. Instead my mother encouraged me to volunteer to baby-sit for the migrant families' young children on Saturdays so that their older brothers and sisters -- my classmates -- could help their parents in the field.

I remember how proud I felt to be serving families who worked so hard for so little. And I remember being struck by both the differences and the similarities in our lives. We learn the most about ourselves when we stand in someone else's shoes and someone else's world and look back at our own. I've always believed that those early experiences with service ultimately helped shape the direction of my career and my life. As Chelsea grew up, we tried to give her those kinds of experiences, by taking her to volunteer at shelters, encouraging her to be a part of a cause bigger than herself, and inspiring her to keep an eye out for everyday needs waiting to be met.

But, those needs don't always appear before us . Redefining citizenship for the 21st century also requires peering beyond our own backyards and creating a circle of community that binds our entire nation together. Our history is replete with examples of citizens pulling together when faced with war abroad and disaster at home. When Hurricane Andrew shook this great state, when floods ravaged North Dakota, and when home-grown terrorism struck Oklahoma City, we saw citizens gathering up their humanity and rising to the occasion, not as Latinos or Caucasians, liberals or conservatives, Jews or Christians, but as Americans.

Yet, even in the absence of adversity -- indeed, especially in the absence of adversity -- citizenship in the 21st century requires that we see our fates are inextricably linked to the fates of all Americans. We can wear our individual heritage like a badge of honor, but we should always do so as citizens of the same national community. When we have differences, whether they are on the playground or at the highest levels of government, we must lower our voices and look at our common purposes.

We need a national spirit that sees every problem as our problem, every solution as our solution, and the government as our government. We need an active citizenry with the courage to keep our institutions honest and the optimism to serve them on behalf of our nation.

And we need to give every American a way to serve their communities and their country. That has always been the President's vision for AmeriCorps. Today, right here in Miami, AmeriCorps volunteers are earning money for college while building homes for single families. They are teaching parenting skills to low-income citizens and reading skills to their small children. And they are recruiting high school students to mentor young children after school and during the summers. All in all, there are more than 950 AmeriCorps volunteers in Florida who are literally changing lives, for themselves and those they serve. If AmeriCorps gets the support it needs from our government and our citizens -- and it must -- it has the potential to help 160,000 people across the nation serve by the year 2000.

Finally, 50 years after the Marshall Plan, redefining citizenship for the new century means that we must reach out again and create a circle of community with our democratic allies throughout the world. I have been fortunate enough to visit countries in Europe that once lived under the shadow of the old Iron Curtain and now live under the flags of free independent nations as they work to build democracies with civil liberties, civic duties and a new sense of community. I have seen the spirit of reconciliation alive and well in South Africa, where a nation of diverse peoples has overcome 40 stubborn and violent years of Apartheid to begin the difficult journey to democracy. And to our south, and embodied in the diversity that enriches Miami, we have seen every nation of our hemisphere save one reject the rule of force and accept the rule of law.

All over the globe, nations are looking to the American experience as an example and an inspiration of what free people who pull together in common cause can accomplish for the individual and the community. They are looking at us to see not only how to build a democracy, but also how to nurture and sustain one. And their journeys, in turn, can inspire and guide us as we appreciate the blessings we have and continue our never ending quest to refine and redefine what it means to be a citizen in the oldest and greatest democracy in the world.

As we do all of this, as we commit ourselves to the ever widening circles of community throughout our neighborhoods, our nation, and our world, let us always fix our gaze on the fundamental principles of citizenship that never change.

It was almost exactly 100 years ago, at the dawn of the last century, that a little girl named Virginia O'Hanlon wrote one of the most famous letters to the editor of all time. Her question was, "Is there a Santa Claus?" And the answer the New York Sun editorial page gave was, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist." Those simple words offered children, and their parents, an anchor, a shield, something to believe in. That was the responsibility we had to the Little Rock Nine as they crossed the threshold into Central High. And, that is the responsibility we have -- as journalists, as government officials, as communities, as citizens -- as we help all children cross the threshold into the next century in a nation that is great simply because it is good.

Thank you.

(3)

Thank you. Thank you distinguished guests, staff of the Miami Herald, and citizens of Miami. I am honored to be here this afternoon to commemorate the spirit of Charles Whited, a columnist who reflected the best of this diverse community. Nothing makes me happier than joining in a celebration of service, and of those who dedicate their lives to it. I can honestly say that I am humbled by the achievements that today's six honorees have accomplished.

I have met enough dedicated citizens like today's award winners to know that they are precious, and essential to America's well being. Their commitment to service literally changes lives, and it can change our nation.

I don't mean that in an abstract way. Anyone who has seen a young boy enraptured by a mentor's lively reading will know what I mean: Anyone who has seen an elderly woman cheerfully recount her life story to a hospital volunteer will also understand. For the many Americans who need help, service is as concrete as a new house or community center or a neighborhood playground, built by the hands of caring citizens.

And what these citizens are creating is much more than a new house and a new playground. They are instilling in all those who come across them an ethos of responsibility, a spirit of generosity, and a message of hope. And by spreading those common American values, they are building the future of our democracy.

For American democracy can not just be about well oiled institutions, post offices and bus service and tax refunds that come on time. Our democracy must also internalize democratic values in our hearts, our minds, and our everyday lives. Now that we no longer have the threat of a cold war uniting us, it is time to turn inward, and remember what it means to be active citizens at home. And central to that memory is a tradition of service, of reaching out beyond the familiar, to help those in need.

Think of our democracy as a house. The post office and the bus service are its foundations, the walls that keep it from falling. But with only those things, it's an empty house. In order to come alive it needs people, meeting and greeting within its walls. It needs people with a common purpose, working together like a family.

And no matter how different they seem, Americans do, indeed, have a common purpose. What individual family does not confront the same questions that confront our national family? What parents do not wonder how, in the face of challenges, in the face of technology and television that fragment us, can they raise children - their own children and the nation's children? How to give them moral signposts to guide them in this frightening world? How to teach them our common values - values I call opportunity, responsibility and community. These are questions every parent, whether from Homestead or Coral Gables, from Miami or from Maine, must consider.

The answer has to do with why we are here today. It has to do with civil society - the meeting and greeting that happens inside the house. Civil society is that lively, bustling space where government can not, and should not reach. It is the heart of a good democracy. Fueling it are community leaders like the ones gathered here, running local organizations, philanthropies, volunteer associations, neighborhood groups, and even families. That is where our children will learn to be citizens, and serve their neighbors; that is where they will learn a new kind of patriotism.

For those who take on the task of teaching our children, it is a great challenge. Learning how to become an active citizen can not be taught with chalk and a chalkboard, in Citizen 101. It can not be tested with a multiple choice exam. The values that service teaches can only be learned through experience. There is no substitute for the first time a young volunteer sees relief in a neighbor's eyes, when she knows she has made a difference.

If taught correctly, the experience of serving should be as searing to this generation of children as war was to the generations before them. It should have all the urgency of what happens after an emergency, such as Hurricane Andrew, when people who never knew each other as neighbors come to know each other as family.

Today we have among us a few of those teachers, a few of the rescue workers for our nation. Each of them has spent their lives rushing to the scene of the hurricane. Each of them has ventured outside when they could have stayed home, to forge links between communities.

In my book, It Takes a Village, I tell a story from my childhood. Near my neighborhood outside Chicago was a camp of migrant workers from Mexico. For a while, my only contact with them was unpleasant. A young Mexican was our local playground bully, taller and older and meaner than I was. It was not until my mother encouraged me to volunteer to babysit some younger children in the camp that I began to think of the migrants as coming from families just like mine, as a collection of mothers who cooked dinner and fathers who worked and children who liked to eat candy.

Susan Reyna has also ventured out, to babysit and feed and clothe and fight for migrant workers in South Florida. First at Centro Campesino, then at Migrant Services Council and now as founder of MUJER, she has looked after the most basic needs of a population used to doing without. When migrant homeowners suffered the most damage after the hurricane and received the least insurance, she showed them where to turn. She recognized that what might be familiar to her was entirely foreign to them, and acted as their guide.

Willie Brown is one of those citizen activists that pop up everywhere, and just can't help themselves from getting involved. For most of his adult life, he's been forging links between the many minority groups in Homestead and South Dade, as founder of the Haitian, Hispanic, African American Coalition, the Concerned Citizens Progressive Action group and a host of other

neighborhood groups. By now, he qualifies as a one man civil society.

Edward Pudaloff decided to forego the moment in our lives we are all waiting for: the comfortable retirement, in order to help others get there. He reached across generations down to the young people who needed his help, first as a guardian in Broward, then as founder of HANDY, a group that helps abused and neglected children.

Joseph Pinon was once a frightened child on a flight from Cuba to Miami. Now he works to make that relocation a more friendly experience, as an assistant city manger of Miami Beach, and as president of several Latin American service organizations.

Bill Colson is a trial lawyer who has fought large corporations to protect the consumer. He, too, has chosen to forego retirement, and instead has founded a group called Leadership Miami, dedicated to bringing together diverse leaders to address regional problems.

Finally, there's Marilyn Segal, a woman who has spent her life working on the issue dearest to my heart. For three decades, Mickey, as she's known to friends, has dedicated herself to studying child development. As a teenager, she worked in an orphanage. After college, she worked at an adoption agency. She then went on to found some of the most prestigious centers for the study of children in our nation. And her mission was as simple as it was grand - to encourage schools to stop separating children by their socioeconomic background. All that, plus five of her own kids, and a cookie jar in her office rumored to have never been empty.

Together, these extraordinary people have changed the lives of countless children and their parents in South Florida. But they have also done something more. They have shown us a way out of one of the most intractable problems facing America, a problem we've struggled with almost from the country's founding: how to keep a nation of increasingly fragmented ethnic groups from splintering. How to remind our citizens that despite all their differences they still suffer the same winters, or in the case of Miami, the same sunburns.

Miami is one of America's famously diverse cities. Each neighborhood wears its ethnic pride on its sleeve, with neon-sign delis or bodegas. In restaurants, schools, and theatres, Miami life is suffused with the color of identities. And the richness has lasted through the generations.

It is important for parents to teach their children a strong sense of identity. But that is only half a parent's, and a community's task. A child must also be taught to avoid ethnic arrogance, to respect everyone's else's strong sense of identity. And a community must teach its citizens to revel in the diversity of identities, and to consider the other a neighbor.

It is this lesson that Susan Reyna, and Willie Brown, and Edward Pudaloff, and Joseph Pinon, and Bill Colson, and Marilyn Segal, teach us every time they cross town, every time they reach beyond the familiar and become comfortable with the unknown. Call it the lesson

of babysitting: spend a day in a stranger's house and they won't seem so much like a stranger.

There is a teacher in Los Angeles who makes his students spend the night in a neighborhood they had been too scared to enter. He makes them stand on a street corner, or, if that's too frightening, camp out in an all night diner. So far, he's had only one near casualty.

But there's no need to be that dramatic. There is a story about my husband which illustrates for me what I would like service to become. One Thanksgiving when Bill was ten, his mother sent him to the corner store to do some last minute shopping. One of his classmates was there, eating a doughnout and drinking a soda. When Bill asked him where he was eating Thanksgiving dinner, he held up his doughnut and said "Right here." Bill didn't hesitate to invite him over for dinner.

We all have lonely colleagues, elderly neighbors, worried relatives who might need our help. If each of us developed the habit of offering it, we will have changed our nation. Service need not be lofty, or connected to some institution. It should just be a habit of daily living, as basic as eating or good health.

Harris Wofford, who helped to found the Peace Corps and now heads the Corporation for National Service, has said that the service ethic should be to democracy what the work ethic is to capitalism. Service, in other words, can be simple, a routine part of our daily lives, but also a necessary part. And one day it will be ingrained we won't need to give service awards. Thank you

THE WHITE HOUSE

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FROM: Hanna Rosin

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MESSAGE: I never got yr fax, but I think I found out everything I need
Thanks for yr patience

(1)

Draft – Community Service Speech

I think it's fitting to begin my remarks with a few words about a public figure who recently died. A woman whose life personified the public service that we are here to honor today: Mother Teresa. She will be missed by the thousands for whom she personally cared each year, as well as by the millions who were inspired by her selfless acts of charity and caring. I had the privilege to spend some time with Mother Teresa over the years and I can safely say that she was one of the most powerful people I have ever met.

Her power didn't come from any of the sources we commonly point to when we talk about power in the United States. It didn't come about from her skill at political wheeling and dealing or her graduation from an Ivy League school. It didn't come from making the right connections and shaking the right hands; nor from possessing a large bank account. Mother Teresa was a supremely powerful person because she understood the importance, the tremendous rippling impact, of personal action.

She knew that while government and other institutions are important in creating a prosperous and well-run society, ultimately government and institutions can only provide the blueprint for such a society. But we don't live within a blueprint. The greatest of accomplishments can only be achieved – and the greatest of problems can only be solved – by individual action. One simple, courageous, step at a time.

These simple steps are the bedrock of our democracy. Over two thousand years ago, when the principle was in its infancy, Greek lawgivers arrived at the notion that the strength of any democracy depends on the sum of the people involved. It is that notion that fuels our own experience today.

Imagine if the sum of our democracy included more people like Mother Teresa. Imagine if we were fortunate enough to include within our vast borders more committed women and men like those gathered in this room.

People like Willie Brown who has spent his entire life working to better the place in which he lives, whether by building a park community center or by bringing people together to bridge the racial gaps between our people. People like Marilyn Segal whose lifelong mission has been to better the lives of children. People like Bill Colson who has helped bring together the county's diverse leaders. And Susan Reyna, who, not content to let the needs of migrant Hispanic families go unanswered, formed MUJER to work for their benefit. People like Joseph Pinon, a former police officer, a Cuban refugee, who today works with numerous civic organizations.

These are people who embrace the biblical golden rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. They embrace it not only as a principle of faith, but as a principle of democracy and service.

Two years ago, during a summer heat wave, something terrible happened in Washington, DC. A four-year-old little girl and her two-year-old brother wandered away from their home and, apparently looking for a place to play, climbed into an unlocked car in a nearby lot. A couple of hours later, both children were found dead of suffocation.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, some neighbors pointed out that for years they had tried to get local authorities to build a playground so that kids in the area would have someplace safe to play. And the local government should have done that. But the neighbors bear some of the blame for what happened that summer, too. If they had understood and accepted their own personal responsibility, they might have taken it upon themselves to take turns watching the children; to clean up the yard the children ran in; and to chip in to buy a few outdoor toys that the children could all share.

A few months after this tragedy, a community service organization stepped up to the plate. With volunteer labor, a few contributions and a whole lot of planning, they created something incredibly important, yet exquisitely simple: a place for children to play.

It is through service like this that people together are able to achieve what alone they could not.

I know service was an important part of my upbringing as a young girl. It helped me appreciate the life I was born into, and enabled me understand the lives of others who seemed so different. I remember volunteering to baby sit for young migrant children while their older brothers and sisters joined their parents working in the fields. Taking care of those children not only gave their parents a little piece of mind for the few hours I was there, but it gave me a way to connect with people who spoke a different language and who ate what looked to me to be pretty exotic food. It gave me an opportunity to see that those foreign-seeming people had hopes and dreams for themselves, and care and love for their families, just as great as any I'd encountered in Park Ridge, Illinois.

It's important that we introduce our children to service, early, so that it becomes a way of life for them. Many schools and cities throughout the country, agreeing with that notion, are beginning to establish frameworks that make it easier for children to volunteer.

Schools like Washington Elementary School in Mount Vernon Washington have integrated service into its curriculum. Students there create classroom projects as well as perform individual acts of service, like tutoring younger children and acting as safety patrols. Here in Florida, North Miami Beach High School helps organize volunteers with its own web site and (ADD MORE EXAMPLES HERE).

I am proud of many of the accomplishments made by my husband's administration, but one of the things of which I am most proud is my husband's dedication to the Corporation for National Service, the public-private enterprise that includes AmeriCorps.

Around the country, young AmeriCorps members are devoting themselves to making our nation more secure for the future. They are doing this by tutoring children, and helping to raise reading scores; by immunizing hundreds of thousands of children; and by working with police departments to keep neighborhoods safe and to fight against drugs.

At the Summit For America's Future, held earlier this year in Philadelphia, thousands more Americans, young and old, took a pledge to participate in community service – committing themselves to help two million children by the year 2000.

But America's embrace of the service ethic came long before my husband's presidency. Long before AmeriCorps and its predecessors, the Peace Corps and Vista were even dreamed of. It was early in the 19th century when Alexis de Tocqueville observed that voluntary organizations had become a hallmark of American citizenship and a distinctive part of our national life. It's this unique trait that makes me most proud to be an American.

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Martin Luther King Jr., inspired our entire nation with his acts of service, reminding us that service is not something just for "other people" – it's for us all. He said: "You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't need to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. And you can be that servant."

He was right.

The greatest challenges facing us in the 21st century will not be solved by government alone. Our most daunting challenges will not be how to create greater technologies, bigger weapons, faster computers. No. We will need to figure out how we can live better in the midst of the technological and social changes we've already undergone. To understand how to retain a meaningful connection to our community when our communal interactions might be fewer. Our challenge will be how to maintain our most precious gift – our democracy – when so many Americans are feeling alienated from each other and their government.

It seems to me that in this area of our lives we have to go back in order to come forward. A robust economy is not enough. Smart trade policies are not enough. We have to renew our ties to our community and our country in order to derive the satisfaction we need from the wealth we have. Because I know that we as a people will be defined not only by the riches that we reap – but by the kind of society we build with our riches.

It takes more than money to achieve the things we most care about. It takes more than government. It takes commitment and time. It takes constant nurturing and vigilance. It takes the involvement of our people – the sum of our democracy – to fulfill our greatest goals.

Robert Kennedy said: "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

The people we are celebrating today in this room are sending forth those tiny ripples of hope. I hope you inspire others to follow your example. Because just as it is our privilege to live in a society for the people and by the people – it is also our fate.

End

REMARKS FOR THE CHARLES WHITED SPIRIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD
SEPTEMBER 30, 1997

It is a great honor to join you tonight in this world-class city to celebrate the better angels of our nature and our nation.

President Kennedy once said that "a nation reveals itself not only by the men and women it produces, but also by those it honors, by those it remembers." Tonight our nation reveals itself by the leaders we honor with the 13th Annual Charles Whited Spirit of Excellence Award. We honor heroes who reach across the lines that too often divide us. Heroes who, in good times and bad, lift up South Florida's vulnerable children and families. Heroes who, every day, make us proud of who we are and who we can become. But when we honor these dedicated Americans, we paint a picture of more than community service in South Florida. We show a model of citizenship in our democracy, a model that this generation -- like all generations -- must refine and redefine for its time.

I was thinking about community and citizenship while the President and I were back home in Arkansas. We just spent a wonderful weekend visiting family and friends and attending Bill's high school reunion. But our thoughts kept returning to the reunion our nation held Thursday at Little Rock Central High School. Forty years ago, when I was a young girl growing up outside of Chicago, I remember seeing pictures of the Little Rock Nine as they walked up the steps of Central High, escorted by the 101st Airborne Division. I will never forget watching them brave the hatred outside and the fear within in order to seize the opportunity that all children deserve, the opportunity to live and learn and reach their God-given potential. And I will never forget the look on their faces, 40 years later, as the President opened up the door for them again, only this time to the welcoming sound of thunderous applause.

Remembering that historic day in 1957, one of the nine, Melba Pattillo, wrote that she had "crossed the threshold into that place where angry segregationist mobs had forbidden us to go." Today, at Central High, students of all races freely cross that same threshold, which is now protected not by the National Guard, but by four strong statues emblazoned with these words: Ambition, Personality, Preparation, and Opportunity. It is up to us as a nation to make sure that all children have the ambition, personality, preparation and opportunity -- yes, opportunity -- they need to walk through those doors into the new century.

Notice that I said it is up to our nation, not just our government. Throughout our history, there have been those who claim government can do it all and those who insist government should do nothing at all. As usual, the real truth lies somewhere in between. Because when we think about our on-going struggle to build an American house that cannot be divided by race or religion, we are reminded of both the power and limitations of government. For while government can pry open those doors, while government can enforce our constitutional rights, and while government can help our citizens keep out of harm's way, it cannot heal our racial divide or reweave our frayed communities. It cannot make sure that involuntary segregation is not replaced simply with voluntary separation. It cannot change a heart or mend a spirit. It cannot make us feel connected to one another or allow us to enter the new century together. But citizens can. And as you have shown in South Florida, citizens do.

When Alexis de Tocqueville looked at our democracy, he described a nation that was truly special. Not just because of our system of limited government. Not just because of the individual initiative that thrives in our free-market economy. What has always made America special is the space between our government and our economy. Social scientists refer to it as our civil or civic society. All of us know it as the roles played by our families, our churches, our Boys and Girls Clubs, by all of you. We see it in Marilyn Segal's exploration of early child development and her fight to give the children of Broward County the right start in life. We see it in the Miami Herald's Holiday Wish Book, which brings community support to families in need. We see it in the three words that launched our nation: We the People, and in the three words that adorn our national seal: *E pluribus unum*, which tell us that out of many we are still one. This is not big government, it is shared government.

What all of this says, and what all of you have shown, is that good citizenship in a democracy means more than paying your taxes, casting your ballot, obeying our laws, and earning an honest living. Good citizenship means internalizing democratic values in our hearts and minds. It means realizing that we are responsible for one another, each of us our brother's and our sister's keeper. And, it means understanding that none of us got to where we are without someone opening the door for us, and none of us will ever get to where we need to go without reaching back to keep the door open for someone who comes after us.

Those ideals remain, but how we meet them must continue to change. Because for more than 200 years, we have been guided not by a document, but by a democracy, a living, breathing democracy. Every generation has sought to perfect it, without any real assurances that we ever will. Every generation has sought to balance the power of our government, our free market and our citizenry. Every generation has sought to meet its new challenges by redefining what it means to be a citizen in this great country. My parent's generation was asked to save our nation from economic collapse and world tyranny. Thirty years ago, my generation was challenged to fight for civil rights, explore space, and carry the American dream to every corner of our country and our world.

As we enter the 21st century, our families, our nation, and our world are all facing new challenges that will once again force us to redefine the role citizens play in our democracy. In our homes, parents are under more pressure as they try to balance work and family, and raise their children in the face of media messages that teach them that smoking is cool, and a consumer culture that tells them to value the logo on their sneakers more than the generosity in their hearts. Across our nation, new patterns of work, technology, and mobility have changed how we view our connection to and responsibility for our local and national community. And around the world, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the rise of new democracies create not only new responsibilities to build alliances of shared values, but also new opportunities to inspire and learn from them.

When Congressman Tony Hall met the late Mother Theresa a few years ago, he asked her how she was able to accomplish so much. She replied, "I did the thing that was in front of me." What is clear is that today, the thing in front of us is no longer just in our neighborhood or our local school. It is national, and it is global. And yet, while our concept of community continues to evolve, our age-old commitment to it must not.

I was pleased to hear that the Miami Herald and NBC have been hosting events called Community Circles to talk about how to solve the problems facing our most vulnerable children. If we are going to redefine citizenship for the new century, I believe that we need to foster a commitment and connection to ever-widening circles of community, from our home to our world.

To do that, we must first recognize that citizenship is a lifelong job and commitment. Not all of us will have children or work in an office. Not all of us will graduate from college or buy a house. But, all of us will be citizens in our democracy. We also know that teaching good citizenship must begin with our children. And that goes far beyond the time we must take to read to children, play with them, talk with them, and nurture them as they grow. It even extends beyond what we teach our children about cleaning up their rooms, or helping out around the house. What I'm talking about here is really our obligation to inspire children to serve others, to help them see service -- including political participation -- as a privilege, as an everyday fun activity, and as a way to find common ground with others by respecting – not just tolerating – our differences.

I was thinking about one of the ways my mother did this as I read about Susan Reyna's extraordinary work with migrant families. For a few weeks every autumn when I was growing up, migrant families worked the fields around Chicago and their children went to classes with us. One of the these kids took to bullying me and my friends on the playground. Were it not for my mother, I might have wallowed in my anger and fear. I might have judged an entire group based on the poor behavior of one individual. Instead my mother encouraged me to volunteer to baby-sit for the migrant families' young children on Saturdays so that their older brothers and sisters -- my classmates -- could help their parents in the field.

I remember how proud I felt to be serving families who worked so hard for so little. And I remember being struck by both the differences and the similarities in our lives. We learn the most about ourselves when we stand in someone else's shoes and someone else's world and look back at our own. I've always believed that those early experiences with service ultimately helped shape the direction of my career and my life. As Chelsea grew up, we tried to give her those kinds of experiences, by taking her to volunteer at shelters, encouraging her to be a part of a cause bigger than herself, and inspiring her to keep an eye out for everyday needs waiting to be met.

But, those needs don't always appear before us . Redefining citizenship for the 21st century also requires peering beyond our own backyards and creating a circle of community that binds our entire nation together. Our history is replete with examples of citizens pulling together when faced with war abroad and disaster at home. When Hurricane Andrew shook this great state, when floods ravaged North Dakota, and when home-grown terrorism struck Oklahoma City, we saw citizens gathering up their humanity and rising to the occasion, not as Latinos or Caucasians, liberals or conservatives, Jews or Christians, but as Americans.

Yet, even in the absence of adversity -- indeed, especially in the absence of adversity -- citizenship in the 21st century requires that we see our fates are inextricably linked to the fates of all Americans. We can wear our individual heritage like a badge of honor, but we should always do so as citizens of the same national community. When we have differences, whether they are on the playground or at the highest levels of government, we must lower our voices and look at our common purposes.

We need a national spirit that sees every problem as our problem, every solution as our solution, and the government as our government. We need an active citizenry with the courage to keep our institutions honest and the optimism to serve them on behalf of our nation.

And we need to give every American a way to serve their communities and their country. That has always been the President's vision for AmeriCorps. Today, right here in Miami, AmeriCorps volunteers are earning money for college while building homes for single families. They are teaching parenting skills to low-income citizens and reading skills to their small children. And they are recruiting high school students to mentor young children after school and during the summers. All in all, there are more than 950 AmeriCorps volunteers in Florida who are literally changing lives, for themselves and those they serve. If AmeriCorps gets the support it needs from our government and our citizens -- and it must -- it has the potential to help 160,000 people across the nation serve by the year 2000.

Finally, 50 years after the Marshall Plan, redefining citizenship for the new century means that we must reach out again and create a circle of community with our democratic allies throughout the world. I have been fortunate enough to visit countries in Europe that once lived under the shadow of the old Iron Curtain and now live under the flags of free independent nations as they work to build democracies with civil liberties, civic duties and a new sense of community. I have seen the spirit of reconciliation alive and well in South Africa, where a nation of diverse peoples has overcome 40 stubborn and violent years of Apartheid to begin the difficult journey to democracy. And to our south, and embodied in the diversity that enriches Miami, we have seen every nation of our hemisphere save one reject the rule of force and accept the rule of law.

All over the globe, nations are looking to the American experience as an example and an inspiration of what free people who pull together in common cause can accomplish for the individual and the community. They are looking at us to see not only how to build a democracy, but also how to nurture and sustain one. And their journeys, in turn, can inspire and guide us as we appreciate the blessings we have and continue our never ending quest to refine and redefine what it means to be a citizen in the oldest and greatest democracy in the world.

As we do all of this, as we commit ourselves to the ever widening circles of community throughout our neighborhoods, our nation, and our world, let us always fix our gaze on the fundamental principles of citizenship that never change.

It was almost exactly 100 years ago, at the dawn of the last century, that a little girl named Virginia O'Hanlon wrote one of the most famous letters to the editor of all time. Her question was, "Is there a Santa Claus?" And the answer the New York Sun editorial page gave was, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist." Those simple words offered children, and their parents, an anchor, a shield, something to believe in. That was the responsibility we had to the Little Rock Nine as they crossed the threshold into Central High. And, that is the responsibility we have -- as journalists, as government officials, as communities, as citizens -- as we help all children cross the threshold into the next century in a nation that is great simply because it is good.

Thank you.

(3)

Thank you. Thank you distinguished guests, staff of the Miami Herald, and citizens of Miami. I am honored to be here this afternoon to commemorate the spirit of Charles Whited, a columnist who reflected the best of this diverse community. Nothing makes me happier than joining in a celebration of service, and of those who dedicate their lives to it. I can honestly say that I am humbled by the achievements that today's six honorees have accomplished.

I have met enough dedicated citizens like today's award winners to know that they are precious, and essential to America's well being. Their commitment to service literally changes lives, and it can change our nation.

I don't mean that in an abstract way. Anyone who has seen a young boy enraptured by a mentor's lively reading will know what I mean. Anyone who has seen an elderly woman cheerfully recount her life story to a hospital volunteer will also understand. For the many Americans who need help, service is as concrete as a new house or community center or a neighborhood playground, built by the hands of caring citizens.

And what these citizens are creating is much more than a new house and a new playground. They are instilling in all those who come across them an ethos of responsibility, a spirit of generosity, and a message of hope. And by spreading those common American values, they are building the future of our democracy.

For American democracy can not just be about well oiled institutions, post offices and bus service and tax refunds that come on time. Our democracy must also internalize democratic values in our hearts, our minds, and our everyday lives. Now that we no longer have the threat of a cold war uniting us, it is time to turn inward, and remember what it means to be active citizens at home. And central to that memory is a tradition of service, of reaching out beyond the familiar, to help those in need.

Think of our democracy as a house. The post office and the bus service are its foundations, the walls that keep it from falling. But with only those things, it's an empty house. In order to come alive it needs people, meeting and greeting within its walls. It needs people with a common purpose, working together like a family.

And no matter how different they seem, Americans do, indeed, have a common purpose. What individual family does not confront the same questions that confront our national family? What parents do not wonder how, in the face of challenges, in the face of technology and television that fragment us, can they raise children - their own children and the nation's children? How to give them moral signposts to guide them in this frightening world? How to teach them our common values - values I call opportunity, responsibility and community. These are questions every parent, whether from Homestead or Coral Gables, from Miami or from Maine, must consider.

The answer has to do with why we are here today. It has to do with civil society - the meeting and greeting that happens inside the house. Civil society is that lively, bustling space where government can not, and should not reach. It is the heart of a good democracy. Fueling it are community leaders like the ones gathered here, running local organizations, philanthropies, volunteer associations, neighborhood groups, and even families. That is where our children will learn to be citizens, and serve their neighbors; that is where they will learn a new kind of patriotism.

For those who take on the task of teaching our children, it is a great challenge. Learning how to become an active citizen can not be taught with chalk and a chalkboard, in Citizen 101. It can not be tested with a multiple choice exam. The values that service teaches can only be learned through experience. There is no substitute for the first time a young volunteer sees relief in a neighbor's eyes, when she knows she has made a difference.

If taught correctly, the experience of serving should be as searing to this generation of children as war was to the generations before them. It should have all the urgency of what happens after an emergency, such as Hurricane Andrew, when people who never knew each other as neighbors come to know each other as family.

Today we have among us a few of those teachers, a few of the rescue workers for our nation. Each of them has spent their lives rushing to the scene of the hurricane. Each of them has ventured outside when they could have stayed home, to forge links between communities.

In my book, It Takes a Village, I tell a story from my childhood. Near my neighborhood outside Chicago was a camp of migrant workers from Mexico. For a while, my only contact with them was unpleasant. A young Mexican was our local playground bully, taller and older and meaner than I was. It was not until my mother encouraged me to volunteer to babysit some younger children in the camp that I began to think of the migrants as coming from families just like mine, as a collection of mothers who cooked dinner and fathers who worked and children who liked to eat candy.

Susan Reyna has also ventured out, to babysit and feed and clothe and fight for migrant workers in South Florida. First at Centro Campesino, then at Migrant Services Council and now as founder of MUJER, she has looked after the most basic needs of a population used to doing without. When migrant homeowners suffered the most damage after the hurricane and received the least insurance, she showed them where to turn. She recognized that what might be familiar to her was entirely foreign to them, and acted as their guide.

Willie Brown is one of those citizen activists that pop up everywhere, and just can't help themselves from getting involved. For most of his adult life, he's been forging links between the many minority groups in Homestead and South Dade, as founder of the Haitian, Hispanic, African American Coalition, the Concerned Citizens Progressive Action group and a host of other

neighborhood groups. By now, he qualifies as a one man civil society.

Edward Pudaloff decided to forego the moment in our lives we are all waiting for: the comfortable retirement, in order to help others get there. He reached across generations down to the young people who needed his help, first as a guardian in Broward, then as founder of HANDY, a group that helps abused and neglected children.

Joseph Pinon was once a frightened child on a flight from Cuba to Miami. Now he works to make that relocation a more friendly experience, as an assistant city manger of Miami Beach, and as president of several Latin American service organizations.

Bill Colson is a trial lawyer who has fought large corporations to protect the consumer. He, too, has chosen to forego retirement, and instead has founded a group called Leadership Miami, dedicated to bringing together diverse leaders to address regional problems.

Finally, there's Marilyn Segal, a woman who has spent her life working on the issue dearest to my heart. For three decades, Mickey, as she's known to friends, has dedicated herself to studying child development. As a teenager, she worked in an orphanage. After college, she worked at an adoption agency. She then went on to found some of the most prestigious centers for the study of children in our nation. And her mission was as simple as it was grand - to encourage schools to stop separating children by their socioeconomic background. All that, plus five of her own kids, and a cookie jar in her office rumored to have never been empty.

Together, these extraordinary people have changed the lives of countless children and their parents in South Florida. But they have also done something more. They have shown us a way out of one of the most intractable problems facing America, a problem we've struggled with almost from the country's founding: how to keep a nation of increasingly fragmented ethnic groups from splintering. How to remind our citizens that despite all their differences they still suffer the same winters, or in the case of Miami, the same sunburns.

Miami is one of America's famously diverse cities. Each neighborhood wears its ethnic pride on its sleeve, with neon-sign delis or bodegas. In restaurants, schools, and theatres, Miami life is suffused with the color of identities. And the richness has lasted through the generations.

It is important for parents to teach their children a strong sense of identity. But that is only half a parent's, and a community's task. A child must also be taught to avoid ethnic arrogance, to respect everyone's else's strong sense of identity. And a community must teach its citizens to revel in the diversity of identities, and to consider the other a neighbor.

It is this lesson that Susan Reyna, and Willie Brown, and Edward Pudaloff, and Joseph Pinon, and Bill Colson, and Marilyn Segal, teach us every time they cross town, every time they reach beyond the familiar and become comfortable with the unknown. Call it the lesson

of babysitting: spend a day in a stranger's house and they won't seem so much like a stranger.

There is a teacher in Los Angeles who makes his students spend the night in a neighborhood they had been too scared to enter. He makes them stand on a street corner, or, if that's too frightening, camp out in an all night diner. So far, he's had only one near casualty.

But there's no need to be that dramatic. There is a story about my husband which illustrates for me what I would like service to become. One Thanksgiving when Bill was ten, his mother sent him to the corner store to do some last minute shopping. One of his classmates was there, eating a doughnout and drinking a soda. When Bill asked him where he was eating Thanksgiving dinner, he held up his doughnut and said "Right here." Bill didn't hesitate to invite him over for dinner.

We all have lonely colleagues, elderly neighbors, worried relatives who might need our help. If each of us developed the habit of offering it, we will have changed our nation. Service need not be lofty, or connected to some institution. It should just be a habit of daily living, as basic as eating or good health.

Harris Wofford, who helped to found the Peace Corps and now heads the Corporation for National Service, has said that the service ethic should be to democracy what the work ethic is to capitalism. Service, in other words, can be simple, a routine part of our daily lives, but also a necessary part. And one day it will be ingrained we won't need to give service awards. Thank you

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Comments: These are the drafts from the column candidates.

Column Candidates

Comment Sheet

Name: _____

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CHARTER SCHOOLS

The day after we left Chelsea at Stanford University, full of excitement as she begins the next stage of her education, my husband and I went to San Carlos, California to the state's first charter school to study an educational development that is brightening the futures of children across the country.

We met with teachers, parents, administrators, and students who told us about their experiences building charter schools. These are public schools, supported and chartered by the states, open to all students, and accountable for their performance. But they are unique because they are freed from the red tape of traditional school bureaucracies. In San Carlos, we heard about what worked and why; the problems and frustrations they've encountered; and lessons learned.

I've been caught up in the challenges facing our education system since 1983, when Bill was governor of Arkansas and entrusted me with chairing a committee to make schools better. There are certain things I've come to believe deeply that help explain why charter schools make sense. First, children learn differently and are smart in varied ways; we need to tailor schools to respond to their individual needs and talents. Second, the key to good education is to have high expectations-- of students, of teachers, and of parents-- and then give them a hand in making changes happen. Third, good ideas are contagious.

The day my husband took office in January, 1993 there was just one charter school in the country. Now, supported by legislation he passed in Congress in 1994, there are 787, serving over 100,000 students in 24 states. These schools were started by many different kinds of people-- teachers, administrators, community groups, businesses.--who want to make our schools better. Let me tell you about just a few places that reflect the extraordinary diversity and promise of charter schools.

Earlier this year, I visited the Vaughn Next Century Learning Center outside Los Angeles. Once one of the lowest-achieving elementary schools in the area, grossly crowded and bordered by a neighborhood of broken-down crack houses, it's been transformed into one of the country's most exciting charter schools. Stressing the crucial involvement of parents, Vaughn has an onsite Family Center to help the school's mostly poor Latino and Asian-American families get the basic health and social services they need, from immunization and dental care to parenting classes. Parents volunteer in the school in return for the services. The school requires students to wear uniforms, provides after-school tutoring and gang prevention programs, and calls students' homes when they are absent, resulting in an attendance rate of 99%.

Another acclaimed charter school, Boston's City on a Hill, was founded by two teachers from traditional inner city schools where they felt they had only minimal influence shaping decisions. They chose to spend (and risk) their careers building an alternative school where the diploma truly means something. It's only granted when children have earned it by demonstrating they've mastered a demanding set of academic skills that they'll need to compete in the 21st century world they're entering. City on a Hill takes advantage of all the great resources of Boston: art classes are held in museums; the gym program uses the YMCA. Students are required to get involved and work in the community to link school to real world experience and learn in practice the values underlying our democracy. They also can't graduate if they haven't learned to swim.

The first charter school in the nation, City Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota, was started to attract and serve children who'd dropped out of school. One of the main reasons for its tremendous success was the involvement of twenty school drop-outs who helped design and create a school they'd want to attend.

Charter schools aren't without problems. The start-up costs are high. They sometimes face opposition from entrenched bureaucracies reluctant to give up control. They need to be scrutinized closely from the start in deciding who gets charters, how they'll be managed and their performance judged. If charter schools don't perform, they can be closed down. A handful have been.

In November, Secretary of Education Dick Riley will convene a national conference on charter schools in Washington so they can learn from each other and we can learn from them all. This year's budget calls for funds for another 500 schools. Charter schools are already proving what exciting things can be achieved when we relinquish the idea that one size fits all in American education and give the people who know and care most about our schools a free hand to find new and better ways for children to learn.

(770 words)

FROM : PHONE NO. : [redacted] Sep. 25 1997 07:34AM P2

2 DRAFT

Charter Schools: A Gift to Our Community

September 24, 1997

I wish you all could have been with Bill and me when we visited the San Carlos Charter Learning Center, one of the very first charter schools in the nation. It was a day I'll never forget.

We had just left Chelsea at Stanford, one of the toughest moments we've ever endured as parents. Visiting San Carlos was just what the doctor ordered.

San Carlos is a good news story – one of hundreds taking place every day all across the country. It's a school that works. Volunteers gave 20,000 hours of time to create the Charter Learning Center. When it was created, one of the organizers said, "The granting of the San Carlos Charter is a gift the community has given to itself....the gift of the opportunity to create choice for all learners."

That's what charter schools are all about.

Charter schools are public schools operated under a charter or contract. They may be organized by parents, teachers or others from the community, but the idea is that, in exchange for public funding, they are freed from the regulations and red tape that stifle effective innovation. In addition, they are held accountable. If they don't meet the high expectations they've set for themselves, their charter is revoked.

In 1991, Minnesota became the first state to pass a charter school law. Now, merely six years later, there are 700 charter schools in 29 states.

As parents, we all know what works for our children: clear expectations that all children can and should learn; manageable school and class size; an orderly classroom environment; the close personal involvement of at least one teacher with each child; a commitment to tailoring instruction to how different children learn; and active parent participation.

These are pretty fundamental principles. Yet, in too many cases, our public schools have become too big -- too industrialized. Gone are the basic ingredients once considered requisite to a good education. That's where charter schools come in.

I've been privileged to visit charter schools all across the country. At San Carlos, Bill and I saw a business run by students at the school. Eleven to 14-year-olds develop and market inexpensive games and software for children of all ages.

At the Vaughn Next Century Learning Center, principal Yvonne Chan showed me where crack houses used to stand next to the school. She fought for state funding to bulldoze

the houses and build new classrooms. What Chan is most proud of, though, is her students' daily attendance rate – 99%.

Another California school has lengthened the school year to 200 days. Jingletown was created by Oakland's Hispanic community, long frustrated by the school district's refusal to provide a bilingual middle school. The longer school year, combined with a longer school day, allows the school to provide study hall, art and music classes that are no longer offered in the district's regular public schools. Jingletown parents clean bathrooms and provide food services for one hour each week, allowing the school to spend precious resources in the classroom, where they belong.

Early on, critics complained that charter schools would serve only the affluent. Actually, the opposite is true. Charter schools are serving more minority and at-risk students than anyone ever expected. Michigan's charter schools have more than twice the minority enrollment of the public schools.

Here's one of my favorite stories: Pam Girod, a teacher in Minnesota, used $9,000 of her own money to fund the Cedar-Riverside Community school for students from a community housing project who had no neighborhood school.

I could fill a year's worth of columns with stories just like these. Parents, in partnership with energetic educators, are making them happen all across the country.

The President and I are determined to take the lessons we've learned from these stories and use them to infect every public school in America. In November, Education Secretary Richard Riley will convene a national conference on charter schools, bringing together teachers, administrators, parents, and others who are interested to share their very best ideas.

The recently enacted balanced budget agreement contains enough money to set up thousands more charter schools across the country. At San Carlos, Bill announced the release of $40 million in grants to establish 500 more charter schools right away. We want to see 3,000 – or even 4,000 – charter schools in operation by the year 2000.

Charter schools are about giving people a chance – about empowering parents, teachers, and communities. But, most of all, charter schools are about doing what's best for our children.

TALKING IT OVER (758 words)

3

Last week, my husband and I flew to California to get Chelsea settled in at college. It was a difficult time for me as a mother, but as First Lady I had a different experience.

While we were in California, the President and I visited the San Carlos Charter Learning Center, one of our nation's emerging charter schools. There, we encountered a vibrant community of dedicated teachers, students and parents working together to meet the diverse needs of their children. It was easy to see success on the smiling faces of those kids.

I don't think anyone would deny that a strong public school system is crucial to the health of any nation. As we are so often reminded, today's children are tomorrow's doctors, teachers, business owners and parents. We all agree that every child, from every background and in every part of the country, deserves the opportunity to develop his or her God-given potential.

For that reason, the President and I have devoted a lot of time and attention to education reform. While Bill was Governor of Arkansas, we went into the schools to learn what was needed. We worked on many issues, but one of the things we heard expressed frequently was a desire for public school choice. Before long, Arkansas passed a law granting parents more freedom to choose which school their child attends.

Charter schools -- which have developed in the last five years -- take the element of choice one step further. Charter schools are public schools which are not bound by ordinary regulations but instead are created under contracts specific to them.

Each child is different, and each child has a different set of talents as well as needs. Sometimes it takes a particular kind of environment to truly nurture a child's gifts. Because charter schools operate under a set of guidelines that they themselves have established, they have the freedom to develop innovative techniques -- or to reinstate effective old ones -- to meet the varied needs of their students.

Many advocates of school reform believe that schools would be more effective if, like businesses, they were answerable to their customers -- in this case, students and parents. Charter schools are accountable: In order to keep their charters, they must maintain high standards, and they must satisfy the people they serve.

And charter schools are satisfying people all over the country. In Pacoima,

California, a charter has transformed the Vaughn Next Century Learning Center from a place where drug deals were happening on school property to one of the most promising schools in the nation. Among Vaughn's many successful facilities is a Family Center, a one-stop referral center which helps families obtain health and social services.

In San Diego, the O'Farrell Community School clusters its students in "families" headed by a single teacher for three years, so as to keep track of students' progress. Community service is a requirement for graduation, and the school has a counseling center to help students with nonacademic problems.

In Massachusetts, where there are currently twenty-two charter schools, studies show that the overwhelming majority of participants are delighted with the results. Eighty percent of the parents and students surveyed reported that their charter school experience was superior to that of their previous school, and seventy-five percent of the parents reported that their child's interest in learning has increased at the new school.

Beyond educating our children, charter schools educate us -- about what does and doesn't work for our students. Far from leaving other schools behind, these learning centers provide models to be emulated. With some care and attention, what succeeds in one school can be adopted by another. In this way, every school will be encouraged to act like a charter school, and students across the nation will enjoy improvements in the ways they learn.

There are now over five hundred charter schools across the United States. Because these schools often use money already allocated for public schools, they are cost-effective. But they need additional support to get started. The President recently released $40 million in grants to help these schools get up and running, and I share his hope that every American will see the value in funding these schools.

Charter schools represent what is best about America -- diverse groups of teachers, students, parents and members of the community joining together to take responsibility for meeting the needs of our children. We *can* improve the quality of education in this country. In fact, we are already doing so, and charter schools are leading the way.

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[002]

Department of English

FAX TRANSMISSION

Date: 9.26.97

To: Michael O'Mary

Fax No.: 202.456.6244

Michael: Thanks so much for all of your help!

From: Melissa Levine

Fax No.: 314.935.7461

Phone: ML's home: P6/(b)(6)
but call 314.935.5190 if there's a problem with the fax

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To Michael O'Mary

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Thanks very much

(2)

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202-337-3171

TO: MICHAEL O'MARY

FAX: 456-5709

TOTAL PAGES: 3

DATE: 9/25

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