

THE SOUTHWEST CONNECTICUT ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

OEM

COUNCIL OF SPONSORS

FOR

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN SERVICES

REMARKS BY

WILLIAM S. WOODSIDE

PRESIDENT, PRIMERICA FOUNDATION

CHAMPION INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

STAMFORD, CT

JUNE 22, 1988

I. INTRODUCTION AND PRAISE FOR CANS

0 ALTHOUGH I HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED A
TOPIC TO SPEAK ABOUT, AND I HAVE
NOT BEEN ASKED OR PROGRAMMED TO DO
A COMMERCIAL FOR CAB, I WANT TO
BEGIN THIS AFTERNOON WITH SOME
WORDS OF ADMIRATION FOR THE WORK
OF THIS ORGANIZATION AND FOR THE
LEADERSHIP PROVIDED TO IT BY MATTHEW
MELMED.

-5:4-4J/65

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

0 I FIRST REALLY BECAME AWARE OF
CAHS WITH THE PUBLICATION OF
"GROWING UP AT RISK IN CONNECTICUT."
THIS REPORT OFFERED ONE OF THE
MOST VIVID PORTRAITS OF POVERTY'S
IMPACT WITHIN A SINGLE STATE THAT
I CAN REMEMBER.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

0 I ALSO RECALL BEING VERY IMPRESSED
BY A 1986 REPORT CAHS DID ON LOW
BIRTHWEIGHT BABIES AND INFANT
MORTALITY IN CONNECTICUT. ENTITLED,
"TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE, THE REPORT
WAS A POWERFUL REMINDER OF THE
URGENCY WHICH MUST UNDERSCORE OUR
EFFORTS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE PRE-
NATAL CARE TO LOW INCOME PREGNANT
WOMEN.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

0 AND MOST RECENTLY, WORKING WITH
THE SUPPORT OF THE PRIMERICA
FOUNDATION, CAM HAS DEVELOPED A
FIRST EVER, RELIABLE, ACCURATE,
LOW COST, SIMPLE TO USE, COMMUNITY
BASED SURVEY TO MEASURE THE EXTENT
OF CHILDHOOD HUNGER ON A
NEIGHBORHOOD-BY-NEIGHBORHOOD
BASIS. THE RELEASE OF THE PILOT TEST
STUDY IN NEW HAVEN LAST FALL HAD
QUICK AND STUNNING IMPACT.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

BY DOCUMENTING THE EXTENT OF
CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN THE "HILL"
SECTION OF NEW HAVEN (18 PERCENT
OF KIDS HUNGRY SOMETIME DURING ANY
GIVEN MONTH AND AN ADDITIONAL
SEVEN PERCENT AT SERIOUS RISK.)
CAB WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN FINALLY
GETTING - AFTER SOME 15 YEARS OF
RESISTANCE - THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN
AND ITS SCHOOL SYSTEM TO ADOPT A
SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM FOR
DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN.

70;47-q

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT WHICH CAHS
WORKED LONG AND HARD TO DEVELOP AND
REFINE WILL NOW BE FIELD TESTED
ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IT HAS
SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL TO PROVIDE MUCH
NEEDED DATA ABOUT CHILDHOOD HUNGER.
AND, AS EVIDENCED IN NEW HAVEN, SUCH DATA
CAN BE A COMPELLING FACTOR IN ROUSING A
SOMETIMES SOMNAMBULENT PUBLIC TO
CONDITIONS OF CHILDHOOD POVERTY WHICH ARE
SIMPLY WRONG AND UNACCEPTABLE.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

0 IN SUM, AND IN SUBSTANCE, CAHS HAS
DEMONSTRATED OVER AND OVER AGAIN
ITS EFFECTIVENESS AND ITS
LEADERSHIP. AND MORE THAN THAT,
CAHS HAS BEEN A PERSUASIVE
CONSCIENCE, REMINDING US OF THE
TRAGIC ISLANDS OF UNATTENDED
POVERTY WHICH PERSIST IN A WORLD
INCREASINGLY FOCUSED ON SELF-GAIN.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

II. I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO TALK TO YOU

TODAY IN A GENERAL WAY ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY IN AMERICA. PERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO BEGIN IS BY SHARING SOME DATA WITH YOU. I HAVE ORGANIZED THIS DATA, BRIEFLY, INTO THREE GENERAL AREAS.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

A. POVERTY IS WIDESPREAD

DESPITE THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER, THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICANS DID NOT SHARE IN THE BENEFITS.

0 32.4 MILLION AMERICANS - 13.6 PERCENT OF OUR POPULATION - LIVED BELOW THE POVERTY LINE IN 1986.


CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

0 12.7 MILLION AMERICANS SUBSISTED
ON INCOMES MORE THAN ONE-HALF
BELOW THE POVERTY LINE IN 1986.

0 THE POVERTY RATE FOR BLACK
AMERICANS IN 1986 WAS 31.1
PERCENT. THE 1986 POVERTY RATE
FOR HISPANICS WAS 27.3 PERCENT.

THE MOST FRIGHTENING PART ABOUT
NUMBERS SUCH AS THESE IS THAT THEY
ARE PERSISTING DURING A PERIOD OF
GROWTH AND PROSPERITY. IT SUGGESTS

4*/



THAT THE NEXT RECESSION COULD BE A
.....

REAL WHOPPER

WITH RESPECT TO _____
POVERTY.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

**B. THE SECOND POINT I WANT TO MAKE IS
THAT THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR IN
THIS COUNTRY CONTINUES TO GROW.**

**0 IN 1986 THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND
POOR FAMILIES REACHED ITS WIDEST
POINT IN THE 40 YEARS SINCE THE
CENSUS BUREAU BEGAN COLLECTING
SUCH DATA IN 1947.**

0 IN

**1986 THE WEALTHIEST 20 PERCENT OF
AMERICAN FAMILIES RECEIVED 43.7
PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY
INCOME, THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE
RECORDED.**

**0 IN 1986 THE POOREST 40 PERCENT OF
AMERICAN FAMILIES RECEIVED 15.4
PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL FAMILY
INCOME, THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE EVER
RECORDED.**

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

THIS COMBINATION OF WIDESPREAD,
PERSISTENT POVERTY AND AN EVER GROWING
GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR MAKE IT
ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT WE RUN THE RISK OF
BEING A SOCIETY WITH A PERMANENT AND
GROWING UNDERCLASS, A SOCIETY IN WHICH
INCREASING NUMBERS OF PEOPLE HAVE NO
ROLE, AND WITH WHICH THEY FEEL NO
IDENTITY OR CONNECTION, A SOCIETY IN
WHICH IT WILL BE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT
FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND
PROCESSES TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

THE ISSUE OF A TWO TIERED SOCIETY,
BY-THE-WAY, IS PARTICULARLY SALIENT
IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT WHICH
DESPITE ITS RANKING AS THE STATE WITH
THE HIGHEST PER CAPITA **INCOME IS ALSO**
HOME TO SOME OF THE POOREST CITIES IN
THE NATION. RATHER THAN WISHING THIS
ISSUE AWAY, THE STATE WOULD DO WELL
TO TACKLE IT HEAD ON AND OPENLY. A
GOOD WAY TO BEGIN MIGHT BE WITH THE
CREATION OF A STATE COMMISSION TO
REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE
ON **THE PROBLEMS OF POVERTY IN CONNECTICUT**
AND WHAT THE STATE CAN DO TO RESPOND
MORE EFFECTIVELY.

**C. FINALLY I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU A
LITTLE ABOUT CHILDHOOD POVERTY.
AGAIN LET ME START OFF WITH A BRIEF
LITANY OF DEPRESSING STATISTICS.**

adas;e-

**0 THE 1986 CHILDHOOD POVERTY RATE
WAS 20.5 PERCENT; THE POVERTY RATE
FOR BLACK CHILDREN IN 1986 WAS A
STUNNING 43 PERCENT; FOR HISPANIC
CHILDREN IT WAS 27.3 PERCENT.**

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

0 OF EVERY HUNDRED CHILDREN BORN IN
AMERICA VS

- 13 WILL BE BORN TO A TEENAGE
MOTHER
- 15 WILL BE BORN INTO A
HOUSEHOLD WHERE NO PARENT IS
EMPLOYED

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

- 15 WILL BE BORN INTO A
HOUSEHOLD WITH A WORKING PARENT
EARNING A BELOW POVERTY WAGE

- 25 WILL BE ON WELFARE AT SOME
POINT PRIOR TO ADULTHOOD.

0 A CHILD OF A POOR BLACK WOMAN BORN
741/
IN 'WINNER CITY OF THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA HAS LESS OF A
CHANCE OF LIVING TO THE FIRST YEAR
OF LIFE THAN A BABY BORN IN COSTA
RICA.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

A RECENT PUBLICATION OF THE CHILDREN'S
DEFENSE FUND CONTAINS SOME 1985
STATISTICS FOR CONNECTICUT.

0 OF THE 756,000 CHILDREN UNDER THE
AGE OF EIGHTEEN, 110,000 OR 14.5
PERCENT WERE LIVING IN POVERTY

0 39,000 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF
FIVE - OR 19 PERCENT OF THE

CHILDREN IN CONNECTICUT UNDER THE
AGE OF FIVE - WERE LIVING IN
POVERTY

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

- o 35 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S BLACK CHILDREN AND 62 PERCENT OF THE HISPANIC CHILDREN IN CONNECTICUT LIVE IN CONDITIONS OF POVERTY.

WHILE THESE FIGURES AND OTHERS

COMPARE FAVORABLY WITH THE NATIONAL NORMS - WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE

HISPANIC POPULATION - THEY ARE *c;p4k'1* (

NOTHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT, NOTHING

TO BE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

THESE FIGURES OUGHT TO PROVOKE AN
OUTCRY. I AM MYSTIFIED AS TO WHY
THEY DON'T. IS IT BECAUSE WE ARE
UNAWARE OF THEM? IS IT BECAUSE WE
DON'T WANT TO BE AWARE OF THEM? IS IT
BECAUSE WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO RESPOND?

fflitX11-

WHAT WE NEED MOST OF ALL IS SOMETHING
WE NEVER HAVE REALLY HAD IN THIS
COUNTRY: A SERIOUS NATIONAL EFFORT
TO ACTUALLY IMPROVE THE SOCIAL AND
ECONOMIC STATUS OF CHILDREN INSTEAD
OF JUST TALKING ABOUT IT.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

AMONG THE ITEMS I WOULD LIST ON THIS
AGENDA INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED
TO:

1. ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN AMERICA
2. FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE WIC
PROGRAM AND SIMILAR STATE
PROGRAMS.
3. ACCESS TO PRENATAL CARE.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

4. EFFECTIVE TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS - (IF MARION WRIGHT EDELMAN WAS HERE TODAY, SHE WOULD REMIND YOU THAT TODAY 40 TEEN-AGED GIRLS WILL BE GIVING BIRTH TO THEIR THIRD CHILD.)

5. EXPANDING HEAD START AND CHAPTER ONE TO ALL ELIGIBLE CHILDREN.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

6. MAKING QUALITY DAY CARE ACCESSIBLE
TO CHILDREN OF PARENTS WHO MUST
WORK.

7. IMMUNIZING EVERY CHILD AGAINST
INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

THIRTY-NINE THOUSAND CHILDREN UNDER
THE AGE OF FIVE IN CONNECTICUT ARE
LIVING IN CONDITIONS OF POVERTY.

THESE ARE THE YEARS WHEN THE BASIC
FOUNDATION IS DEVELOPED FOR ALL THE
PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL
GROWTH THAT WILL OCCUR IN LATER
YEARS.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

IF A CHILD DOES NOT GROW AS TALL AS HE OR SHE MIGHT HAVE UNDER BETTER CONDITIONS, WE CANNOT GIVE BACK TO THAT CHILD THE HEIGHT THAT WAS LOST. WE CANNOT GIVE BACK THE BRAIN CELLS THAT FAILED TO DEVELOP BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE NUTRITION. WE CANNOT GIVE BACK THE EMOTIONAL SUSTENANCE THEY MISSED OR THE SENSE OF PERSONAL WORTH THEY SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED. WHATEVER IS LOST DURING THESE YEARS IS LOST FOREVER. IT CANNOT BE REPLACED.

CAHS - COUNCIL OF SPONSORS LUNCHEON

WE HAVE TO DO BETTER AND WE
BETTER DO SO QUICKLY. FOR OUR
GOOD ... AND THE GOOD OF OUR
CHILDREN.

THANK YOU.