WILLIAM S. WOODSIDE - CHILDREN'S EXPRESS ACCEPTANCE COMMENTS - 11/26/85

CHILDREN'S EXPRESS ACCEPIANCE COMENIS 11/26/85

THE RECOGNITION OF YOUR PEERS IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE HIGHEST HONOR A PERSON CAN RECEIVE.

TONIGHT IS AN EXCEPTION TO THAT RULE.

ICAN THINK OF NO HIGHER HONOR FOR A PERSON OF MY
GENERATION THAN TO BE RECOGNIZED BY A YOUNGER
GENERATION, PARTICULARLY WHEN THAT RECOGNITION
COMES FROM THOSE WHO, IN THE NOT-SO-DISTANT
FUTURE, WILL BECOME LEADERS OF THIS COUNTRY.

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AND SO I FIRST WANT

TO EXPRESS MY THANKS ON BEHALF OF THE AMERICAN CAN COMPANY,

OUR

FOUNDATION AND THOSE OF OUR EMPLOYEES WHO IN BOTH
THEIR PRIVATE LIVES AND THROUGH CORPORATE EFFORTS

ARE ACTIVE IN ISSUES AFFECTING CHILDREN. YOU HAVE
MADE US PROUD BY SELECTING US FOR

THIS AWARD, AND WE DEEPLY APPRECIATE THIS RECOGNITION,

I HAVE WATCHED THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF

THE CHILDREN'S EXPRESS SINCE IT FIRST WAS

ORGANIZED TEN YEARS AGO,

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LIKE EVERYONE ELSE WHO HAS COME INTO CONTACT WITH
THESE YOUNG JOURNALISTS, I HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH
THEIR CONCERN ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM. I HAVE
BEEN IMPRESSED, TOO, WITH THE RANGE OF ISSUES THAT
CONCERN THEM,

BUT WHAT IMPRESSES ME THE MOST IS THEIR STRONG SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY,

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THESE YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT VIEW THEIR JOURNALISTIC

EFFORTS AS A VEHICLE FOR FINDING OUT WHAT IS GOING ON

IN THE WORLD, THEY VIEW THEIR JOURNALISTIC

EFFORTS AS A VEHICLE FOR BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE

WORLD, THEY DON'T SIMPLY WANT

TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS, THEY WANT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM,

THEY MAY BE ONLY 10, 11 OR 12 YEARS OLD, BUT THEY
ALREADY UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE WORD
"RESPONSIBILITY", THEY UNDERSTAND IT ON A BROAD
SOCIAL LEVEL, THEY UNDERSTAND IT ON A PERSONAL
LEVEL,

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SO I THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE, AND IN KEEPING WITH
THE SPIRIT OF THIS AWARD YOU HAVE GIVEN

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TO US, THAT WE TAKE A MOMENT TO REMEMBER THAT ONE
OUT OF EVERY FOUR CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY BELOW THE
AGE OF SIX IS LIVING IN POVERTY,

THINK ABOUT THAT, ONE OF FOUR, TWENTY-FIVE

PERCENT OF ALL CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF SIX ARE

GROWING UP DEPRIVED DURING THE MOST CRITICAL

DEVELOPMENTAL TIME IN THEIR LIVES,

AND, INSTEAD OF GETTING BETTER, THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE SITUATION MAY INDEED BE GETTING WORSE,

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JUST LAST MONTH, THE NEW YORK TIMES NOTED

THAT COMPLEX SOCIAL' ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FACTORS ARE CREATING A VAST NEW CLASS OF

POOR AMERICANS WHO ARE MUCH YOUNGER, LESS

EDUCATED AND MORE LIKELY TO GIVE BIRTH SOONER

TO THEIR OWN CHILDREN THAN RECENT GENERATIONS OF THE POOR,

WHILE THE DATA ARE NOT PRECISE AND CERTAIN, WE FACE THE STUNNING PROSPECT OF AN EVEN

LARGER AND MORE PERMANENTLY ENTRENCHED

UNDERCLASS OF CHILDREN WITH FEWER OPPORTUNITIES

TO ESCAPE THE TRAPS OF POVERTY THAN ANY

PREVIOUS GENERATION IN OUR HISTORY.

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WE CAN DEBATE THE FUTURE ALL WE WANT. BUT

THERE SIMPLY IS NO WAY TO ESCAPE THE BASIC FACTS

OF HERE AND NOW. TOO MANY OF OUR CHILDREN ARE POOR, TOO

MANY LIVE IN SUBSTANDARD HOUSING.

TOO MANY LACK ADEQUATE MEDICAL CARE, TOO MANY RECEIVE AN INFERIOR EDUCATION, AND THE ONLY

ANSWER WE SEEM ABLE TO GIVE AMERICA'S CHILDREN IS THAT WE WILL TAKE CARE OF THEIR NEEDS.,,JUST

AS SOON AS WE BALANCE THE BUDGET AND ELIMINATE THE DEFICIT.

THE CHILDREN OF POVERTY DID NOT CREATE THE DEFICIT. WHY SHOULD THEY BE ASKED TO PAY FOR IT?

MENTION THIS TONIGHT BECAUSE ALL OF US KNOW THERE

ARE MANY DIFFERENT AND COMPLEX PROBLEMS FACING THIS

NATION. THERE ARE SO MANY THAT A CONCERNED CITIZEN

OFTEN MAY NOT KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN.

SO LET ME SUGGEST AN ANSWER. LET US BEGIN WITH
OUR CHILDREN, WE HAVE DONE A PRETTY GOOD JOB IN
RECENT YEARS IN TAKING CARE OF OUR ELDERLY, BUT
WE HAVE NOT BEEN SO

CONSCIENTIOUS ABOUT THE NEEDS OF OUR CHILDREN.

THE CHILEAN POET GABRIELA MISTRAL, THE NOBEL
PRIZE WINNER FOR LITERATURE IN 1945, WROTE A
VERSE THAT I HOPE CAN SERVE AS A GUIDE FOR OUR
EFFORTS, SHE WROTE:

"MANY THINGS WE NEED CAN WAIT,

THE CHILD CANNOT,

NOW IS THE TIME HIS BONES ARE BEING FORMED,

HIS BLOOD IS BEING MADE,

HIS MIND IS BEING DEVELOPED,

TO HIM WE CANNOT SAY, 'TOMORROW,'

HIS NAME IS TODAY."

THANK YOU VERY MUCH,