

NetDay is a great example of how America works best when we all work together. It's like an old-fashioned barnraising, neighbor joins with neighbor to do something for the good of the entire community; students, teachers, parents, community groups, government, business, unions, all pulling together to pull cable, hook up our schools, and put the future at the fingertips of all our young people.

Once we reach our goal of linking our schools to the Internet, for the first time in history, children in the most isolated rural schools, the most comfortable suburbs, the poorest inner-city schools, all of them will have the same access to the same universe of knowledge. That means a boy in Lake Charles, Louisiana can visit a museum halfway around the world, a girl in Juneau, Alaska can visit the Library of Congress on-line.

Since the first NetDay just over a year ago, nearly a quarter million volunteers have wired 50,000 classrooms around our country. Today NetDay activities are occurring in more than 40 States. In a few minutes, Vice President Gore and I will have a chance to use a new video and computer technology set up for the first time right in the Oval Office to meet with volunteers in south central Los Angeles and children in Hartford, Connecticut. I want to thank them and all the NetDay volunteers for their service to our country.

We have to do everything we can to make technology literacy a reality for every child in America. That's why I asked the Federal Communications Commission to give our schools and libraries a discount, a special "E-rate," or education rate, to help them connect classrooms to the Internet and to stay on-line. On May 6th, the FCC will vote on a plan to provide more than \$2 billion in yearly E-rate discounts for schools and libraries. This can make all the difference for communities struggling to make sure their students are ready for the 21st century. So today, again, I call on the FCC to approve this plan and give our children access to this new world of knowledge.

Now, more than ever, we can't afford for our children to be priced out of cyberspace. But connecting young people to the Internet is not enough. We have to make sure that

when they log on they have access to the information that will prepare them for the world of the future. And Government has a vital role to play in all this. For instance, NASA lets students talk to astronauts on the Internet. And Vice President Gore's GLOBE project gives tomorrow's environmental scientists a chance to interact with the scientists of today. Today I am directing every department and agency in our National Government to develop educational Internet services targeted to our young people. With this action, we are one step closer to giving young people the tools they need to be the best they can be in the 21st century.

We owe much of our progress thus far to the efforts of the Vice President. He has led our national campaign for technology literacy, and I'd like him to say a few words now.

Mr. Vice President.

[At this point, the Vice President made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

Both of us encourage all of you to visit the White House home page. And once again, let me thank all the NetDay volunteers. We are going to meet our goal. We're going to get every classroom and every library in this country hooked up by the year 2000.

Have a great day, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Teleconference Remarks to Students on NetDay

April 19, 1997

The President. Hi, students!

Students. Hi, Mr. President!

The President. Now, is that Mr. Contreras with you?

Precious Robinson. Yes, this is Mr. Contreras.

The President. Hello, Miguel, how are you?

Miguel Contreras. Buenos dias, Mr. President.

The President. Buenos dias. Now, why don't you tell us why you're volunteering this weekend?

Mr. Contreras. Well, we've got quite a number of union members here in Los Angeles as part of the national AFL-CIO NetDay, that are coming together here to help wire 38 schools and empowerment zones in Los Angeles. And we're going to kick it off today. We think that educational opportunities is equivalent to civil rights here, and we want to make sure that all our students have the necessary tools to bring them into the 21st century.

So we're glad that you're supporting this effort. And the unions here—in particular, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 11; we have the CWA, Communication Workers of America, and the United Teachers of LA all have turned out today to ensure that the wiring is a success. So we're going to move forward today.

The President. Thank you.

And Ms. Robinson, what benefits do you expect to flow from this to the students at your school?

Ms. Robinson. Well, we want to be prepared for the 21st century, and we want our children to be familiar and to be competent and to be ready to use the Internet. So we expect a great deal—great many benefits from this. We want the Super Information Highway—we know that is the way of the future, and we want all of our students to be prepared for that.

We have a lot of our staff members here also, my teachers, my parents, my superintendent. And so we're all very excited about the work that's going to take place today.

The President. Well, thank you.

How many of the young people behind us know how to use a computer? Raise your hand if you can use a computer.

Mr. Contreras. Quite a number of them.

The President. Good for you. Well, good luck.

Mr. Contreras. Don't ask the adults. [Laughter]

The President. Well, don't ask the adults on this side of the screen, either. [Laughter] The Vice President can raise his hand; I'm not so sure about me. [Laughter]

Have a good day. Thank you.

Students. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Now we want to go to Hartford. There's Hartford. Good morning!

Students. Good morning!

The President. I want to thank all the young people who are there participating in the Youth Tech Corps. The Vice President and I just announced that Connecticut will be getting some more funds from the Department of Education to make sure that every child in Connecticut will have access to educational technology. So I want you to tell me about what the Youth Tech Corps is doing and how that relates to getting technology out to everybody.

Student. The Youth Tech Corps, first of all, is a program that is designed to match students who have strong interests with technology with other students and use businesses to enhance this program.

The President. So those of you who have good skills are helping those who need it, right?

Student. All who are interested.

The President. Yes, well, maybe you could send me a volunteer. I need some help down here. [Laughter]

Student. No problem.

The President. I see a couple of volunteers in the back of the room there. They're laughing. [Laughter]

What have you done on NetDay? What does it mean for Connecticut and for you?

Student. Well, basically the Youth Tech Corps is—basically, we're trying to continue on the process of Connect '96 and just take it the next step to getting the schools—all the schools connected and make sure that they can use the computers once they have computers and they're connected to the Internet.

The President. Do you find that in your own experience that once the computers are there and they're hooked up to the Internet that they are widely used?

Student. I think they're widely used if the people using them know how to. I know, like, a lot of students—there are some that probably don't know how to. But I think—I feel that they're widely used.

The President. What about the teachers? Do all the teachers know how to make maximum use of it?

Student. No. [Laughter]

The President. Some yes and some no, right? [Laughter]

Student. Yes. Some do and some don't, you know, because some teachers actually put their grades on computer, not for—[in-audible]—but those who calculate it.

The President. So it's important that we don't let the connecting of the schools and the classrooms get ahead of training the teachers and the students about how to use the computers.

Student. Right.

Student. Exactly.

The President. Because otherwise they're useless just sitting there, right?

Student. Right.

The President. Now, is everybody in the room a member of the tech corps?

Student. This is the corps; this is the beginning of it. Hopefully, they will continue to be a part of the Youth Tech Corps.

The President. Good for you.

Do you want to say anything, Al?

The Vice President. Well, I just want to congratulate all of you. It's an exciting day. It makes you feel good to be a part of this, doesn't it?

Student. Yes.

The Vice President. Well, congratulations, and keep up the wonderful work.

Student. Thank you.

The President. You've reminded us of something very important today about what you're doing, too, because we sometimes get so focused on making sure all the classrooms in the country are hooked up that we forget that the hookup is worthless unless the teachers and the students are trained to use it—

Student. That's right.

The President. —and have the time and ability to use it.

So I thank all of you for what you're doing, and I hope that this conversation we're having today will lead to some greater publicity for your Tech Corps so that maybe every community in the country will have one to make sure that the students and the teachers can use the computers and the hookups that we're providing.

Thank you, God bless you, and good luck. Hang in there.

Students. Thank you.

The President. Bye-bye. Have a good day.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 10:40 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House to students in Los Angeles, CA, and Hartford, CT. In his remarks, the President referred to Precious Robinson, principal, Barrett Elementary School in Los Angeles.

Proclamation 6992—National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week, 1997

April 19, 1997

By the President of the United States
of America

A Proclamation

Giving life to another through an organ or tissue transplant is one of the most selfless human acts. The person choosing to become a donor usually receives no tangible thanks and gains no fame or glory from the gesture. And yet the decision to sign a donor card does give the donor a quiet, inner fulfillment in the knowledge that he or she may one day help save a life, bringing new joy to another person and their family. Often, for many Americans, this sense of fulfillment is sufficient thanks.

Today, more than 50,000 Americans are on the national transplant waiting list and about 2,000 more people need transplants every month. Unfortunately, even though this country has an adequate supply of individuals who qualify as organ donors, many people have still not chosen to become one. Patients in truly desperate circumstances are depending on their fellow Americans to choose to become organ and tissue donors.

Stunning advances in transplant research and technology have made miracles possible, but we must do our part to make the dreams of people awaiting transplants become reality. Many Americans are unaware of the national shortage of organ donors, and all of us must work together to spread the word.

Let us take advantage of our enormous power to save a life or to enrich the quality of life for those who otherwise face endless pain, torment, or death. I urge every American to respond to the urgent call for organ and tissue donors by signing a donor card