

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

FOR

NEW YORK CITY'S FUTURE:

THE CORPORATE ROLE

IN

PUBLIC EDUCATION

REMARKS BY

WILLIAM S. WOODSIDE

CHAIRMAN, AMERICAN CAN COMPANY

(1:47RUCH BUSINESS BRIEFIN'

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NEW YORK CITY

I WANT TO BEGIN TODAY BY CONGRATULATING THE NEW YORK
CITY PARTNERSHIP, THE CENTER FOR
MANAGEMENT AND THE BARUCH SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION FOR CO-SPONSORING THIS SERIES ON PUBLIC-
PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR NEW YORK CITY'S FUTURE, IT IS
A TIMELY AND IMPORTANT TOPIC TO CONSIDER, AND I AM
DELIGHTED TO PARTICIPATE,

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE NEWEST PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP
IN NEW YORK CITY IS THE JOINT

OFFER OF A PURCHASE DISCOUNT BY FELIX ROHATYN AND ED KOCH
SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO BUY BOTH OF THEIR BOOKS AT THE SAME
TIME,

WHEN MARIO CUOMO'S BOOK HITS THE BOOKSTANDS, I
UNDERSTAND WE WILL BE INTRODUCING A NEW
TERM INTO OUR VOCABULARY - THE TRIANGULATED
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP,

I WANT TO FOCUS MY COMMENTS TODAY SOLELY ON THE
TOPIC OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,

WHY? WELL, I HAVE SAID IT BEFORE AND I WILL
START HERE BY SAYING IT AGAIN,

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT A FIRST RATE SYSTEM OF
PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION IS EVERY BIT AS
IMPORTANT TO OUR FUTURE AS OUR NATIONAL
DEFENSE SYSTEMS,

IN MY VIEW, THERE IS NO MORE VALUABLE DOWN
PAYMENT THAT WE CAN MAKE ON OUR FUTURE THAN TO INVEST
IN EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN AMERICA'S PUBLIC ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS,

AND YET, WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A DILEMMA, MAJOR
NATIONAL REPORTS REVEAL THAT THE
STANDARDS OF EDUCATION IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE IN
SERIOUS CONDITION, AT THE SAME TIME, THE PUBLIC
SECTOR HAS SET SIGNIFICANT BUDGETARY
CONSTRAINTS WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATIONAL FUNDING,

THE RESULT? PUBLIC EDUCATION IS FACED WITH AN
OVERWHELMING OBSTACLE TO THE REVERSAL OF
DECLINING ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS, PERSISTENTLY HIGH
DROPOUT AND TRUANCY RATES, LOW MORALE AMONG
EDUCATORS AND DISINTERESTED COMMUNITIES WHICH ARE
RELUCTANT TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES
AND THEIR FUTURE HOPES WITH THE PUBLIC
SCHOOLS,

I AM DISMAYED BY THIS TURN OF EVENTS, IT IS
UNHEALTHY FOR OUR COUNTRY,

INCREASINGLY, THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY' IS
REALIZING THE VESTED INTEREST WE SHARE IN THE
QUALITY OF OUR SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, YET,
THE MOST STRIKING ASPECT OF THIS MEETING IS THAT
TODAY'S TOPIC - THE CORPORATE ROLE IN PUBLIC
EDUCATION - WASN'T EVEN BEING DISCUSSED VERY
SERIOUSLY THREE OR FOUR YEARS AGO,

MOST CORPORATIONS HAD TENDED TO ADHERE TO A TRADITIONAL VIEW THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION WAS GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN, NOT OURS, INSTEAD, THE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY FOCUSED ITS ATTENTION AND RESOURCES ON THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, AFTER ALL, THESE WERE THE INSTITUTIONS THAT WERE PRODUCING OUR MBA'S, OUR LAWYERS, OUR ACCOUNTANTS, OUR SCIENTISTS AND OUR FINANCIAL EXPERTS,

AMERICAN BUSINESS STILL PROVIDES GENEROUS SUPPORT TO HIGHER EDUCATION, AND, I SUSPECT, WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO, BUT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF CORPORATIONS ALSO ARE BEGINNING TO TURN THEIR ATTENTION TOWARD PUBLIC EDUCATION AND TOWARD PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN PARTICULAR.

THE DETERIORATING CONDITION OF OUR PUBLIC
SCHOOLS OF COURSE WAS A PRIMARY MOTIVATION
FOR THIS NEW FOCUS, BUT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WAS
ALSO BEGINNING TO RECOGNIZE THAT IT COULD NOT BE
AN ISOLATED, AUTONOMOUS ISLAND THAT EXISTED
INDEPENDENTLY FROM THE COMMUNITIES IN
WHICH THEY WERE LOCATED, INSTEAD OF DEFINING
RELATIONSHIPS IN TERMS OF THE BARRIERS AND
DIFFERENCES. THAT KEEP THEM APART, CORPORATIONS AND
COMMUNITIES ARE NOW MORE OFTEN DEFINING THEIR
RELATIONSHIPS IN TERMS OF THE GOALS,
AND VALUES THEY SHARE IN COMMON,

IT HAS TAKEN A LONG TIME, BUT OUR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
INSTITUTIONS MUST NOW KNOW THAT NO
COMMUNITY CAN PROSPER IF ITS MEMBERS, INCLUDING
CORPORATIONS AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, HAVE NO CONTACT WITH
EACH OTHER OR HAVE NO COMMON GROUND ON WHICH TO MEET AND
TO WORK TOGETHER,

ANOTHER REASON LEADING TO GREATER CORPORATE
INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY PROBLEMS IS THE GROWTH AT THE
LOCAL LEVEL OF SMALL, CAREFULLY DESIGNED PROGRAMS THAT
FOCUS ON SOME OF THE MORE

MANAGEABLE ASPECTS OF HIGHLY COMPLEX SOCIAL ISSUES.

FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS, OUR EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH LONG-
STANDING HUMAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED
PRINCIPALLY AROUND BROAD BASED, COMPREHENSIVE
PROGRAMS THAT WERE NATIONAL IN BOTH DESIGN AND
IMPLEMENTATION, THESE PROGRAMS WERE NECESSARY THEN, THEY
ARE NECESSARY NOW, AT THE VERY LEAST, THEY ARE A
TANGIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF OUR NATIONAL CONCERN AND
COMMITMENT, WHEN THEY ARE WORKING WELL AND ARE PROPERLY
SUPPORTED, THEY ALLOW US TO MAKE QUANTUM LEAPS FORWARD
IN HOUSING AND IN

HEALTH CARE, IN FEEDING THE HUNGRY AND PROVIDING FOR THE
AGED AND INFIRM, IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS AND IN SUCH
SUPERB EDUCATION PROGRAMS AS HEAD START TO MENTION BUT A
FEW,

BUT IT IS THE SMALL, LOCALLY DESIGNED AND LOCALLY
BASED PROGRAMS OF RECENT YEARS THAT HAVE INDUCED THE
CORPORATION INTO THE CENTER OF THE PUBLIC ARENA,

FOR EXAMPLE, AFTER MANY YEARS OF IGNORING THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CORPORATIONS NOW ARE HELPING THEM
IN APPRECIABLE WAYS THAT HAVE AN IMMEDIATE IMPACT,
CORPORATIONS UNDERWRITE THE COST OF VARIOUS
SPECIAL PROGRAMS, OF MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT
PURCHASES, WE SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS YOUNG
AUDIENCES AND THE JOINT COUNCIL

ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION THAT OFFER SPECIAL PROGRAMS
AND SERVICES TO STUDENTS, BUSINESSES ARE PROVIDING
ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOL
BOARDS AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS. AND THE BUSINESS
COMMUNITY IS ONCE AGAIN ENCOURAGING THEIR EMPLOYEES
TO TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THEIR LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.

MY OWN PREFERENCE, HOWEVER, IS FOR A LONGER
TERM AND MORE PERSONALIZED RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN A PUBLIC SCHOOL AND A CORPORATION,
SUCH AS THE ONE THAT EXISTS IN THE NEW YORK
CITY JOIN-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM,

JOIN-A-SCHOOL IS A PROGRAM THE NEW YORK CITY BOARD OF
EDUCATION STARTED IN MID-1982, BASICALLY, THE

JOIN-A-SCHOOL CONCEPT SEEKS TO MATCH CORPORATE OR
OTHER INSTITUTIONAL SPONSORS WITH INDIVIDUAL HIGH
SCHOOLS TO SUPPORT ACTIVITIES THAT ENRICH THE
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND HELP MOTIVATE STUDENTS

AND TEACHERS. JOIN-A-SCHOOL PROGRAMS - SOMETIMES
REFERRED TO AS ADOPT-A-SCHOOL - HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY
STARTED IN A NUMBER OF CITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY,

FOR A MODEST COST, SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS HAVE PROVIDED
INCENTIVES THAT CAN HELP CHANGE THE ENTIRE AMBIANCE
OF A SCHOOL, INSPIRE STUDENTS AND ENCOURAGE TEACHERS.

AMERICAN CAN WAS ONE OF **THE THREE** ORIGINAL
CORPORATIONS - **EQUITABLE LIFE AND MANUFACTURERS HANOVER**
TRUST WERE THE OTHER TWO - THAT HELPED TO START
JOIN-A-SCHOOL IN NEW YORK CITY, OUR EXPERIENCE
WITH THE PROGRAM TO DATE SUGGESTS THAT A JOIN-A-
SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP WORKS BEST WHEN IT EMPHASIZES:

(1) PEOPLE INVOLVEMENT - JOIN-A-SCHOOL

IS PREDICATED ON AN ACTIVE PARTICIPATORY
INVOLVEMENT OF CORPORATE EXECUTIVES

AND STAFF WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND THE
STUDENT BODY, MONEY CAN HELP MAKE A
GOOD PROGRAM BETTER, BUT IT DOES NOT BY
ITSELF CONSTITUTE A PROGRAM;

(2) A SERIES OF PROJECTS SPREAD ACROSS A DIVERSE
AREA OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES RATHER THAN ONE
LARGE PROGRAM IN A MORE NARROWLY DEFINED
AREA, AND

(3) AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PARTNERSHIP, LIKE A
MARRIAGE IS A LONG TERM COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER,

AMERICAN CAN'S PARTNER IS MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., HIGH
SCHOOL IN MANHATTAN, TOGETHER, WE HAVE DEVELOPED A
PROGRAM THAT IS ORGANIZED AROUND THREE RELATED THEMES:
KEEPING STUDENTS INTERESTED IN SCHOOL, IMPROVING THE
AMBIANCE OF THE SCHOOL, AND IMPROVING THE MORALE OF
BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS,

I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU HOW IMPORTANT AND
NECESSARY THESE TASKS ACTUALLY ARE. ANYONE WHO
IS EVEN REMOTELY INTERESTED IN OUR PUBLIC
SCHOOLS KNOWS THAT IN MANY OF THEM, 40 PERCENT OR
MORE OF THE STUDENTS WHO ENTER AS FRESHMAN HAVE
DROPPED OUT BY THE TIME COMMENCEMENT
ROLLS AROUND, MOREOVER, WHILE VARIOUS NATIONAL
COMMISSIONS AND ACADEMIC CONFERENCES DEBATE
THE RELATIVE MERITS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMS, MANY
STUDENTS WHO REMAIN IN SCHOOL ARE ASKING
THEMSELVES A MUCH MORE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: DO I
SHOW UP TOMORROW OR NOT?

JOIN-A-SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE NOT GOING TO SOLVE THE
PROBLEM OF DROPOUTS AND TRUANTS, BUT BY
PROVIDING SUPPORT SO THAT THERE CAN BE AFTER
SCHOOL CLUB ACTIVITIES, BY PROVIDING ATTENDANCE AND
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS, BY WORKING WITH STUDENTS TO
PREPARE HANDBOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS AT THE
SCHOOL, BY INVOLVING STUDENTS IN WORLD-OF-WORK
SEMINARS, AND INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS, BY
INVOLVING OUR PEOPLE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THAT
SCHOOL AND BY INVITING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TO BE
INVOLVED WITH US

AT OUR PLACE OF WORK - BY SAYING OVER AND OVER
AGAIN THROUGH OUR ACTIONS THAT "WE CARE", I AM
CONVINCED BEYOND ANY DOUBT THAT YOU CAN HELP MAKE
ANY SCHOOL IN AMERICA A BETTER PLACE TO BE IN
AND TO LEARN IN,

THESE ACTIVITIES MAY NOT SOUND LIKE MUCH, IT WOULD BE
FAR MORE IMPRESSIVE IF I COULD STAND HERE AND DESCRIBE
A REVOLUTIONARY ACADEMIC PROGRAM IN WHICH EVERY STUDENT
DESPERATELY WANTS TO ENROLL, I CAN'T AND IT IS
UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT ME TO DO SO, BUT DON'T SELL
PATIENCE AND INCREMENTAL GAINS SHORT,

TWO YEARS AGO WE DID NOT KNOW ONE STUDENT OR ONE
TEACHER AT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR, HIGH SCHOOL. ONE
MONTH FROM NOW WE WILL BE HOLDING OUR ANNUAL
SHAREHOLDERS MEETING AT THE SCHOOL. I LOOK FORWARD TO
THIS EVENT WITH GREAT

ENTHUSIASM BECAUSE IT WILL SAY MORE ABOUT SCHOOL-
BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS THAN I COULD EVER CONVEY IN ONE
TWENTY-MINUTE TALK,

THERE IS ONE OTHER SIDE OF OUR PARTNERSHIP, HOWEVER, THAT I
WANT TO TURN YOUR ATTENTION TO, IT CONCERNS WHAT THE
STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOL HAVE TAUGHT US AND THE VERY PERSONAL
WAY IN WHICH OUR EMPLOYEES WHO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM
HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THEIR PARTICIPATION,

WHEN WE FIRST BECAME INVOLVED IN JOIN-A-SCHOOL, WE THOUGHT
PRIMARILY IN TERMS OF HOW AMERICAN CAN COULD HELP MARTIN
LUTHER KING, WE WERE TOTALLY UNPREPARED

))
FOR THE/IMPACT THAT THE SCHOOL HAS HAD ON US. WE
HAVE FOUND TEACHERS WHO ARE DEDICATED AND INVOLVED, WE HAVE
FOUND STUDENTS WHO ARE ABLE, INTERESTED AND AMBITIOUS. WE HAVE
LEARNED ONCE AGAIN THAT WHEN YOU APPROACH YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
CARE AND RESPECT, THEY RESPOND WITH CARE AND RESPECT, WE WERE
REMINDED THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO GROW AND
LEARN IF THEY ARE NOT GIVEN A FAIR AND REAL OPPORTUNITY,

FRANKLY⁴ I DO NOT BELIEVE THE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS OF
THIS NATION, AND ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO COME FROM
IMPOVERISHED, NEGLECTED AREAS, CAN RECEIVE A FAIR
OPPORTUNITY IF THEY HAVE TO TRADE GOVERNMENT
SUPPORT FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT,

OUR SCHOOLS NEED MORE THAN WHAT ONE CORPORATION CAN
PROVIDE, THEY NEED MORE THAN WHAT ALL CORPORATIONS
CAN PROVIDE TOGETHER,

SURE, WE NEED TO DEVELOP PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIPS. BUT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS MUST NOT
RESULT IN PRIVATE SECTOR SUBSTITUTION FOR PUBLIC SECTOR
RESPONSIBILITY.

I UNDERSTAND THE FINANCIAL STRAINS ON GOVERNMENT, BUT I ALSO BELIEVE THAT GOVERNMENT HAS AN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE OUR SCHOOLS WITH THE FUNDS THEY NEED - AND TO STOP LOOKING FOR WAYS TO REDUCE THAT SUPPORT BY TELLING OTHERS THAT THEY SHOULD BECOME INVOLVED.

I HAVE A SIMILAR MESSAGE TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS ARE MARVELOUS, BUT LET'S NOT BE SEDUCED INTO THINKING THAT THEY ARE GOING TO RESULT IN DRAMATIC, NATIONWIDE IMPROVEMENTS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT. IF WE REALLY WANT TO RESTORE OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO WHAT THEY SHOULD BE - INDEED WHAT THEY MUST ONCE AGAIN BECOME - THEN WE IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY MUST SEND A STRONG MESSAG TO WASHINGTON, TO OUR STATEHOUSES AND CITY HALLS - A GOOD SCHOOL SYSTEM, A GOOD SCHOOL BUILDING, A GOOD SCHOOL TEACHER COST MONEY - AND WE WILL SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR EFFORTS TO MAKE THAT INVESTMENT NOW,

THE CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLING IS AS
WIDESPREAD, PERSISTENT AND INTENSE

AS EVER BEFORE. THIS IS PRECISELY THE TIME TO
REAFFIRM THE LEGACY AND POTENTIAL OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION, A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN

PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN OF ALL ABILITIES IS
FUNDAMENTAL TO THE AMERICAN IDEAL OF A JUST SOCIETY,

WHEN FRANK MACCHIAROLA, THE PRESIDENT OF THE NEW
YORK CITY PARTNERSHIP, PRESENTED HIS FINAL ANNUAL
REPORT AS CHANCELLOR OF THE NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS, HE WROTE SOMETHING THAT I THINK ALL OF US
SHOULD REMEMBER.

I WOULD LIKE TO CLOSE WITH THOSE WORDS TODAY.

"MAYBE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

TO BE DONE," MACCHIAROLA WROTE,

"IS TO PUT CHILDREN IN THE CENTER

OF OUR PUBLIC LIFE AS WELL AS IN

THE CENTER OF OUR PRIVATE LIVES,

SUCH A COMMITMENT,"

HE SAID, "IS AS IMPORTANT TO US AS IT IS TO THEM."