



The Hands of Hope QUILT

A Creation of Joy and Love by Foster Children

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE

CONTACT: **Marsha Friedman** at 831-443-7115

Small Hands Reach Out to First Lady **Florida Foster Families Present a Giant "Hands of Hope" Quilt**

WASHINGTON, DC -- Foster families and members of the *Hands of Hope Quilt* Project from Pinellas County Florida, met with Mrs. Clinton in the East Reception Hall of the White House and presented a giant quilt dotted with over 250 brightly colored little hand prints representing a brighter future for foster children everywhere.

"It's taken nearly a year of dedicated work from a community that pulled together to make this dream happen for our foster children," said Marsha Friedman, President of the *Hands of Hope Quilt* project. "Our mission is to bring the plight of abused and neglected children to the nation and ask the First Lady and others to pledge their support to these children."

The delegation from Pinellas County flew to Washington to unveil the eleven-foot square masterpiece. The Quilt is made of black velvet and shows over 250 tiny handprints of foster families made from brightly colored silks, carefully embroidered onto the fabric by over 30 artisans from Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough Counties. A quote from the renowned humanitarian, L. Ron Hubbard, runs through it, "A good stable adult with love and tolerance in his heart is about the best therapy a child can have."

The visitors praised Mrs. Clinton's efforts to help unfortunate children and asked her to sign the *Hands of Hope Pledge* to create a better world for abused, abandoned and neglected children. One foster child presented the First Lady with *Hands of Hope Quilt* t-shirts for the Clinton family saying, "Over 250 of us traced our hands and joined them together with love creating this Hands of Hope Quilt. It is our hope that this Quilt will show some of the love that is given and received by foster families and foster children." Ben Kugler, Executive Director of the *Hands of Hope Quilt* Project then presented the First Lady with a leather bound edition of "The Way to Happiness" book by Mr. L. Ron Hubbard.

Marie Wooster, a veteran foster parent who has taken over 250 foster children into her home over the last 26 years, and former President of the Foster Parents' Association of Pinellas County, said "the majority of children in the foster care system are there because of abuse and neglect and this clearly comes from a lack of parenting skills in the homes

they were born and raised in. Our precious children deserve every chance they can get and this is what the *Hands of Hope Quilt* Project is all about."

According to the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse, there were over 8,111,000 reports of child abuse in 1995 and an estimated 996,000 cases of confirmed maltreatment in the same year. The National Council for Adoption reports that 500,000 children are in foster homes, while roughly 150,000 additional children remain in foster care awaiting court decisions on where they should be placed.

Earlier in the day, Project executives met with Father Stan Deboe of Congressman Christopher H. Smith's (NJ) office and Wilfred Hamm of Health and Human Services' Foster Care Department in the Rayburn House Office Building where the giant eleven-foot square black velvet quilt was presented. Congressman Smith is a member of the Congressional Children's Working group. Both gentlemen signed the *Hands of Hope Quilt* Pledge and received their gifts from the children.

The *Hands of Hope Quilt* was created at the Seventh Annual Pinellas County Foster Children's Christmas Party, and was contributed to by over 70 community volunteers, along with numerous national organizations including the McDonald's Corporation, Motown Records, the Community Auxiliary of the Church of Scientology, Pizza Hut, and Tampa area quilt artisans.

Other members of the delegation included Gracia Bennish, Art Director for the *Hands of Hope Quilt*; Mary Story, Community Affairs Director of the Church of Scientology which offers its premises for the Christmas Party each year; and a representative from the Pasco County Quilting Association.

The White House and Congress are some of the first stops on a national and international tour that will take the Quilt and its message across the United States and overseas. "Let this Quilt be a symbol of the importance of love and care in a child's life," said Friedman. "Our children are our future and how we treat them today will determine that future."

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QUILT

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MEMORANDUM

To: Karen Finney Fax: 202-456-7805
From: Marsha Friedman Phone: 813-443-7115
Date: June 5, 1996 Fax: 813-443-0835
Re: Hands Of Hope Quilt

Dear Karen:

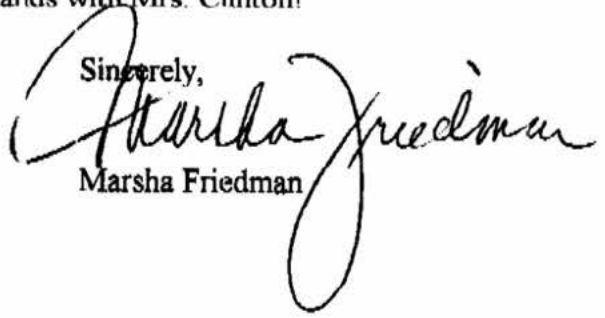
I just wanted to thank you for spending a few moments with me yesterday in conversation about the article that appeared in Tuesday's edition of the St. Pete Times.

After reading Lisa's quote in the article, I'm sure you were able to understand my concern in calling you. As we discussed on the phone, the White House had been advised through memo's and photo's of the many groups supporting this project, including the Church of Scientology. So, as you can imagine, I was surprised to read anything that contradicted this recognition. But, I was glad to hear from you that Lisa's complete statement to the St. Pete Times reporter, was that the White House's perspective on the visit was not concerned with any Church involvement or personal religions, as the visit was clearly about the foster children. It's just unfortunate that the St. Pete Times put your office on the spot and then didn't publish Lisa's full response in their article.

I completely agree with your comment that the reporter must have been having a bad news day and was obviously trying to stir up a negative twist on a very wonderful, positive story about this memorable experience for these foster children.

Anyway, I thought you and your office might enjoy knowing that some of the foster parents who were part of the delegation got numerous calls yesterday from people who read the article and were thrilled to learn that these children were given the opportunity to visit the White House and, most importantly, meet and shake hands with Mrs. Clinton!

Sincerely,


Marsha Friedman

St. Petersburg Times

Florida's Best Newspaper

TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 1996

L. Ron Hubbard quoted on quilt at White House

■ A Pinellas foster-family group led by two Scientologists brought the quilt.

By DAVID DAHL
Times Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON — It was, in the capital's parlance, a "meet and greet" photo opportunity at the White House.

So, there was a smiling Hillary Rodham Clinton. There were the foster families from Pinellas County. There was the "Hands of Hope Quilt" decorated with 250 brightly colored hand prints.

And there on the quilt was . . . a quote from Church of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard.

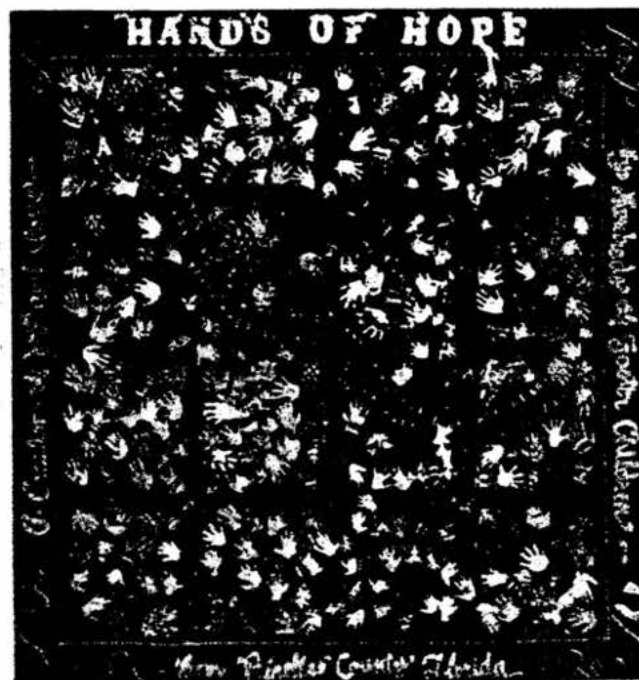
Unbeknownst to Mrs. Clinton or her staff, the group greeted warmly by the first lady last Tuesday is headed by two Scientologists and promotes Hubbard's controversial beliefs as part of its promotional literature.

"We were not aware that it is affiliated with the Church of Scientology," Lisa Caputo, Mrs. Clinton's press secretary, said Monday upon hearing of the group's connections. "It was a very quick hello."

After that quick hello, the president of the Hands of Hope Quilt project put out a news release that took note of Hubbard's works and reported that one of the White House visitors had presented Mrs. Clinton with a copy of one of Hubbard's books.

Describing the quilt, the news release

Please see **QUILT** 5A



The "Hands of Hope Quilt" is decorated with 250 hand prints and a quote from Scientology's founder.

Quilt from 1A

says: "A quote from the renowned humanitarian L. Ron Hubbard runs through it, 'A good stable adult with love and tolerance in his heart is about the best therapy a child can have.'"

"It so perfectly says what our message is," explained Marsha Friedman, a Scientologist and president of the Hands of Hope Quilt project.

Hubbard died in 1986 but remains a central figure in a religion that still is trying to shake a tarnished reputation.

In the 1970s, before he died, Scientologists bugged an IRS office. In the mid-'70s, the Scientologists secretly bought land in downtown Clearwater and began what became a long and stormy relationship with the city.

Practitioners travel to Clearwater and pay thousands of dollars to receive Scientology religious services. Some former members and other critics, though, complain that Scientology is a cult.

In 1993, the IRS sided with Scientology and ended a lengthy tax dispute with the organization by recognizing it as a religion. The church says it has cleaned up its act since the trouble of the '70s.

Along those lines, the Church of Scientology has hosted a Christmas Party for foster children for the past seven years, according to Friedman. The quilt was created at the party, she said.

Friedman said she worked for months to set up a meeting with



Hillary Rodham Clinton posed with the Pinellas delegation. To her right is Marsha Friedman, a Scientologist who heads the project.

Mrs. Clinton.

Florida Sens. Bob Graham and Connie Mack sent perfunctory letters urging the Clintons to meet with the Hands of Hope Quilt group — with no mention of any Scientology connection. "It is my pleasure to forward to you a request from 500 foster children (from) Pinellas County, Florida," read Graham's November 1995 letter.

Finally, it happened. Caputo said Mrs. Clinton saw the brief get-together — similar to hun-

dreds the first lady participates in — as a chance to visit with foster families. As is customary, an official White House photo was taken.

Reached by telephone Monday, Friedman insisted she is hiding nothing, because there is nothing to hide. She said the quilt project is not affiliated with the Church of Scientology.

"This is not about the church or the church's controversy. It's really about the children," she said. "I am not a representative for the Church of Scientology. I am a

business owner. I am a mother. I am a grandmother."

Friedman, a Clearwater public relations executive, said she is a member of the church. She said other Scientologists include project executive director Ben Kugler and quilt designer Gracia Bennish.

The Scientologists were in the delegation that saw Mrs. Clinton last Tuesday, along with ten children and seven parents and several foster-child advocates from Pinellas County who are not members of the church.

Among those in attendance was Marie Wooster, a veteran foster parent from Pinellas County who is not a Scientologist. She said she believes the quilt project — and its members who are Scientologists — are filling a need in the community by promoting foster parenting.

"They have never really tried to push their religion on anybody," Wooster said in a phone interview. "If they hope to gain more through their association with us, I'm afraid they will be sorely disappointed."

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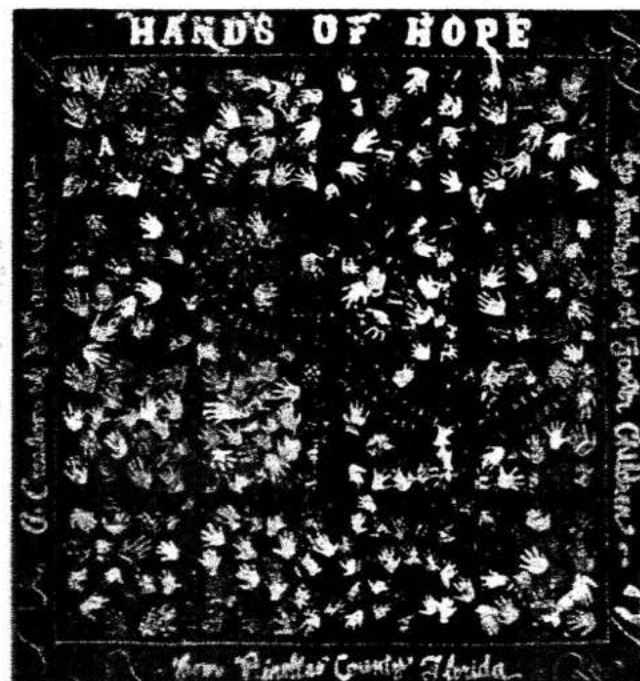
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White House photo

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