

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
VHI "SAVE THE MUSIC" ANNOUNCEMENT
NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL 72
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Thank you, John, for that generous introduction. But it is I who should be thanking all of you here today for all that you've done together to bring music back into our public schools. I am so pleased to be here at East Harlem Tech Jr. High -- and I want to thank your principal, Iraida Hada [Eye-rada HaDAAH] for hosting all of us today. I also want to add my thanks to the young musicians who have played so beautifully for us today.

I always know I'm in a good school when I come in and see art hung all over the walls. And when I came in and saw all these boxes of instruments on the stage -- I knew that this building would soon be filled with the sounds of music as well. I've learned that ten years ago, you had a great music program -- and that students here would proudly play their instruments in the annual East Harlem parade. [And for years -- you were the top winners of that parade]. But like so many schools over the past decade -- the music program here was cut way back -- to a single piano, and no organized music classes.

Now, through the “Save the Music” initiative, many of the students who are with us today will once again be able to play their instruments – and fill this school – and the streets of Harlem – with their music.

Thanks to our partners here today, this success story will now be replicated in 40 schools across the City. And I’d like to ask all the principals and teachers who are receiving similar grants to stand up – so that we can applaud them for their efforts to get music back into their schools – and into the lives of their students. I know that four years ago, schools in District 14 in Brooklyn had little or no music instruction. And thanks to the work of VH1 – 75% of the music programs in that District’s schools have been restored. So this is an initiative that really can transform our schools.

I want to pay a special tribute to the people who have made all of this possible. Barry Rosenblum, president of Time Warner Cable, for being such a strong partner with VH1 to “Save the Music” for young people here and around the country. To Sumner Redstone, chair of Viacom, for his courageous leadership. And to VH1 and John Sykes – whose brain child we celebrate today. I knew John was a powerful advocate for putting music back into our schools when he was able to persuade my husband to do the unthinkable: give away his Saxophone. And as we can see – from the instruments up on this stage today – he’s been successful in persuading many others to give generously as well.

I know we all are thrilled today to hear from Jewel about her experience as a young musician, and I want to thank her for being such a positive role model for our young people, and such a tireless advocate for the arts, and for this “Save the Music” initiative.

I'm also glad that we have Chancellor Rudy Crew with us today – who has been such a passionate voice for lifting up New York's public schools, and for recognizing that the arts must be an integral part of the curriculum. And perhaps most important -- I was pleased to hear from Aaron [Lisboa – Lis-BO-ah] who did such a good job of telling us what this new music program will mean to him and his classmates. It's because of you -- the young people here at East Harlem Tech Jr. High and in schools across the city -- that we are here today.

I can think of so many young people – like Aaron – who I've met over the years whose lives have been transformed by the power of music. Today, we learned how Jewel thrived after she was introduced to music by her father, who was a music teacher. I've heard BabyFace talk about how he wouldn't say anything in school. Not a word. And then one day he was introduced to the drums. And all of a sudden, music gave him “a voice and a reason to say something.” I think of so many young people I've met -- like the ones sitting here in this room - - who have told me why the arts are so important to them.

Children who would never have found their voices – or their talents – or their self confidence -- if they hadn't been given the chance to pick up a paint brush or a musical instrument, and begun to compose their own futures.

Today – here at this school -- we see the best of what can happen when a community comes together to invest in music and art in the classroom. But you are the lucky ones.

There are more children attending school this year than ever before in our history. But if we don't act now, too many of them will go through school without ever painting a picture, or singing a song; or playing an instrument. If we don't act now, too many of them will attend schools where arts programs are the first to get cut – and the last to be added. Everyone here knows – arts and music education is not a luxury for the few; it is a necessity for all.

We can see – in the faces of our young people – that the arts not only give children new ways of creative expression. They can also change attitudes from despair to hope. In one of the poorest neighborhoods of Washington, D.C, I met students who told me that poetry helped them control their anger and increase their self confidence. As one young man wrote in a poem: “I’m so musical that when I write songs, you sing them for the rest of your life.” All of our children deserve these same opportunities to express themselves in positive ways.

Many of us have supported arts funding and arts education almost intuitively over our lifetimes – but now we have research that supports those intuitions. Studies – like the one at the University of Wisconsin and elsewhere – show that music education not only lifts our children’s hearts and sparks their creativity. It also dramatically increases their abstract reasoning, spatial skills, and their scores on math and verbal exams. We know that putting the arts in the schools helps children stay there and excel there.

And I'm pleased that you've been working with Fran Rauscher [Raow-sheer] from Wisconsin to develop a keyboard lab in which students here and in other New York public schools can not only learn to play music – but can sharpen other skills that will benefit them in the years ahead.

Just this March, I was pleased to release a study of school districts that have made a concerted effort to provide comprehensive arts education programs for their students. And the single most important factor that the study found in the success of these programs was community support for arts education – people and organizations willing to lobby for it; to fund it; and to support it through in-kind resources of talent and material.

The efforts of VH1 and Time Warner over the past few years – and the major announcement that we celebrate today -- are perfect examples of what can be accomplished when communities and the private sector come together to ensure that music and arts are a central part of our children's lives.

And today – more than ever -- our kids need the confidence and the hope – and the ability to express their anger in positive and creative ways -- that only the arts can develop.

Last September at the White House, when I issued a national call to action to bring the arts back into every school in America, I knew it would not be an easy mission to fulfill. But as I look around this room today – at the bright young students; at our committed educators; at this remarkable pile of boxes filled with musical instruments; and at our partners in the private sector; I'm filled with confidence that we will succeed. I want to thank all of you for what you've already done – and what you will do in the future – to make this national call for music and the arts a reality in every school in America, and an experience that can enrich the lives of all of America's children.

Thank you.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 26, 1996

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT ARTS AND HUMANITIES FOR
AT-RISK YOUTH EVENT
THE WHITE HOUSE**

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Thank you and welcome to the White House. And I want to start by thanking the Chicago Children's Choir because we were, Richard and the rest of us, in the Blue Room getting ready for the program. I'm going to ask them to sing again in the middle and the end of the program because I really appreciate their being here.

I want to thank so many people, but let me start with Sheldon Hackney, and Jane Alexander and Diane Frankel who, through thick and through thin, have remained tireless in their efforts to promote our nation's rich cultural and artistic legacy. And the good news is that a day after there was an agreement on the 1996 budget, we still can say that the United States supports the arts, and the humanities and our museums. And we're just so grateful for the constancy of effort that many of you brought to this struggle in encouraging members of Congress and others to understand that our country needed to have the kind of commitment represented by these agencies. So, I want to thank all of you for making that possible.

On behalf of the President, let me also convey our very deep appreciation to the members of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Under the leadership of John Brademas, you have devoted considerable time and attention over the past year to helping children discover their creative potential through art, words, and ideas. And I would like to ask all the members of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, starting with Mr. Brademas, to please stand so that we can recognize and thank all of you for your work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the countless artists, teachers, museum professionals and community leaders across our country who are offering our children positive alternatives, often amidst violence, and destruction, and despair. These men and women, many of whom are in this room representing thousands and thousands of others across our country, believe in the promise of every child, and in the power of the arts and humanities to transform children's lives. Your dedication and expertise have given and will continue to give

thousands and thousands of children new hope and confidence in their own future. And I am very grateful that those of you who could be here were able to join us today.

You know, every day, through the media, particularly television, we hear so many negative stories about America's children. We hear about children floundering in a sea of confusion, frustration, anger, and violence. We hear about children growing up in environments that are so impoverished -- economically and spiritually -- that they cannot resist the lure of drugs, gangs, and other forms of destructive behavior.

But there are so many more positive stories to tell. There are so many young people and children, who despite the odds, are going forward with optimism and confidence in their own lives.

I was in a school in Philadelphia a few weeks ago, and a young boy in seventh grade said, "You know, Mrs. Clinton, all we hear about are the bad kids; nobody really pays attention to us, and we're trying real hard to do the best we can." He said, "It must be like when an airplane crashes; everybody pays attention, and people forget about the thousands that land safely everyday." And I told him that I would do my part, as each of you is doing, to make sure that the positive stories get told. That we know that in every corner of America there are examples of children -- who might otherwise have been written off --- discovering joy, and fulfillment, and discipline and confidence. And often the way they are doing that is through artistic and intellectual expression.

The study that the President's Committee is releasing today, called "Coming Up Taller," offers compelling evidence that the arts and humanities provide young people with creative, productive, and safe outlets for their energy.

My husband often says, "Children need something to say yes to." And what better to say yes to than music, dance, painting, poetry, writing, drama, history, photography and other forms of creative expression.

The Committee's study -- which was funded entirely by private sources -- cites numerous instances of children whose school work, social habits, and outlooks on life have improved with exposure to arts and humanities programs.

I couldn't possibly relate every story. I hope you will read the report with the care it deserves. But for example, let me just mention a few:

-- One teenager, at risk of dropping out of high school, became involved with an artists-in-training program sponsored by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Now she has a full scholarship to

college and is in her second year studying voice.

-- A sixth-grader growing up in a low-income area of Philadelphia joined *The People's Light and Theater Company*, which works with students after school on a year-round basis. The students wrote, improvised and performed plays, including works of Shakespeare. Today, the girl is one of the top students in the 12th grade and is hoping to become a lawyer. I'll have to talk to her about that decision. Her 19 classmates in the program will all graduate from high school this spring.

-- A four-year-old boy came to pre-school every day but never talked. One day, as part of an early childhood arts program, the boy drew a picture in class, and began to tell his classmates the story behind his picture. Since then, his development has flourished through arts projects.

Each of these cases illustrates the benefits that come when children are engaged in activities that teach new skills, build strong interpersonal relationships, emphasize excellence, and provide a stable, safe environment that enhances learning and growth.

The President is extremely proud that his Administration -- through the National Endowment for the Arts, and its partnerships with the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Corporation for National Service -- as well as the ongoing work of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum Services, has consistently supported creative alternatives for young people.

Clearly our nation today faces great challenges and difficult choices when it comes to how we allocate federal resources. But I hope that, as we establish priorities for a new millennium, Americans will appreciate that the very small amount of public support given to the arts and humanities is a down payment on our future. It is not only an investment in our young people -- it is an investment in the values we claim to honor and the cultural traditions in which our democracy has flourished for more than 200 years.

If we care about civility, character, and our democratic freedoms, then we ought to support the federal agencies and institutions whose mission it is to make American culture available to all children, not just those whose parents can introduce them, but every child in whom that spark can be lit if they are given the chance.

Now this is National Poetry Month, and there is probably no better way to express what we all feel and what brings us together here than to quote some of the eloquent words from Rita

Dove, our National Poet Laureate from 1993 to 1995. As Ms. Dove reminds us:

"If children are unable to voice what they mean, no one will know how they feel. If they can't imagine a different world, they are stumbling through a darkness made all the more sinister by its lack of reference points. For a young person growing up in America's alienated and disparate neighborhoods, there can be no greater empowerment than to dare to speak from the heart -- and then to discover that one is not alone in one's feelings. Once hope and self-esteem have been engendered, the work of redefining the future can begin."

Well that is what we are about the business of doing, engendering hope and self-esteem and trying to redefine a better, more optimistic and confident future. Indeed, when we hear the extraordinary voices of the Chicago Children's Choir, or the words of the two young people who will talk to us today -- or when we learn from Bill Strickland about his experiences as a student and teacher in children's art programs -- we know that our rich cultural traditions are alive and well and safely guarded for the future.

Thank all of you for your resilience in the face of some opposition and misunderstanding, for continuing to believe in America's children, and for understanding the roles that our arts and culture play in our individual and collective lives.

We are so honored today to have one of our finest actors and citizens with us. Certainly those of us who have followed his career have appreciated so much of what he has brought to the screen, the way he has moved us, the way he has provoked us, but recently he has, through a particular movie, reminded us of how important the work teaching of young people is when it comes to the arts. I was asked recently what my favorite movie of the year was, and I said "Mr. Holland's Opus." Not only because it started in the 1960's, when I was in high school, so I sat there looking at those white socks and tennis shoes the girls were wearing, seeing the scenes in the hallways, living through all that I can recall, but also remembering what it was like when I was in high school and even the smallest school, in the poorest state - like my husband's school in Hot Springs, Arkansas - had a band, had an orchestra, had art classes, had drama classes, put on plays. And now I look around, and just as we saw in the movie, those are considered frills. They're being cut out. No one wants to go to the trouble or spend the relatively meager resources needed to give children a chance to flower in ways that will give them the positive direction that some many of them need. I'm really grateful for that movie, but I'm even more grateful for the support and the career of Mr. Richard Dreyfuss. Please join me in welcoming him here today. Thank you.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION MANCHESTER CRAFTSMEN'S GUILD
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
JUNE 7, 1996**

- I'm very happy for this chance to visit the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild and to meet all of you -- the students and teachers who are making this place a wonderful haven for the arts and an important training ground for the future.
- In April, when Bill [Strickland] came and spoke at a White House arts event, we were deeply moved by what he had to say. He described an oasis for the young people of Pittsburgh -- a place where you can listen to world class music, emulate first-class artists and mentors, and create your own beautiful works of art. Ever since that afternoon, I have been very eager to come here.
- Here, at the Guild, you are learning much more than how to shape clay, take pictures or develop film. You are learning about the power of your own imaginations and intellects. And imagination and intellect, when combined with practice and discipline, can take you wherever you want to go in this world. So believe in yourselves.
- I'm here to let you know that the President and I, and all of your fellow Americans, have faith in you and in your ability to make the most of your lives. And, if you're willing to take responsibility for your own lives, we will do everything we can to help you.
- I'm also eager to hear your stories, and to learn about your experiences here at the Guild, at school, or at home. What do you think have been the most valuable lessons you've learned here? And how do you think we can encourage more young people to get involved in programs like this one?

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Every time we watch a child's face light up as she plays the first few notes of a song or puts the final touches on a painting, we see the power of the arts to educate and inspire the next generation. We know that exposure to the arts and humanities not only fires up children's imaginations and makes their spirits soar. It can help them think, learn, and grow. It can give them the positive alternatives they need to stay out of harm's way and the confidence they need to reach their God-given potential.

That is the purpose of the Coming Up Taller Awards. In communities across America, artists, teachers, library and museum professionals, and local leaders are using the arts to create safe havens for children after school, during the summer, and on weekends. ~~Instead of expressing themselves with violence,~~ children in these programs are learning to put their feelings on paper. ~~Instead of wandering the streets or sitting glued to the television,~~ they're in enriching, creative, and safe environments learning new skills and meeting new friends. ~~Instead of hopelessness and frustration,~~ they can experience the joy and pride that come with mastering an instrument, creating a mural, writing a poem, or recording their community's history.

The Coming Up Taller Awards recognize and reward some of these outstanding programs. Behind every award are children, who often have overcome destruction and despair, to lift up their lives and reach their dreams. Behind every award, are caring adults who believes in the promise of all children and the power of the arts to transform their lives. The Coming Up Taller Awards are a down payment on our children's future -- and our nation's future as well.

Congratulations to the winners and the children and families they serve every day.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

First Lady

Honorary Chair, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities