

MEMORANDUM FOR MRS. CLINTON

FROM: Shirley Sagawa
Ann O'Leary
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RE: White House Conference on Teenagers

DATE: March 30, 2000

We wanted to bring you up to date on the planning for our conference, now scheduled for May 2. We have tentatively entitled the event "The White House Conference on Teenagers: Raising Responsible and Resourceful Youth." In addition to the group on this memo, Sonia Chessen, director of the White House Council on Youth Violence, has been working hard on the conference. Sonia is on detail from HHS where she was a senior advisor to Peggy Hamburg responsible for the youth development portfolio.

We have held focus groups with researchers, youth-serving organizations, experts on youth development, education organizations, foundations, work and family experts, and youth. In addition, we have asked youth-serving organizations to hold their own focus groups with youth and to report back their ideas. We are finding strong support for the following messages:

- The early teen years are as important as the zero to three years in terms of healthy and meaningful development (there is even preliminary research that suggests the brain goes through an important "pruning and weeding" phase around puberty, raising the stakes for these years).
- Contrary to their own perceptions, parents do play an important role in the development of their teenage children; research and reports from teenagers themselves confirm that youth look to their parents for guidance and want more interaction with them.
- Parent and teen fears about violence and other dangers are disproportionate to actual risks; we must shatter the stereotypes people hold in regard to youth and at the same time explore why some risks/negative behaviors perpetuate, we need to acknowledge that there is a crisis of community and values in our society that must be addressed in order to be restored.
- While there is significant consensus regarding what young people need, and about what parents, adults in the community, and youth themselves can do to meet these needs, this information is not well known.

The opening session will be held in the East Room in the morning, to be followed by a lunch, breakout sessions, and possibly a closing off-site. We expect to invite about 150 people including youth experts, foundations, corporations, federal, state and local policymakers,

educators, and pairs of youth and parents. Please let us know if there is anyone in particular you want to invite. We will have a draft invitation list for you to look at next week.

We are working on several possible deliverables. They include:

- **Portrait of American Teenagers:** A "snapshot" report on teenagers and the American Family, to be prepared by the Council of Economic Advisors, will be used as a base for the conference and will provide the public with an accurate image of teens, their families, positive and negative behavior trends of young people, and why parents matter in the lives of teens. This report will include information on the diversity of teens (race, ethnicity, immigrant status), health status, life expectancy, education and will put this information in an historical perspective -- looking at teens over the past one hundred years.
- **Tools for teenagers:** A one-stop center for information pertaining to teens will be rolled out in a new www.teenagers.gov site that will link together government websites with information on everything from health care to education to programs and opportunities for teenagers. In addition, we would like to be able to announce possible plans to develop a national youth hotline like the UK's "Childline" so that America's youth could have one hotline to call that would link them to local service providers for help in crisis or times of trouble.
- **Tools for parents:** We would like to provide a number of tools for parents: (1) a joint statement/pamphlet by the Campaign for the Prevention of Teen Pregnancy, ONDCP, Tobacco Free Kids, and Youth Violence campaign on what parents can do to help their children avoid risky behavior; (2) a new parenting website being developed by OJJDP that would have information specifically for parents of teenagers (most parenting websites provide little or no information to parents of teenagers) ; and (3) steps to move forward on developing a uniformed rating system that would be easy for parents to use.
- **Challenges to the community:** to employers to make it easier for parents of teenagers to spend time with them; to youth organizations to involve parents in their programs, not just youth; to schools to involve not just elementary school parents, but middle school and high school parents as well; to the media to take responsibility in how they portray young people, how they market to young people, and what messages they send to young people, etc.
- **Challenges to youth themselves to take responsibility for their futures.** We are also considering initiating a national challenge to "make family meal time a priority" as a proxy for the overall important message of parents and teenagers spending time together. Research suggests the importance of this simple step, but in a practical sense, it is not easy to achieve even by the best parents. In order to acknowledge how hard it is for many families to come together for meals, and to make the challenge credible, we would seek a few lead commitments by employers and others (7-11s, cereal companies, etc.) both to spread the word and take steps to help their own employees participate in family meals. Do you think this is a good idea?

To increase media attention we are looking to include a celebrity into the speaking program. So far we are considering Denzel Washington, Susan Sarandon, Sela Ward, Cal Ripkin, or Bill Cosby to take part as both child advocates and parents. As youth-oriented role models we are considering Will Smith and Grant Hill, a basketball player from the Detroit Pistons who has done PSAs for AmeriCorps, the Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and ONDCP. Do you have any preferences or further ideas on which celebrities to invite?

Finally, we are pleased that the Annie Casey Foundation has agreed to provide funding in support of the conference; the Department of Education has agreed to organize the satellite uplink; GSA has agreed to manage the satellite uplink and downlinks; and the YMCA of the USA has agreed to do a poll and video for us, and to be our key private sector partner. The video will feature a diverse group of young people and parents talking about the issues they face. It is being produced by Sunburst (the firm that did the Philanthropy Conference video and Millennium Evening videos).

Next week, we will provide you with a draft of the agenda including proposed speakers, researchers, and model programs we hope to highlight. Over the next few days, we will be vetting ideas internally and will be brainstorming further with David Hamburg in order to further revise and hone the message. We will keep you posted as we move forward. Don't hesitate to call with any questions.

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Children's Hospital

60-70% of the kids

DC Health Care community rec. focused
on enrollment - resolution

new Dir of Health Ivan Waller moving forward along

At conceptual phase - not action yet

Y.3 m spent 350,000 -

Getting ready to draw down

Need to get workers in the hospital

Presumptive eligibility for children

Computerize enrollment

Mayor can do it tomorrow

Getting best up to/c :? our rel. w/ ~~g~~ no r others

Seen as anti home rule

DC Gov't have turned Wash Post reporter into

Children - Goldstein

Proposal is in report

Mayor

Dr. Ivan Waller DC Dept of Health

Herb Weldon Medicaid Admin

Diane Bernstein DC Act - community org

Maia Gomez - Mary Center

advocacy

[DC General - Public Benefits Corp]

Providence Hosp - Sister Carol - Perry School

Lisa Benkeff
Co-ordinator of CM

Lisa Drew
editor at S+S

Jordanes — everybody understands that ~~children~~ ^{parents}
are the lynchpin of the family
incl. ch.

Kids + parents do talk + do spend
time together — eat meals 8x a
week

Lots of parents + youth disagreements
time together not nec. qual. time
only 30% parents say "more than
enough time"

Kids 3x more likely than parents
to say ~~they~~ want more quality
time

Parents worried about ~~sex~~ drugs, violence etc.
Kids rank time #1 / feel a lot

Both blame work

Vast diff in terms of what children + kids
say they are talking about
25 pt diff on values + beliefs

Children put more faith in their peers than
parents do -

Parents think they are monitoring but kids say
they're not