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Digital Divide/Disability Event - 9/21/00

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Digital Divide Event
Thursday, September 21, 2000
Flint, Michigan

Message: The President will visit Flint, Michigan as part of his initiative to bridge the digital divide and create digital opportunity for all Americans. This event will highlight the importance of ensuring that new information and communications technologies are accessible to and usable by the 54 million Americans with disabilities. The President will announce new actions by the government and the private sector that will help ensure that people with disabilities are full participants in the Information Age. The President will highlight several model programs that are empowering people with disabilities by providing access to cutting-edge technology, increasing employment opportunities, and allowing people with disabilities to acquire new skills using distance learning.

**GREET ON
ARRIVAL:**

Time: 2:15pm – 2:25pm

Greeters: Lenore Croudy, Chair of Board of Trustees, Mott Community College
 Dr. John Snell, Vice Chair of Board of Trustees, Mott Community College
 Father James Bettendorf, Secretary of Board of Trustees, Mott Community College

EVENT:

Time: 2:25pm – 3:20pm

Location: Ballenger Field House, Mott Community College

Backdrop: “Digital Opportunities for Americans with Disabilities”

Lectern: Blue Goose

On Stage with Speakers: None

Announce: Off-stage announcement of the President, accompanied by Secretary Norman Mineta, Mayor Woodrow Stanley, Judy Brewer and Karla Hudson.

Program: Mayor Woodrow Stanley
 Judy Brewer, Director of Web Accessibility Initiative, W3C
 Secretary Norman Mineta
 Karla Hudson
 The President

Audience:	1,000 Cabinet: Judy Heumann, Asst. Sec. For Special Ed and Rehabilitation Services, DoED Susan Ness, FCC CommissionerHeumann IGA: Local electeds Other: 400-500 disability community 300 students other community members
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MEET AND GREET:

Time:	3:25pm – 3:50pm
Location:	Recreation Room, Mott Community College
Guests:	20 supporters

PRESS PLAN:

Open Press

NOTE:

Karla Hudson, age 29, has worked as a rehabilitation counselor for the last four years at the Michigan Commission for the Blind. Here, Karla, who is fully blind as a result of a genetic condition, assists blind or vision-impaired people in finding employment. In her position, Karla uses a high-tech Braille display and computer to research job sites on the Internet, correspond with clients and perform other tasks. Without this technology, Karla would have to use a Braille reader to read the want ads and other job listings – a painstaking, time-consuming task. At home, Karla uses speech output software on her computer to read the newspaper, shop online and access information on the Internet. Karla believes her ability to access technology allows her to enjoy life more fully, maintain an independent lifestyle, succeed at work and explore a wealth of new opportunities. Karla earned a B.A. and and M.A in Rehabilitation Counseling at Michigan State University.

In her job, Karla has witnessed clients employment opportunities skyrocket over the last several years with the augment of technology, such as speech output software. Twenty years ago these opportunities would not have been available. Technology has helped level the playing field. However, she also recognizes the stumbling blocks still to be addressed, such as compatibility issues, high costs of the software, and lack of accessibility to current technologies. She believes that the potential of technology for people with disabilities is yet to be fully tapped. Karla lives in E. Lansing, Michigan with her husband Michael, the Director of Resource Centers for Persons with Disabilities at Michigan State University. She is articulate and very motivated.

The President will be seated next to Judy Brewer, Director, Web Accessibility Initiative, W3 Consortium, and Karla Hudson.

Scheduling Contact: Stephen Lamb

Substance Paper Contact: Patrick Dorton

Press Contact: Jason Schechter

Remarks Contact: John Pollack