

For Immediate Release
September 8, 1998

Contact: Nancy Mathis/Sarah Zak
National School-to Work Office (202) 401-6222

***FIRST LADY ANNOUNCES \$1.8 MILLION SCHOOL-TO-WORK GRANT TO
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA***

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton today announced that the District of Columbia will receive a \$1.8 million award from the National School-to-Work Office, which is jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education.

The funds will be used to implement a School-to-Careers system (as School-to-Work is called in D.C.) that will serve the District's entire public school system and its 77,000 students.

"This award recognizes a commitment to competitiveness that D.C. has made to all its school children," said Mrs. Clinton. "I am pleased that our nation's capitol has done the hard work of organizing a School-to-Work partnership that will encourage academic excellence and open doors to the high-skill, high-wage jobs of the future. "The entire Washington community should play a role in making sure that our kids have a realistic view of what it will take to succeed in the 21st century and are adequately prepared to meet those challenges."

The District's School-to-Careers plan calls for employers such as BellAtlantic, the World Bank, Clyde's Restaurant Group, and the District government to provide adult mentors and work-based learning opportunities to students -- internships, apprenticeships and job-shadowing. In turn, the City's public schools will develop new curriculum that helps better prepare students for college and careers based on input from business, industry, organized labor, and professional organizations. Teachers will be offered opportunities for both additional training and summer internships in area businesses (including high-technology) so they can better demonstrate to students how classroom lessons are applied in the workplace.

The city of Washington began planning its School-to-Careers system with \$200,000 grant from the National School-to-Work Office in 1994 bringing the total STW investment in the District (including today's award) to \$2 million.

The National School-to-Work Office was established in 1994 through the School-to-Work Opportunities Act which passed with strong bi-partisan support. Its purpose is to provide states and local communities with venture capital to form partnerships among schools, parents, students, employers, organized labor and community organizations. Those partnerships connect the classroom with the world of work to show students how academic achievement is crucial to their

success as a working adults.

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Currently, 42 states, Puerto Rico and now, D.C., have received STW implementation grants. The remaining states have received development funds and have applied for implementation grants. The National School-to-Work Office has also awarded grants in 189 local communities across the country.

*Note to Editors; a one-page description of D.C.'s School-to-Careers plan is attached.

District of Columbia State Implementation Grant

Awardee: Government of the District of Columbia (D.C. Public Schools)

Contact: Noel F. Meekins (202) 724-7170

Award Amount: \$1,800,000

School-to-Career, as School-to-Work is called in the District, is a cornerstone of the city's larger efforts to reform its education system and reinvent its entire local governance structure to better serve the needs of its 500,000 residents.

D.C.'s School-to-Career (STC) initiative has four, laudable goals to; enable all of the city's youth to enjoy upward mobility, participate fully in a knowledge driven economy, achieve long-term self-sufficiency, and become contributing members of the community.

A D.C. School-to-Careers Governing Council comprised of key employers, heads of city agencies, and other interested parties will steer the city's efforts to implement and sustain a comprehensive School-to-Work system. A School-to-Careers Office, housed within the School Reform Office of the D.C. Public Schools, is responsible for day-to-day operations. Each city high school will hire an on-site STC Coordinator.

D.C.'s efforts to offer School-to-Careers to all of the city's 77,000 public school students will begin with high school. Ninth graders will be asked to select a "career pathway" based on interest, aptitude, and discussions with their teachers, parents, and guidance counselors. Each "pathway" provides a framework and context for learning and career exploration. "Career Pathways" include: business and marketing; health and human services; arts and communication; engineering and science; and industrial technology. Students may move among "pathways" as their interests and aptitudes dictate.

In 9th grade, students will use their selected "pathways" as a means to focus on problem-based learning and career investigation. By 10th grade, students will "job shadow" an employee at the worksite. Eleventh graders will join in a structured relationship with an adult mentor who gives the students support, career guidance, and opportunities to learn about specific jobs. In the last year of high school, 12th graders work in internships -- paid or unpaid -- with employers for a specific period. At each grade level, work experience will be directly related to the student's selected "career pathway". In school, academics will be linked to work-based learning experiences. Finally, each student will be asked to prepare a plan for post-graduation which will address their plans for college and additional training.

The District hopes that by the second year of its implementation grant, it can begin to extend STC opportunities to elementary and middle school students through efforts geared toward career awareness and exploration (field trips to businesses, classroom visits from recognized professionals, job-shadowing, etc.) Additionally, internship for teachers will be offered through some of the STC partners including the D.C. Chamber of Commerce.

In an effort to include all of the city's students (85% of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch programs), STC is working to link with non-school hour services for both students and dropouts. The World Bank has committed to providing adult mentors and tutors, and STC has made connections with existing federal initiatives -- Job Corps, "One Stop" Centers, Summer Jobs, and the Individuals with Disabilities Act to build on efforts already underway.

Key partners include: the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO; the Washington Teachers Union; Bell Atlantic; the World Bank; the University of the District of Columbia; the

Washington Performing Arts Society; Clyde's Restaurant Group; and the Government of the District of Columbia.

FAX TRANSMITTAL

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To: Christy Macy
White House
Office of the First Lady

Date: May 28, 1998

Fax #: (202) 456-5709

From: Christine Silvia
Public Policy Department

Comments:

Ms. Macy,

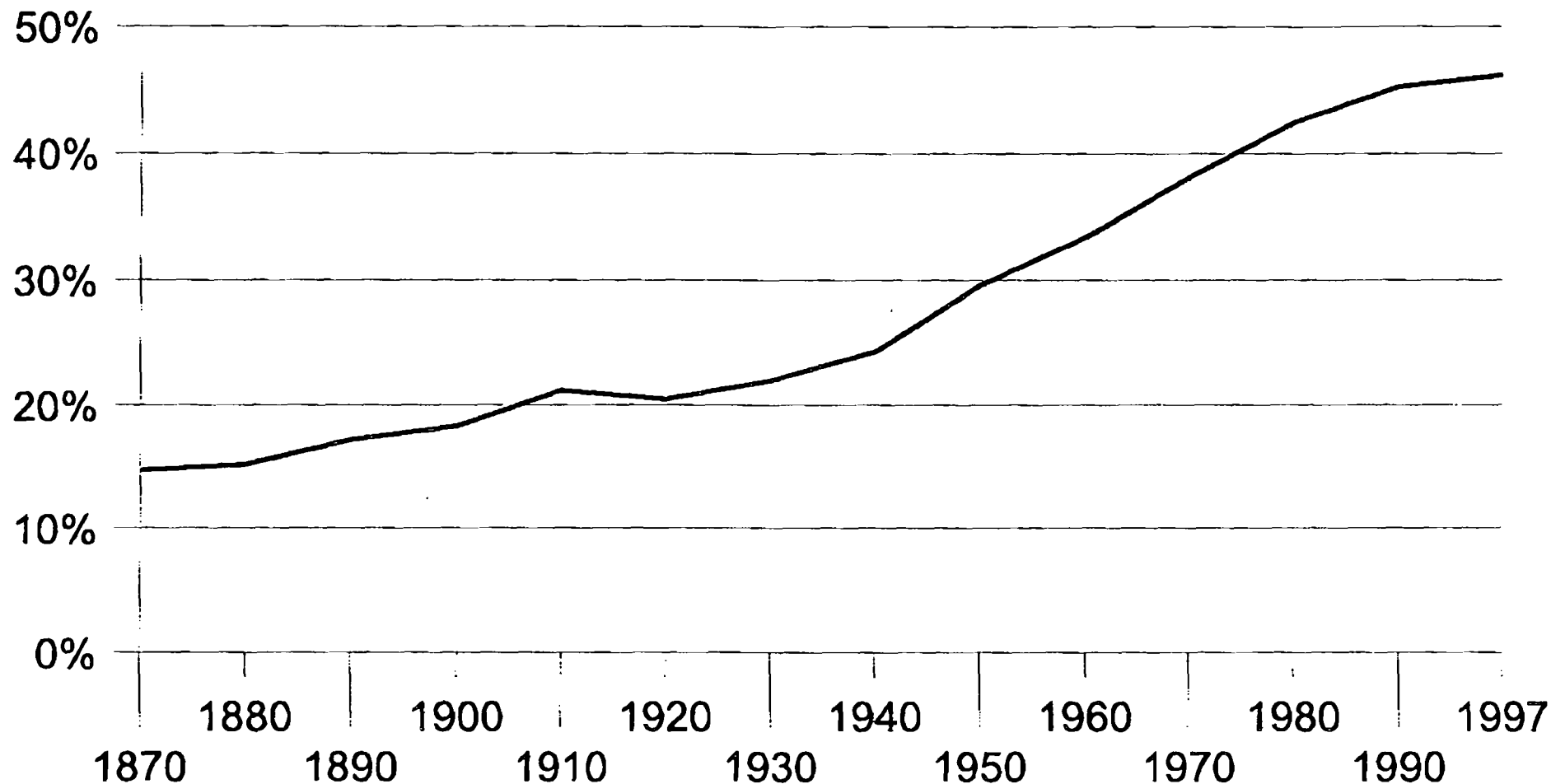
Karen Nussbaum asked me to send you a copy of a chart I recently pulled together for her. As you can see, the chart shows that women's share of the labor force has increased dramatically over time. If you have any questions about this chart, or if I can be of additional assistance, please give me a call at (202) 637-5177.

Thanks.

Christine Silvia

*Go of
Women
who work*

Women's Share of the Labor Force, 1870-1997



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, various years; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Handbook of Labor Statistics - Bulletin 2340, August 1989; Bureau of the Census, Statistical History of the United States From Colonial Times to the Present, 1976.

Note: Several series were used to create this chart. Data from 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900 came from the Decennial census (January); data from 1910 came from the Decennial census (April); data from 1920 came from the Decennial census (January); data from 1930 and 1940 came from the Decennial census (April); and data from 1950 to the present are from the Current Population Survey.

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REACH OUT AND READ ANNOUNCEMENT
NEW YORK CITY, NY
DECEMBER 1, 1998**

I'm so pleased to be here at Bellevue Hospital -- one of New York's finest -- and to join this distinguished group of doctors and educators who have made this event possible: Carlos Perez (executive director of Bellevue Hospital Center); Dr. Barry Zuckerman (founding director of Reach Out and Read); Dr. Leora Mogilner (director of Reach out and Read at Mt. Sinai Medical Center). I also want to acknowledge Richard Robinson -- president and CEO of Scholastic Corporation, and Patricia Schroeder, former member of Congress and president and CEO of the Association of American Publishers. We've come together today to promote one of the most important ingredients in a child's overall well being -- the love of reading.

Many of you have heard me talk about my fond memories of reading to Chelsea when she was a little child. Bill and I used to stretch out on her bed, hold her in our arms and either read her books or make up new tales about imaginary characters who embarked on breathtaking adventures. Just like our parents and grandparents did with us.

What we didn't know back then was that the stories we read to children during their first years of life do even more than strengthen our emotional bonds with them. As last year's White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning made clear, reading and talking to our infants and toddlers helps them learn words and concepts. It actually fires up the synapses and stimulates the growth of their brains. And it lays the foundation for a lifetime of reading and imagination.

Yet when we speak to young parents about the importance of reading and talking to their young children, many are puzzled by the thought of reading to someone who can't understand or talk back. Some worry that they're not good readers themselves or, sadly, that they can't read at all. We must tell them, "It doesn't matter." All parents can open a book, point to the pictures, and make up a story. All parents must hear the message: Reading and talking are as important to our children's brains as car seats and immunizations are to their health.

But how do parents know this? They won't always have access to the latest research about child development. But they do take their children to the doctor, and listen to their advice. Our idea was that pediatricians should prescribe reading just like other good medicine. And that they should fill that prescription on the spot by handing a parent or caregiver a book. But we knew they couldn't do this alone.

So 20 months ago, I issued a challenge to publishers, booksellers, pediatricians, librarians, health centers, and other dedicated citizens to work together to make sure that every infant and toddler who goes to a doctor returns home with a book. The initiative was modeled on the national Reach Out and Read program -- and we called it the Prescription for Reading Partnership. And today, across the country, the number of children who have been served by "Reach Out and Read" doctors has swelled to more than 780,000 in 47 states. The number of doctors trained to prescribe reading has jumped to 5,000 -- which means that books are being prescribed at approximately 200,000 well visits a year.

Today, I'm privileged to be here as you take an important next step in this national campaign to promote reading for children -- by launching the Reach Out and Read Coalition of Greater New York -- a city known for its great publishing houses, hospitals, community health centers, and nonprofit organizations. While your needs here are big, your hearts are even bigger. The breadth of your coalition is remarkable -- over 100 member organizations have joined. And today, you are committing yourselves to meet an ambitious goal -- to "prescribe" books to one million children in the five boroughs, New Jersey, and Westchester county by the end of the millennium. Thank you for all you have done and all you will do -- to prepare our young people for the challenges of the 21st century.

I am especially honored to announce today that Scholastic, a leader of the national Prescription for Reading Partnership, has expanded its generous commitment to our cause. Scholastic is not only donating 50,000 books to the Reach Out and Read Coalition of Greater New York. It is donating one book for every new child served by the program over the next five years. Scholastic is also extending its local challenge grant program to New York City so that for every \$5,000 raised locally, 500 books will be given locally.

And, for every \$100,000 raised nationally, 5,000 books will be given nationally. Lastly, Scholastic will expand their multi-lingual book program, which I had the honor of announcing last April in Chicago, to include two additional languages- Bengali and Serbo-Croatian- as a means to serve these growing communities of New York.

Thanks to these efforts -- more children will have books in their hands -- encouraging them to read, encouraging them to learn, and encouraging them to grow in new and expansive ways. I want to commend Mr. Robinson and Scholastic for contributing so much to the lives of our young people.

In a world in which well-off families can provide their preschoolers with computer software that teaches them phonics and can buy whole libraries of quality children's literature, it should not surprise anyone that children from families without big pocketbooks may be at a disadvantage when it comes to reading. In fact, children from affluent communities begin first grade with vocabularies almost double those of their peers in low-income communities.

We need to do more to level the playing field -- by supporting high quality early childhood development programs, providing education for parents, offering children the chance to own books of their own and working towards another kind of literacy -- computer literacy.

So I would like to commend a new computer literacy program that is also being launched today in New York, thanks to some of the people here and their partners around the city. Over 10,000 pieces of software are being donated by U.S. Kids Compute -- in conjunction with the Learning Company. First Book will in turn distribute the software across the country -- improving access for children who, for economic or other reasons, have had little or no access to computers and educational software. -- *the keys to successful*

Last year, the President set an ambitious goal for our country: that all children will read independently and well by the end of 3rd grade. This challenge, coupled with new research about how best to teach reading, has already sparked changes in elementary school classrooms nationwide. Programs like the ones being launched today will help boost our nation's efforts to reach the President's goal -- and ensure every child in America has the skills to succeed in the 21st century.

Congratulations to all of you on this successful launch of your new “Reach out and Read” partnership. I eagerly await the results of your first year, and many years to come. I also want to thank you for ~~also~~ giving me the opportunity -- in a few moments -- to perform one of my most favorite tasks -- reading a book to the children.

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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
CHARTER SCHOOL MEETING
INDIAN TREATY ROOM
THE WHITE HOUSE
AUGUST 4, 1998**

- Thank you, Mike (Mike Smith -- Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary at US Department of Education) -- for that introduction. I want to welcome everyone here today to the White House -- for this important discussion on charter schools, and what we can all do to ensure they succeed here in Washington, D.C. Welcome to Alice Rivlin, incoming chair of the Control Board; Josephine Baker, chair of the DC public charter school board; Tonya Vidal Kinlow -- chair of the charter school committee of the elected School Board. A special welcome to the representatives from the School Board, and the leaders of the DC Charter schools -- 17 of which are scheduled to open for the first time in only a few short weeks.
- Thank you to the panelists who have traveled here from across the country to share with us their wisdom and “best practices” about how to open and manage successful charter schools. Appreciation also to the people at the US Department of Education who have been working so hard to promote quality public education and effective charter schools in communities nationwide: Mike Smith; Judith Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary; and Arthur Cole, Director of School Improvement Programs.
- I also want to acknowledge the leadership of someone who is not here -- DC School Superintendent Arlene Ackerman -- whom I met with recently. We discussed our mutual support for reforms within the public education system. She has been a forceful proponent for improving public education for every DC student -- and is bringing new vision and energy to the job of superintendent. She’s also been very involved in and supportive of the charter school initiative here in DC. Unfortunately, we had to change the date of this event -- and she had family obligations she could not break. Arlene sent me a note reinforcing how much she wanted to be here -- and I am very pleased that Eloise Brooks has joined us to represent the Superintendent.
- I recognize how incredibly busy all of you are -- particularly those of you who are responsible for opening your schools in just a few short weeks. And I applaud you for taking the time to come here today -- to contribute to this discussion, and to share your expertise.
- We’re all here today because we’re advocates of public education -- and we believe that every child -- across the country and here in DC -- deserves to attend a quality public school. We’re also here because we believe that charter schools can play a significant part in revitalizing and strengthening public schools today -- by offering greater flexibility from bureaucratic rules, so that parents, teachers, and the community can design and run their own schools, and focus on meeting goals and getting results.

- As you know, this Administration, and this President, are deeply committed to improving public education -- and as part of that commitment, to expanding charter schools nationwide. The President wants to expand public charter schools that are open to everyone; that are non-sectarian; that are accountable for results; that provide real choices to parents and students. The President believes, as I do, that charter schools are a way of bringing teachers and parents and communities together -- instead of other efforts -- like vouchers -- which separate people out -- siphon off much needed resources; and weaken the school systems that so desperately need to be strengthened.
- At the beginning of this Administration, there was only one charter school in the country. This fall, over 1100 charter schools are expected to open their doors. A total of 33 states -- plus DC and Puerto Rico -- have passed laws authorizing charter schools. In 1994 -- there was \$6 million in the budget targeted to support charter schools. In 1998, nearly \$75 million in federal assistance is available to provide new and continuing grants to states to help charter schools cover costs for planning and initial implementation. The President has requested \$100 million for FY '99.
- Both the President and I have visited charter schools across the country that are leading the way in offering important choices to public schools students and their parents. Many of these schools are meeting the needs of students who had trouble succeeding in more traditional public schools.
- I visited one such school in San Fernando Valley in California, whose students were mostly Hispanic, and where academic performance was low. Today this school is a charter school. There are computers in every classroom; kids wear uniforms; parents are helping out in the classrooms. Scores are up. So are expectations for high achievement. I visited another charter school in Wilmington, Delaware, which was a great example of a business/community partnership, with a math and science focus. So I've seen first hand how charter schools can bring parents and teachers and businesses together to help meet the educational needs of the community; and how lifting the sometimes stifling rules and regulations of the bureaucracy can spark the energy and creativity of an entire neighborhood.
- And today, you will be hearing from some of the leaders of the nation's top performing charter schools from across the country -- whose innovative approaches and partnerships have transformed their schools; their students and their communities. And whose inspirational leadership becomes a model for us all.
- But the President -- and all of us here today -- are very well aware that the charter school movement is still in its infancy. And like anything new and different that we undertake, we know the challenge before us is a daunting one. While some charter schools have thrived, others have already failed and been shut down. So we have to be very honest about what works, and what doesn't work. And we have to learn from each other. That's why this meeting today is so very, very important.

- Today, you'll be discussing critical issues facing charter schools today -- like funding shortfalls -- that result in some schools running out of money before they have a chance to finish even the first year. We're working to ensure that doesn't happen -- by securing proper and adequate funding for charter schools, as well as for all public schools. And there are hopeful sign that many members of Congress agree with us. [Last Thursday, the House Appropriations Committee ensured adequate funding for both charter Schools and traditional public schools.]
- You have an extraordinary opportunity to shape the lives and the future of America's children. As a charter school, you have the advantages of greater flexibility -- from designing the curriculum to the hiring of teachers. But you also hold a sacred public trust. If schools accept the freedom from the bureaucracy -- but don't do the hard work of being accountable for improving student achievement -- then the students lose. And we all lose. I know that some of you have been working very hard to ensure that public trust is maintained -- by developing an effective accountability plan with your governing boards. And I've been impressed that those efforts could serve as a model for the nation.
- I know how much all of you are looking forward to today's discussion. You recognize that if we are to make headway in this critical area of public education -- then we must listen to those who have gone down this path before us. I hope that what you hear today -- both the success stories and the considerable challenges -- will help the charter schools in DC succeed and flourish. Surely we all have a stake in that success.
- I regret that I am unable to stay for this discussion. So I will now hand you back to Judith Johnson, who will open this up for discussion. But before she does, I want to again thank all of you for coming here today. Given how extremely busy all of you are -- particularly at this time of year right before school opens -- I commend you for taking the time to be here -- to share your wisdom; to learn the lessons; to engage in a frank and honest discussion. This is a time of great opportunity for the children and parents of our nation's capital -- and for young people across the country. Let's work together to fulfill their great promise.

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
CHILD STUDY CENTER
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
DECEMBER 1, 1998

Thank you, Mr. Corzine [CORE-ZIGN] (chairman and CEO of Goldman, Sachs & Co; and 1998 Gala Chair) for that kind introduction. It's a great pleasure and honor to join you and Dr. Harold Koplewicz [KOP-LE-WITZ], director of the NYU Child Study Center; Brooke Neidich [NY-DICK], chair of the Center, and all of you here this evening. I want to begin by offering my heart-felt congratulations on the launching of this Child Study Center, which I had an opportunity to visit briefly this afternoon. Your vision to combine scientific research, education and community outreach has made this the most comprehensive child mental health facility in the region -- and one of the largest in the nation. I am truly honored to receive the award you are bestowing on me this evening.

But it is what all of you do -- on behalf of our young people every single day -- that deserves our deepest appreciation and gratitude. For so many years, when we talked about what children needed to grow up strong and healthy — we thought primarily of their physical well being. By devoting this Center exclusively to promoting the mental health of children and adolescents -- you will help complete the circle of comprehensive services that we now know young people need to grow and learn and flourish.

Perhaps most important of all, the Center has placed scientific research at the heart of its work with parents, educators, pediatricians, and mental health providers — where it belongs.

That such a revered and pioneering institution as the NYU School of Medicine has made this level of commitment to the mental health of children and adolescents underscores the magnitude of the challenges before us.

As many of you know, an estimated 12% of the population under the age of 18 suffers from a psychiatric illness — and 8 million of America's children are in need of help. Here in New York state — it's estimated conservatively that 80,000 young people will suffer *without* treatment -- often because their families can't afford it. The problem becomes even more pressing when we look at other indicators that contribute to poor mental health — children living in poverty; those who are abused and neglected; those who are falling behind in school.

The tragedy of mental illness in children and adolescents is an all too familiar part of our lives -- experienced in families that cross every economic and social boundary. I've read some of the heart-breaking words of the children who are part of the Center's "Childhood Revealed" book of drawings. "I just feel like a piece of me inside is missing" says 11-year old Andy. A 14-year girl draws a discarded umbrella in the rain — and talks of watching her mother abuse drugs. All of us are affected — parents and children alike.

Today, thanks to centers of research and education like this one — and the work of the National Institute of Mental Health -- we have made remarkable strides toward erasing the myths and misconceptions about children's mental health. We've learned not only how to identify and treat child and adolescent mental illness more effectively — but also how to help prevent it in the first place. Research tells us that problems are not inevitable -- they can be identified, prevented, and treated. The fact that parents are major supporters of this Center says volumes not only about the need for more support and information -- but also the hope that you have given to children and families across the region.

This Center is a reflection of how far we've come over the years.

As some of you know, I first became interested in child development when I was in law school, and I had the chance to study at the Yale Child Study Center. I was privileged to work with one of the pioneers in the field of infant behavior, Dr. Sally Provence. Later on, in my work with children's organizations such as the Carnegie Council on Children, I watched many dedicated men and women work to apply current scientific knowledge and research in the public policy arena -- reinforcing my belief in the mutuality of research and policy.

One need only look at the progress we have made — and how we have made it — in areas affecting children to appreciate the connection. Could we have lowered the rate of infant mortality, eradicate childhood diseases like measles and polio, or developed and released new drugs and therapies without a nexus between medical science and policy?

Over the past decade, we've learned a breathtaking amount about the importance of children's earliest experiences to their rapidly forming brains, and their healthy development. Last year, the President and I hosted the first-ever White House Conference on Early Childhood Development and Learning. We wanted to give the leading experts in the field of early childhood development — the scientists, pediatricians, researchers, and others — the opportunity to explain their discoveries, and to put this invaluable body of knowledge at the service of America's families, doctors, policy makers, and educators.

It seems astonishing now that we used to think that a baby's brain's structure was virtually complete at birth. Today, we understand that it's a work in progress — that everything we do with a child -- hugging them, reading to them, answering them with a smile -- or neglecting or abusing them -- can impact on that rapidly forming brain. Similarly, before the NIH began conducting research into the emotional lives of our young people, we used to think that children couldn't suffer from depression. Now we know they do.

All of this new knowledge about brain development has profound implications for society as a whole. As you know all too well — the experiences of young children have a tremendous bearing on whether or not they will grow up well adjusted or anxious and depressed individuals, peaceful or violent citizens, focused or undisciplined workers, attentive or detached parents themselves. Whether, in other words, they will be able to fulfill their God-given potential, or be hobbled by problems that will rob them of the joy and productivity of a full life.

This new research and related studies have important implications for policy makers as well. In Washington, we have to pay much more attention to what science is telling us -- and ensure that the policies we craft reflect that knowledge and understanding. Knowing the importance of the early years in a child's development -- for example -- tells us we must pay very close attention to the quality of child care we provide. New research in the area of children's mental health points to the importance of intervening early in a troubled child's life. Studies showing that children whose fathers are involved in raising them tend to be less violent and have higher I.Qs underscore the importance of developing programs that help fathers be better parents.

Part of what is so exciting about this Center's work is your focus on translating scientific research into practical skills for those who touch the lives of children every day. Until that knowledge is part of our everyday approach to how we deal with children, all the scientific discoveries in the world won't help our children cope; or learn; or overcome their problems. I commend the Center's outreach efforts to help parents become better parents -- and to help teachers improve how they manage the classroom -- and identify at-risk students. I also want to encourage your national public awareness campaign on child and adolescent mental disorders.

We still have a long way to go in bringing these difficult issues out into the open, and we must begin by doing a better job of educating parents and teachers and the entire community. Information, research, and a strong dose of honesty is the only way we can begin to diminish the fear and ignorance that can only perpetuate the problems of mental illness.

Much of the invaluable information and knowledge we have gained over the years is the result of the work of scientists, doctors, and researchers like many of you here this evening. But we have also gained it through the work of the federal government. The government supports over 90% of all children's research, and since 1993 — our investment in this work at the NIH has increased 25%.

This year, my husband signed into law the largest single dollar increase for the NIH in its history. This \$2 billion across the board new investment will help stimulate breakthrough research into mental health and child development, funding important research in areas from mental health to how children learn to read to infant day care.

Another top priority for this Administration is to sharpen the rigors of psychiatric and other drug research to benefit our nation's children. Like many of you, the President and I have always been concerned that drug companies don't sufficiently test whether medicines are safe and effective for children. And just last week -- the Food and Drug Administration issued ground-breaking new rules that require drug companies to conduct wider testing of drugs in children.

For too long, doctors have had little guidance in how to administer drugs to children and adolescents. Soon, children will be able to share in the recent progress being made in the area of drugs — including those that combat AIDS. These new rules will also have important implications for drugs that treat child mental health disorders. I want to thank all of you who joined the President in this important initiative.

The children you help treat and guide today will be the next generation's leaders, doctors, lawyers, educators, law enforcement officers; and perhaps most importantly — parents. Their future depends on the investments we make today: in early childhood development programs and child care; in after school programs; in child health care coverage and in pre-and post-natal care for young mothers. Their future also depends on investments in Centers like this one — which will help ensure more hopeful futures for young people who are in trouble and in need of help — and which will help ensure that fewer children need these services in the first place.

We don't need any more research to know such investments will yield great returns tomorrow -- in better health, fewer social ills, and ever-greater opportunities for our citizens.

As we approach a new millennium, and begin thinking about what gifts we can give to our children and future generations, let's rededicate ourselves to the promotion of children's well being in every domain — physical, social, intellectual and emotional. We are coming closer to the day when we can ensure that every child in American can fulfill his or her God-given potential -- free of pain and suffering, filled with confidence and hope, and ready to embrace the extraordinary challenges of the 21st century. It's perhaps the greatest challenge we face. But with the hard work and dedication of people like yourselves — it's a goal we can and will attain.

Thank you.

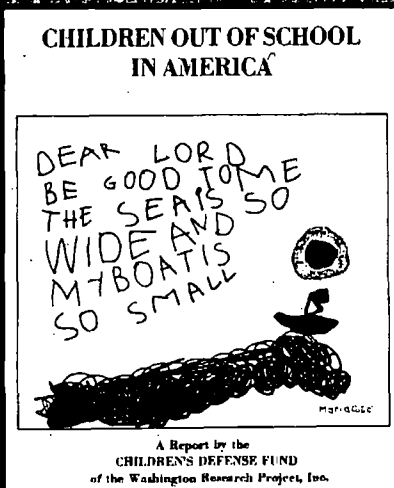
1974

- *Children Out of School in America*, CDF's first major report, documents 2 million children not enrolled in school, including 750,000 children with disabilities. In addition to a multi-state door-to-door survey with local community groups to find out why children were out of school, the report also analyzed federal census and Office for Civil Rights special education data for 505 southern school districts.
- Monitoring office established to implement court order establishing the right of children with disabilities in District of Columbia schools to receive an education.
- First CDF state office opened in Mississippi to document the problems of special needs children, organize parents, and challenge the exclusion of disabled children from schools in that state. Mississippi had no compulsory school attendance for any child, having repealed it to avoid school desegregation.
- The Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment Program (EPSDT), the child health program within Medicaid, promulgated regulations to implement legislation.
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act passed which prohibited detention of children with adult prisoners. CDF's testimony and data played key role.

- Buckley Amendment enacted to protect privacy of children's school records. CDF worked closely with Republican Senator James Buckley and later published pamphlet for parents about law's protections.
- CDF filed successful lawsuits against state of Louisiana to stop the exportation of special needs children to costly out-of-state Texas institutions far away from families and in often inhumane conditions. CDF also filed successful lawsuit to separate children from adult prisoners in South Carolina jails after documentation of detention of children in adult jails in every South Carolina county. Five of six plaintiffs — two of them truants — had been brutally raped and beaten by adult prisoners.

1975

- *School Suspensions: Are They Helping Children?* published. Documented 1 million children suspended from school in study of only half of the school population, mostly for non-serious offenses and many without due process.
- CDF's Child Health division established.
- The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) enacted, creating federal right to education for disabled children (now the Individuals with Disabilities Act). Before 94-142, Office of Education data showed 37.5% (3 of 8) disabled school-age children unserved by schools; today, fewer than 1% are neither



FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CELEBRATES
THE YEAR OF HUMANITIES AND ARTS (YoHA)
AND THE ARTS OF CITIZENS PROGRAM
HILL AUDITORIUM (TRANSCRIPT)
APRIL 28, 1998

Thank you. Thank you very much, President Bollinger and Provost Cantor, administrators, faculty, students, alumni of this great university, members of the Ann Arbor community, elected officials, distinguished guests and friends. It is a pleasure to be back here in Ann Arbor and back on this campus, back in this concert hall. Not only have many great American artists performed on this stage, the building is a monument to the creative expression of one of the nation's finest architects, Lewis Kahn.

So I am very pleased that not only am I a degree holder from this university, but that I feel a part of this community. We gather today for the continuation of an important discussion that was started here last year about the humanities and the arts, and what they mean to us, what they should mean to us, what they must mean to us, and to our country. I was thinking, as I listened to President Bollinger speak, that this year-long series that you have had going on the campus is particularly apt because certainly--as we move toward the end of this century, and indeed toward a new millennium--we are going to be thinking more often and more deeply about who we are, where we are going, what we mean to one another, and what our lives mean to ourselves.

I want to thank the leadership of this university for helping all of us to begin that discussion. I would like to thank Lee Bollinger for his many contributions: as a legal scholar, as the President of this University, and perhaps even more importantly as an advocate for the principles and traditions of American public higher education. Through his dedication, (Applause) this university continues to stand for what is best in the history of our country. I know that President Bollinger, among his many academic accomplishments, is something of a First Amendment scholar. I, too, am a great supporter of the First Amendment, but I can't help but think that it might have just passed even though his mind that censorship would be in order given the recent UPI college ratings, as opposed to those by the AP. (Laughter and applause)

But staying true to his values, you did not hear that from him. (Laughter)

The classrooms and laboratories on this campus remind us of the value of a diverse student body and faculty, and the benefits they bring to a university community. I was (Applause)...I was very impressed and moved by the opinion piece that was written by the President Bollinger and Provost Cantor that appeared today in the Washington Post entitled, *The Educational Importance of Race*. I commend it to everyone on this campus--and indeed on every campus--because it talks about, in a very clear way, the challenges as we attempt to bring our university systems into the future with our values and ideals intact. I want to thank Provost Cantor for your advocacy on behalf of the Arts and humanities, and for the time and energy you have committed to helping Congress explore the role of women in our nation's military. (Applause)

I would also like to thank, as well, Associate Vice Provost Julie Ellison, Director of the Year of the Humanities and Arts, and David Scobey, Director of the Arts of Citizenship Program, for sharing with students, faculty, and the Ann Arbor community their vision of the dynamic relationship between the arts and humanities, and a democratic society. When one thinks about the title of this series, [Arts of Citizenship], it could be just as well stated [Arts and Citizenship] because, to my mind, they are very closely related. The arts play an integral role in determining what we mean by citizenship. Certainly when I use the word arts, I am including arts and humanities. They also tell us something about how we practice the art of citizenship, what it means to be part of a large, diverse, pluralistic democracy, particularly at this point in history.

So this conversation does come at a propitious time. As I was thinking back on the last 1,000 years, as we are about to end this millennium, I was reminded of all of the dire predictions that were occurring around that time. I don't know if you have ever heard of a prolific and rather controversial monk by the name of Raoul Glaber, who lived in the 10th century, who consistently warned his local citizenry of impending doom. Now, perhaps because of his checkered career--he was expelled from several monasteries--he didn't attract much of a following. The earth did not implode as he predicted. In fact, we have a lot of progress that we can look to over the next ten centuries, even though we still can mark those last 1,000 years, as well, by plagues and genocides and other unbearable human suffering.

But Raoul Glaber comes from a long line of doomsayers and pessimists about the human condition. The kind of people who are always looking for what is wrong with the advancements that occur, who are always pointing fingers at one another and predicting the end of civilization as we know it.

Yet despite the doomsayers--and despite all of our own follies and missteps and tragedies--we have a lot to look back on with pride because time's passage also allowed for the discoveries of Galileo and Newton, the art of an El Greco, or Rubens or Picasso, the writings of a Murasaki, a Shakespeare, Tagore, Neruda, the ideas of Locke and Gandhi, and so many more. We can also look at those who were political actors who helped move the idea of human progress forward. We can look at those who built a strong economy, created inventions and scientific discoveries, all of which unleashed human potential and energy. We know that for the last thousand years, from Islamic communities spreading north across Africa to Native American Indian tribes right here in the upper Midwest, people created new forms of art, built cities, designed new systems of cultivation, remapped their worlds, and thought up new ideas.

Now fueling all of these scientific, intellectual and artistic advances was, of course, the human imagination. An imagination rooted not only in the knowledge and understanding of the past, but in the ability to dream and envision a future. An imagination that allowed men and women throughout time to say no to the archetypal doomsday monks, and yes to their own ideas of the possibility of a more positive and more possible tomorrow.

Today we find ourselves at the end of another century, and even another millennium. There is a lot that will occur in the next several years, all kinds of retrospectives, people talking about the past, worrying about the future. But what I hope is that conversations like the one taking place here, about the humanities and the arts, will help us think more clearly about what is at stake as we plan our own individual futures and as we think about that larger, public, common good. There are many unanswered questions about what will happen in the 21st century. Will this century finally yield a cure for cancer? Will we find another Mozart? Will we end poverty, or perhaps even, aim and come near to lasting world peace?

Maybe some of that, but certainly not all of it. Because, we will continue as human beings, having to strive to overcome the age old problems that have beset us. Yet we also have a darker view of what might occur. Will the next 100 years give rise to more ethnic and racial hatred, a wider chasm between the rich and the poor, the spread of biological or chemical warfare, or even a brave new world of genetically engineered people who look and act the same?

Now, when I think about the future, I come down, as you might guess, on a more optimistic note than a pessimistic one. I am congenitally, I suppose, optimistic. But I have also seen enough progress in my own lifetime to believe that we can continue to overcome the challenges that divide us and make progress together. But I have to confess that I am worried about certain trends that I see around me every day. Trends that could, without being checked by our knowledge of our history, our understanding of ourselves, and a willingness to work together to create a consensus about what we wish for our future, trends that could undermine our conceptions of ourselves as human beings and make it more difficult for us to have a common future.

Now, those trends are self-evident. What does it mean that we have such instantaneous communication and such rapid technological advancement? Well, of course, in many ways it means great opportunities. It means that we can be in touch with people around the world. It means that we can have more information than we ever dreamed possible. Yet, it also means that we can retreat into anonymity, that we can be less personal in our dealings with one another, that we can hide behind a computer keyboard and communicate with the world only at a distance. It means that we can be so glutted by information that we can't make any sense out of it; that we have no context for it; that we are bombarded day in and day out by factoids that don't add up to knowledge and wisdom, but threaten to drown us in irrelevancy. ✓

I worry, too, about the need that so many people have to hang on to their own identity as they most narrowly define it. How do they reach out into the wider world when the wider world seems so confusing and so threatening? In fact, one of the most frightening developments that I have personally been studying and thinking about is the way mass communications has played a role in the genocides of Rwanda and Bosnia, where people who before had lived at least peacefully with one another were whipped into frenzies of hatred and fear because of the messages that were coming across the television, the radio, and even the computer. People who didn't know how to make sense of those messages were pushed into action because of what they were being told. I also wonder about how we will survive as a democracy, and how we will retain a sense of citizenship when there is so much pressure on a daily basis to move us toward a society of consumers and away from a democracy of citizens. ✓

The emphasis on our consumer culture distorts our sense of self. It threatens the essence of our pluralistic society, and yet, it seems beyond our control to stop. More and more messages pour out, more and more quickly, influencing particularly the minds and lives of young people. Why are more young American teenagers smoking? Well, there is overwhelming evidence that they are enticed to do so, that it seems like a very grown up, rebellious thing to do. That the messages they receive--either directly or indirectly through the wider culture--create an atmosphere in which they think it's a choice that will enhance their sense of self-being.

X { Why are more American children driven to violence? We are seeing more and more evidence that it does matter what is in the popular culture. It really does count how many hours of television you watch with how many violent episodes, how many murders, how many killers who are not remorseful at the end of the plot. That especially if you are a child from a situation that is not as stable as one would like, you are particularly prone to those messages, to that image of reality that comes directly at you through that small machine in your living room or your bedroom. Why do so many American children judge their worth by the logo on their sneakers instead of the good deeds that they might do or the homework that they finish at night?_

✓ Well, you know as well as I that the consumer culture driven by our free market economy demands more and more buying on the part of more and more consumers. So messages are aimed now not just at thirteen and fourteen year olds, but at eight and nine years olds because in order to keep this great engine going, we have to create a lot of unmet wants, a lot of frustration in the minds of people. Now, this is not in and of itself any great cause for worry. We have certainly overcome a lot of challenges in the past. But, combining all of these trends together I think should cause all of us to stop and think, am I being seduced? What am I giving up in my thinking and in my spirit to the consumer culture, to the machine of technology?

✓ How do I keep some distance? How am I sure that I have the right balance in my life? How do I retain the most precious possession I have, my role as citizen, and enjoy the blessings that I am given because those who came before us understood the importance that democracy places on the role of citizen? If one steps back and thinks about the images we have of the future, that is also a little disquieting. I did a survey about what we think might happen in the century or millennium to come. The overwhelming popular images are of movies in which desolation has occurred because of war, where road warriors are fighting one against the other, where there are people living under great glass bubbles or in very sterile atmospheres because we have polluted and degraded our environment.

We don't have a picture in our heads of the kind of society that we want, and expect to live in the future. In part, that is because change has been so fast in the last decades, faster than at any point in human history, and we are only now being able to digest it. I have often heard it said that, you know, human evolution proceeded over tens of thousands and millions of years, but within this last century we have been stretched, physically, and emotionally, and mentally, and spiritually, unlike any of our ancestors ever have before. So how do we take all of these trends, and how do we begin to understand what they are doing to us so that we can assert control over them, and what do the arts and humanities have to do with all of that anyway?

Well, I would argue that the arts and humanities still give us the best guide we will ever have to thinking through the problems of today and tomorrow. It is not a luxury to read the great poetry of the past, to ponder Shakespeare's plays, to think about the Greek philosophers, to wonder in our own minds what modern poetry and literature and film are saying to us. Instead, I think it is a responsibility because as we think hard about these challenging ideas that come to us from those who are our scholars and our artists, we will be better equipped in our own lives and in our public life to go on.

One of the people who has been most astute in looking at the consumer culture and what we have done in modern days that undermines our sense of well-being with one another, our obligation toward each other, is the Czech President and playwright, Vaclav Havel. He has written and spoken at great length about how in the pressure of modern culture we are homogenizing our desires and tastes. Now, one would think that if everybody in the world wore blue jeans and a certain kind of sneaker, as they do on every continent I have visited, if everybody listened to the same kind of music and watched Baywatch around the world -(Laughter)- that would bring us closer together as a people. That, you know, gee, somebody watching Baywatch in Bangladesh would feel really close with somebody watching Baywatch in Bolivia, for example. (Laughter) But what Havel points out, which I think is right, that almost in an unconscious way, if you will, there is a rebellion against this homogenization. There is a rejection of it even while people take more and more of it in.

One reads about horrific events in India where people are burning brides because the dowry didn't bring a color television but only a black and white one. One reads about people in Africa, who are living in terribly distressed situations, who are spending every dollar they have to try to put on the accoutrements of what they think of as the modern American pop culture. And yet, beneath that superficial homogenization, we are seeing a great striving for identity and a great need to separate ourselves from one another because human beings have to feel as though they have some identity that is of importance in their eyes, in the eyes of those whom they look to for validation.

If we stop and think about the trends that are sweeping the world, then I think it is fair to say that we are moving in a direction where all of the haves--which include us in this room, people of education and affluence and particularly people fortunate enough to live in strong, stable, functioning democracies--will be more and more caught up in the world of materialism as we work harder and harder and longer and longer hours to deal with the machines that are taking greater control over our lives. It is hard to escape. We have 24 hour television channels. We have 24 hour fax machines. You are never out of touch. You never have a moment to stop and think. Decisions are demanded from you all the time. The e-mail messages come over and people expect responses to them.

It is hard for the arts and humanities to flourish when there is very little space left in the popular culture. That is why we have to do all we can to support them, and to make it clear that they are not a luxury, but they are essential to the refueling of the human imagination. (Applause)

If one thinks about our earliest human ancestors, they did not first invent money. They first drew on the walls of caves. They first created figurines that had religious and other significance to them. What were they trying to say? What were they doing? They were finding that special human trait, that attribute of imagination and using it. I can just imagine scenarios of some kind of young man or woman wandering around not paying attention to the mammoth hunt. (Laughter) And all of the relatives are saying, 'You know, he just isn't with it! He is going to get us all killed!' (Laughter) And then back in the cave that night with the flickering fire, everyone else asleep, he is taking the charcoal and he is drawing a mammoth. So all of a sudden out of his imagination comes an opportunity to share an experience that maybe someone who had never seen one before could now understand.

We created the arts so that we could advance human beings, so that our imagination could have an outlet. We saw it as a way to communicate in ways that we couldn't, just by doing and being. It is one of our earliest ways of defining ourselves as human. It is through history and philosophy-(Applause)- literature and painting, music, sculpture, poetry, photography, dance architecture, design, all of it; that we can reclaim the popular imagination, that we can rekindle our spirit of citizenship and exercise the power of our ideas, experiences and feelings to promote a brighter vision of the future.

In our country, there is too often an assumption that the arts and humanities are an exclusive preserve of the rich or the best educated or some cultural elite. Yet from our own personal experiences, we know otherwise. How many of us have felt our hearts stir at a favorite song or a painting or a haunting passage in a novel or a dancer's elegant leap? About a week or so ago, I read a very provocative opinion editorial in the New York Times where a classics professor talked about what Thucydides meant to his community college students. He said, I have taught at some of the great colleges in America, but in these community colleges, in these state universities where young people and not so young ones are enrolled and often working full time, they come to Thucydides with their own personal experience. And all of a sudden, the world of ideas and history opens up to them. How many of us have had an experience like that?

I remember very well when I was probably in junior high coming across a print of Guernica. Looking at that provocative painting that Picasso had done after the fascist bombing of Guernica, I finally realized that art was more than aesthetic. It was a way of communicating, a way of taking people beyond the boundaries of their own experience and giving them a greater understanding of the world around them. Guernica taught me about the human condition. I had never seen anything like that in my own life. I was born in Chicago. I grew up in a very safe suburb in the outskirts of Chicago. I had never even heard of such a thing like the Spanish Civil War. And yet here it was, a painting which said to me, this is what people can do to each other. People thousands of miles from where I lived, but who I, in some way, felt connected to. Art and culture have always been a part of my life, not in any practicing way - I have absolutely no talent whatsoever - (Laughter), but as an observer, as someone who tries to appreciate what I see and hear.

In fact, I really attribute my long-time marriage and relationship with my husband to art. Now, that is a headline! (Laughter and applause) I was standing in line at the Yale Law School to register for classes the following year and struck up a conversation with this young man I had seen wandering around the law school. (Laughter) He likes to say that we noticed each other because we each did not attend a certain class very often, so when we showed up it was rather noticeable. But whatever the story, we began talking and didn't finish talking after we signed up for classes. We began to walk around the Yale campus. He suggested that we go to the University museum to see a wonderful exhibit of Rothko paintings and to show me one of his favorite Henry Moore sculptures. We arrived at the door of the museum only to find that it was closed. And my husband, being the person he is, convinced the janitor to let us into the museum. (Laughter and applause) And the bargain we struck was that we could go into the museum if first we collected the trash that had filled the courtyard of the museum. So in we went where we spent a memorable afternoon looking at the Rothkos and looking at the sculptures. Now, that was my first date with Bill Clinton, but it also was my first date with Rothko and Henry Moore. And all three of them have stayed a part of my life ever since. (Laughter and applause)

I hope that every one of you either has had, or will have an experience like that with some aspect of the arts or humanities. And it is why I believe it is so important that we do all we can to make sure that the arts and humanities are available in every school in America, in every community in the entire nation. (Cheers and applause) I have to confess that I find it disheartening when members of Congress, or local school boards, or state governments decree that public support of the arts and humanities is a luxury that we cannot afford. (Applause) I have seen what it does in the lives of young people who we don't ordinarily think of as season ticket holders to the symphony or the opera. Just last week I visited a junior high school in an inner city Washington neighborhood whose students are

drawn mostly from housing projects nearby. I brought with me our three most recent Poets Laureate. And I was delighted to have them with me to see in action a program that is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts throughout the Writer Core where writers and poets are assigned to work with these young people.

The students we saw were engaged in what is called a poetry slam. Now, I did not know what that was. (Laughter) If you have never seen a poetry slam, it is a high speed, high-spirited competition in which students face off against one another by reading their own poems and then being scored like ice skating at the Olympics from a group of judges. These students, all of them African-American, all of them from poor homes, recited poems that just made my heart leap. Some of them had poems about their own names, or about the plight of a homeless man in their neighborhood, or the contributions of Duke Ellington. They talked of their pride, their joys, their pain. They also talked about how poetry, and learning how to write poetry to express themselves enabled them to put their anger and pain on paper instead of acting it out. They talked about how writing poetry had given them confidence, a sense of purpose and accomplishment. One boy recited a poem with wonder lines like this, I am so musical that when I write songs, you sing them for the rest of your life. (Laughter)

Later that evening, at the White House, the President and I hosted the Poets Laureate in a celebration of American poetry. Robert Pinsky and Robert Haas and Rita Dove read American poets like Emily Dickinson and Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams and so many others. We had this broadcast, cybercast, over the Internet, and I think it is archived if any of you are interested. But in the audience in the East Room that night we also asked some non-poets to read their favorite poem. A disabled veteran from a veteran's home, in a wheelchair, read with a wonderful, gravelly voice Robert Frost's Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening. He said it kept him going because he, too, despite his serious injuries, had miles to go. A minister from Boston told how, as a young, rebellious man in high school, he had been taken under the wing of a teacher who introduced him to poetry and literature, took him off the streets. And he read a poem that had made an impression on him as a young man and which he still read, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Psalm of Life. A high school teacher from Virginia, flanked by several of his students, brought many in the audience to tears when he recited Dudley Randall's Ballad of Birmingham. A little seventh grader, who was part of the poetry slam competition from the District of Columbia, stole the show when she offered a spirited and touching reading of Langston Hughes' Life Is Fine.

Now, whether you watched in the audience, or on your computer screen, or C-Span or at one of the satellite downlink sites, you had to come away from the evening with a much greater sense of the richness of our nation's tradition of poetry, but also how that poetry has influenced us as a nation and recorded what we have done during our passage these last more than 200 years. It is essential that we continue to celebrate the arts and humanities. And you are showing us here at this university how to do it. It is also essential that we take the arts and humanities into places where they are not so commonly discussed or understood. We have seen how the arts can transform the lives of children at risk. We need to do more of that.

I am concerned that, at a time when we need the arts more than ever, music and art in our schools are being cut back. So many young people no longer have access to music lessons or art lessons during the school day. One of my hopes for the millennium is that all of us who care about the arts and music, particularly in our schools, will do what we can to put them back into all schools so that all students have access to them. (Applause) There is another very essential role of the arts and humanities today. At a time when our nation is still dogged by racial insensitivities and unfounded stereotypes, what better way to come to terms with our multiethnic, multiracial way of life than to share in each other's ideas, emotions, tastes and attitudes. Reading of Langston Hughes' poem helps us understand what an experience different from our own might be.

I think it is very important that this university pursue the particular goal that it has had of having a diverse campus. I want to thank again President Bollinger and Provost Cantor for their words because in this op ed piece they write, Institutions of higher education have pursued a conception of education that emphasizes the joys, the variety and the benefits of emerging with different experiences

and perspectives. This means we ask of every applicant, what will you contribute to the whole, not where do you stand in splendid, isolated comparison with everyone else. (Applause) When I read that today, I thought back to an experience I had in 1965 that I have not thought of very much since then.

When I grew up in my suburb, it was all white. I attended all white schools from kindergarten through high school. I never had any real contact with Black or Hispanic or Asian youngsters my age. I was very lucky that when I was in high school, I had a minister at my church who said very forthrightly to all of us middle class, white suburban kids, there is a big world out there, and you are not even going to understand how to deal with it unless you get beyond the boundaries of your own experience. He took us down to the City of Chicago where we would have evenings with black youngsters at churches and Hispanic youngsters at churches. We didn't become friends, but you know what we did in those evenings? We talked about poetry and paintings. I will never forget a discussion with a group of Hispanic youngsters where we talked about a wonderful EE Cummings poem in which it starts, I Dying is fine, but, oh, baby, death is not. Something like that. Don't hold me to it. (Laughter) But death, oh, baby - oh, I know what it is. I Dying is fine, but death, oh, baby, I wouldn't like death if death were good.

We talked about that. The experience of the Hispanic kids was very different because every one of them had seen somebody die. People in our families died in hospitals. They died a long way from where we were. They didn't die at home, and they didn't die on the streets. All of a sudden I realized that there were very different experiences that I did not have a clue about. When I did go to Wellesley, I was, for the first time, attending school with women who were different from me. They were black. They were brown. They came from other places, had other experiences. And I remember going to church one Sunday with a young African-American woman who became a friend of mine. I had never gone anywhere with an African-American before. We went off campus, and we went to this church. I can remember talking with people later about what an amazing experience that was for me. She and I became great friends, but I never would have had that opportunity if I had gone to school at a place where everybody looked like me and everybody had the same background as I did.

It opened my eyes in a number of ways. That is why it is so important that, if we believe in the message of the arts and humanities, we take it to its conclusion, which is, that we all have much to learn from each other and each other's rich cultural traditions and histories. You are doing that in a very practical way here in Ann Arbor in one of the oldest historic neighborhoods. The Broadway bridge reconstruction effort will unite people young and old from throughout Ann Arbor. You will be exploring local culture through history and writing, photography, design and other disciplines. It is a wonderful example of how the arts and humanities can provoke imaginations of people in an entire community and how you can literally build a bridge to the future. You know, my husband and I are very partial to bridge metaphors - (Laughter) - because we think that they happen to very well display to us, in a lot of different ways, what it is we are trying to do. How we imagine, how we envision what comes next.

To that end, we have chosen in the White house to use the millennium as a way to honor the past and imagine the future. Again, that word, I imagine. Because we do believe in the importance of imagination. The founding fathers imagined America. Who could have dreamed what they imagined only a few years before? Imagination has fueled the American dream in the lives of countless men and women. Imagination is what keeps us going day in and day out, and time and time again, here in America, we have supported the arts because we have understood they are the fuel for imagination.

In 1962, when President Kennedy asked for public support of the arts, he reminded Americans that Abraham Lincoln ordered work to go forward on the capitol dome during the Civil War. I would add that one of the great sources of solace President Lincoln had during the Civil War was poetry he read and wrote, plays that he saw, people who inspired him to keep imagining. Franklin Roosevelt, in the midst of World War II, dedicated the National Gallery of Art in Washington. And President Kennedy said about them, These leaders understood that the life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction in the life of the nation, is very close to the center of a nation's purpose and is a test of the quality of a nation's civilization. We are now facing that test ourselves.

That is why in the White House we are sponsoring a millennium program that invites speakers to come, like the Poets Laureate, to lecture about topics ranging from America's founding ideas to creativity and science. That is why we are going to showcase American art, so that we can see what we have contributed to this great march of human civilization. Universities have a special role to play in making sure we are all conscious of the importance of the arts and humanities because it is a university that provides a safe haven for unconventional ideas and thoughts, that gives space for people to exercise their imaginations, that are incubators of culture. These are the places where we can test our ideas, our emotions, our experiences, and attitudes, which is why we do not need to do it in front of a mirror. We need to do it in a larger community that reflects back to us new ideas, new emotions, and new experiences. By doing so, we are, therefore, able to make choices for ourselves as to what kind of people we wish to be and what sorts of citizens we intend to be.



As the Year of the Humanities and Arts of Citizenship program here have shown, you can provoke thought, you can create collective discourse and you need to continue doing that. The arts and humanities really are such great equalizers for all of us. In front of a painting like Guernica or a beautiful piece of poetry, we are all in awe and we all have to reach deep down inside. So, together, let us honor the past and let us imagine the future. By doing so, let us live up to the ideas of our democratic way of life by placing the arts and humanities front and center in the ongoing effort to make America a more perfect union. Thank you very much. (Standing Ovation)

