

employees to give something back. Target Stores is a perfect example. Through the Family Matters Program, started by Points of Light, Target Stores is the first national company to involve its employees and their families in community service.

Last year, nearly 5,000 Target employees and their families volunteered. Working alongside their parents, young people learned firsthand about the importance and the joy of giving back. We thank Target stores for helping so many young children start early on a lifetime of service.

With us tonight to represent Target is Julie Hennessy.

[The President presented the award to Ms. Hennessy.]

The President. As Oprah said earlier, the 16 award winners with us tonight represent volunteers all over our country who are committed to helping us all build a better and stronger future. In honoring their contributions, we cele-

brate the spirit of service that has sustained America in times of trouble and united us with common hopes and dreams.

At the dawn of a new century, let us all resolve to join hands to do it more. Remember what this summit is all about. These people were doing all this before we gathered. Ninety-three million Americans already volunteer. What we're saying is that in every community in America, more people must do it in a systematic way, and everyone must do it if America is going to have the future it deserves and our children are going to all be like those whom we honor here tonight.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. in Exhibit Hall A of the Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Colin L. Powell, USA (ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; former First Ladies Rosalynn Carter and Nancy Reagan; and television talk show host Oprah Winfrey.

Remarks at the Opening Ceremony of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in Philadelphia

April 28, 1997

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to begin by thanking Matthew and Teevee and Christina and Jamil and Christy for introducing the Presidents and Mrs. Reagan. They reminded us of what this summit is all about.

I thank President and Mrs. Bush, President and Mrs. Carter, President Ford, Mrs. Reagan, Vice President and Mrs. Gore for their devotion to this endeavor. I thank Harris Wofford and Bob Goodwin, the president of the Points of Light Foundation; Henry Cisneros and Lynda Robb; and all the others who have worked for this day. I say a special word of thanks to all the public officials who have come from all over our country, Members of Congress, Governors, Lieutenant Governors and others.

But particularly, I want to thank General Colin Powell. At our last meeting, when he was about to retire as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I asked him if there was another mission which might bring him back into public

life. He said he wanted to help children who didn't have what they needed to succeed in life and who needed the chance to serve America. Well, General, this may be your most important mission, and I want to thank you for reenlisting. Thank you.

I thank my friend Mayor Rendell and the wonderful people of Philadelphia, Governor Ridge and the people of Pennsylvania who have made us feel so welcome.

We come here before the house where America was born, the place where we, the people, took the first step on our centuries-old journey to form a more perfect Union. On the last day of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin walked out of this hall and encountered a woman anxious to know what had gone on inside. She asked him, "Well, Doctor, what have we got, a monarchy or a republic?" Mr. Franklin replied, "A republic, if you can keep it."

For more than 200 years, we have struggled to keep this Republic. It is an enduring and

endless challenge, for endemic in human nature and human frailty are successive generations of problems. But we have always succeeded in making our Union more perfect. Consider how imperfect it was when we had people in this country who weren't even treated as people but slaves. Consider how imperfect it was when children could be forced to work long hours into the night in dangerous conditions. Consider how imperfect it was when women, now more than half the population of America, could not even vote.

So when you get discouraged, remember: We have succeeded in over 200 years in forming a more perfect Union. We have succeeded because we've had a brilliant free enterprise system. We have succeeded because we had a flexible, constitutional, evolving, effective government at every level. But we have succeeded mostly because, in the gaps between what is done by Government and what is done by the private economy, citizens have found ways to step forward and move our country forward and lift our people up. Citizen service is the story of our more perfect Union.

Now we live in one of the great moments of change in our history, more full of promise, as President Ford said, than any period of America's past. More of these children behind me and more of these children out here on these streets of Philadelphia will have more chances to live out the future of their dreams than any generation of American children in history if the citizens of this country step forward to fill the gaps in their lives and in our national life to form a more perfect Union.

But let us not be blind to the facts. Even with all the progress that together we have made, with 12 million new jobs and a record drop in welfare rolls and years of dropping crime rates, you and I know that millions of our children are being left behind in lives of too much danger, too many drugs, too little hope, and not enough opportunity. You and I know that too many people are out there doing the very best they can and still not keeping up, much less moving forward.

Yes, there are things that the Government should do. None of us stand here, President and former Presidents, to say that we must not do our responsibility. Of course, we should do better with our schools. Of course, we should open the doors of college to everyone. Of course, all our children should have health care

coverage. Of course, we can do more to make our streets safer. But even if we do everything we should, you and I know that a lot of the problems facing our children are problems of the human heart, problems that can only be resolved when there is a one-on-one connection, community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, street by street, home by home, with every child in this country entitled to live out their God-given destiny. You know it is true.

I am proud of the fact that because of the computer and micro solutions to problems we don't need big Government bureaucracies to do some of the things that used to be done. But as I have said repeatedly, the era of big Government may be over, but the era of big challenges for our country is not, and so we need an era of big citizenship. That is why we are here, and that is what we should promise ourselves we will do.

Let me say one other thing, too. Look at these kids behind me. They're America's future, all of them. And when you think of what is tearing the world apart today, the racial, the ethnic, the religious hatreds, from Bosnia to Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Africa, and you look at the children behind me and you realize what a gift from God our diversity is, you know that if we know each other, if we serve each other, if we work with each other, one of the things that will happen is, we will make sure that our diversity is a rich resource to make our Union more perfect, not an instrument of our national undoing in the 21st century.

We cherish our citizen volunteers. There are already more than 90 million of us, and after this summit there will be more, especially because General Powell, Ray Chambers, and others have organized a followup to this. And the really important work of this summit will begin after my talk's over, when you go into the workshops and the meetings and make a commitment that in every community there will be a systematic, disciplined, comprehensive effort to deal with the five areas outlined as the challenges for our young people. That is what really matters here.

Young people above all, however, have the time, the energy, and the idealism for this kind of citizen service. Before they have their own families, the young can make a unique contribution to the family of America. In doing so, they can acquire the habit of service and get a deeper

understanding of what it really means to be a citizen. That is the main reason, perhaps, we are here.

In Philadelphia, the superintendent of schools is working to make service the expected thing in elementary and middle school. Maryland has required it in high school. And I challenge every State and every school in this country at least to offer in a disciplined, organized way every young person in school a chance to serve. A recent survey said if they were just asked, over 90 percent of them would do it. We ought to be ashamed of ourselves if we don't give them the chance to do that.

Let me also say, of course, that we need some of them to serve full-time. They do, you know, in the Peace Corps. [Applause] And we have some former Peace Corps volunteers out there applauding. But we should all applaud them because they have helped to change the world for the better—[applause]—and they do in AmeriCorps, the national service program that was started in our administration. The idea behind AmeriCorps was to instill an ethic of mutual responsibility in our children so that young people could improve their own lives in return for improving the life of America.

Since its creation, 50,000 young Americans have earned college tuition by serving their communities in many ways. And we know that the typical full-time community servant recruits at least a dozen more volunteers. I saw that in North Dakota when I went to see what the Red River had done to Grand Forks and to the rest of North Dakota and Minnesota. I saw our young AmeriCorps volunteers, and I knew that because they were able to serve full-time, they'd be there when the waters receded, the mess was there, the people had to put their lives back together, and the cameras were gone. I saw it again yesterday when we were working on the streets and on the stadium and on the schools.

The will to serve has never been stronger, and more of our young people want to serve full-time. But there's a limit to what we can do now. And yet, there is a solution—ironically, one I came to right here in Philadelphia, for here in Philadelphia, a minister who is a friend of mine, Reverend Tony Campolo, is helping to organize a movement among churches to get churches to sponsor 10,000 full-time youth volunteers to take a year off from college or defer

a year from college under the sponsorship of their churches.

The churches will do what we do in AmeriCorps, helping to provide for the living expenses of the young people. But I think we ought to say to them, at the very least, it shouldn't cost you any money to serve. And so if you've got a college loan and you take a year off to serve under the sponsorship of a religious organization, I'm going to propose legislation to say during that year no interest should accrue on that college loan. It should not cost you any money to serve your country.

But we can do more. We can double the impact of AmeriCorps with the help of our religious and charitable institutions. I want to challenge every charity, every religious group, every community group, and their business supporters to give young people the support they need to do a year of community service. If you do that, then in our budget now we will be able to give every one of them the scholarship that AmeriCorps volunteers get for their year of community service. Work with your churches, work with your community organizations, and we can provide that to young people. Put them to work as mentors, as teachers, as organizers of other volunteers, and we can double the number of full-time youth volunteers by adding another 50,000. By the year 2000, that would mean that in 8 years, more children will have served full-time on our streets than have worked in the entire history of the Peace Corps around the world. We can change America, folks, if we'll do it together, hand in hand, community by community.

The same thing is true of the police corps, which offers young people a chance to pay for their college education if they'll be police officers for 4 years. We can triple the number of young people who do that, and I intend to try. We need more young people going as teachers into our schools. And we must support them in that.

We have to understand that we need a balance between volunteers on a part-time basis, volunteers on a full-time basis, and there is no conflict between the two. We have to understand that we value America's free enterprise system. We know we need our Government, but there will never be a time when we need citizen servants more than we need them today, because these children have got to be saved one by one.

And let me say to all of you, the most important people here today are not the Presidents or the generals or the Governors or the Senators. The most important people are those who teach the student to read, who save the health of the infant, who give help to families when all help seems gone. The most important title today is not Senator, Vice President, general, Governor, or President; it is—as Harry Truman reminded us so long ago, the most important title any of us will ever hold in this country is the title of citizen. This is our Republic. Let us keep it. *[Applause]* Thank you.

And now, I would like to call upon Mrs. Reagan and my fellow Presidents to join me in signing this summit declaration, “A Call to Citizen Service To Fulfill the Promise of Amer-

ica.” We do this in the hope that in the weeks and months to come, millions and millions and millions of you will join us in putting your names to the declaration, devoting your lives to the mission, and beginning the era of big citizenship for the United States.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:30 a.m. at Independence National Historical Park. In his remarks, he referred to Henry Cisneros and Lynda Robb, vice chairs, Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future; Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia; Gov. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania; Raymond G. Chambers, cofounder, Points of Light Foundation; and David Hornbeck, Philadelphia superintendent of schools.

Remarks at the Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future Luncheon in Philadelphia

April 28, 1997

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I’ve had a great time here, and I want to thank all of you for being so patient while I lumber around with my temporary disability. Can you imagine how bad I would look if I had actually jumped out of an airplane? *[Laughter]* I’m looking forward to not being President. You know, if I can jump out of an airplane and look like Jerry Ford does in 30 years, I’ll be one happy guy. That’s a great thing.

I want to thank President Bush for all of the people that he mentioned and thanking them—I join with that—and especially Ray Chambers and Stuart Shapiro and General Powell for their extraordinary efforts. I’d also like to thank the leaders of the corporate and non-profit sector who are here today, including my longtime friend Millard Fuller, Bob Allen, Doug Watson, and Gerry Greenwald and so many others. We’ve all been washed in the warm glow of lots of words and music and the powerful examples. And I must say, I will live with the stories that the young people told last night at that event for the rest of my life.

I would just like to make two points here, because I really want this to make a difference. I think there are two keys to whether, when people look back on this moment 10 years from

now, they say, “These people really did something special; they changed America.” The first is what General Powell and Ray Chambers and others are doing with the followup on America’s Promise. And everything you can do to support that, you should, making those promises. We’re going to try to do our part.

I said yesterday that the Department of Defense will tutor or teach a million children in the next 4 years. The Department of Transportation and the contractors with whom it works have committed to reach another million kids with tutoring or teaching. We are going to go from 1,500 to 2,000 schools we’ve adopted. Going back to what Eli said—we’ll have more to say about that later—we’re going to hire 10,000 people to move from welfare to work so they can support their children better. We’re going to try to extend health insurance to 5 million kids and try to at least make the first 2 years of college as available as a high school education is today. We’ll try to do our part, and we’ll try to do it in very personal ways.

The last Christmas and the last birthday I had were some of the best I ever had in my life because my gift from the White House staff was a notebook of personal pledges for community service. My Secret Service detail adopted