

adulthood. As any parent can tell you, today's youth has a knack for giving us adults a few important lessons. Tess Spinola's essay does just that.

WHAT DOES AMERICANISM MEAN TO ME?

(By Tess Spinola)

Americanism is such a powerful word with so many meanings. It is the equivalent of struggles, worries, doubts and fears, that all led, eventually, to astounding triumphs that define who we are, and the country we live in. It is the feeling of freedom as we lay our hands over our hearts and pledge to the flag; a flag that symbolizes the blood, sweat, and tears of Americans in the past, present and future; it is the pride and patriotism that only an American can truly understand. Most importantly, Americanism means something different for each of us.

Americanism means Victory to me; it means the success in the quest for independence by the Colonist in the Revolutionary War, symbolizing that America and its citizens are people that will fight to the end, and will prevail in the darkest of situations. Americanism, to me, also means Freedom. It is the heart and passion of the Northern states in the Civil War, fighting for four years for the freedom of their African American brothers and sisters. It means Unity to me, because when joined together as one, we are unstoppable. More recently, and for the first time, Americanism means Compassion for me. It is the New York fire fighters, encased in the ash, smoke, fire and despair, as the Trade Centers were minutes from crumbling to the ground. It is the moments that they climbed up those smoky stairs, risking their lives just for the hope that they could save the life of another. It is the way that Americans have shaken off the September 11th attacks and helped each other recuperate; turning defeat into a lesson we will learn from and grow because of for the rest of our lives. Americanism is a word and a meaning shared throughout our country, by everyone, yet it is also something very personal for me.

When I walk into my Catholic Church, and I am able to take Communion, and have a relationship with God in my own way, I know what Americanism means. When I leave the Basilica that day, and go to friend's house that is a Jew, or a Baptist, or one that has no religion at all, I know what Americanism means. When I am allowed to enjoy the Diversity surrounding me everywhere I go, and love all people I meet as my equal, Americanism has its most profound meaning for me. To be an American is to be a person of God, accepting, acknowledging, respecting and loving all people. It is what we have fought through, what we have strived for, what we are still fighting for in many ways, and what we have the chance to live every day of our lives.

Yet, Americanism, like anything, also means Change and Growth. Not only do we acknowledge that we need to change and grow in many ways, but we strive toward it everyday of our lives. We look forward to once again realizing our faults, defeating them, and growing because of them. Americanism is not represented for me through the war we may be going into with Iraq; in fact the war is America turning its back on everything we stand for. But it does mean to me the hundreds of people lining up to protest the war in San Francisco. These people know what Americanism means; freedom and right to protest, which is something that seems like such a basic right, but in reality, was fought for and earned by our founding fathers. These people are living out what we have fought for throughout our country's entire history, and when I see them on the

front page newspaper, I know why I am proud to be an American.

In short, Americanism means Victory, Freedom, Unity, Compassion, Diversity, Change, and Growth. It is the triumph and the pride in the tears that run down the cheeks of America's citizens as they hold their hands to their hearts and ponder for what seems like the first time, every time, the meaning of their National Anthem. It is alive in each and every one of us, and we must strive to be a real American everyday; the sum of what we have fought for, and what we have learned. As I watch people of all races, nationalities, religions and histories live together as equals, as I gaze at our flag, waving in the cool air of a young sunny day, as I observe the sparks of fireworks on the Fourth of July, bursting triumphantly and fluttering back to the ground in a glowing sparkle, I know what Americanism means to me. What does it mean to you?

HONORING MOTHER TERESA

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2003

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mother Teresa, a woman who has touched the lives of millions directly and indirectly. On October 19th 2003, Mother Teresa will be beatified in Rome by Pope John Paul II.

Born August 26, 1910 in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, she would not wait long to change the world. She soon found her calling at the age of 18 when she had her first calling in the Catholic church and joined the Sisters of Loretto. This Irish order of Catholic Nuns was responsible for Mother Teresa's traveling to India, where she taught and also served as principal at St. Mary's High School.

Mother Teresa's second calling came from the sick and the dying people in the streets of India. In 1948, she was granted permission by the Vatican to leave the Sisters of Loretto and start her own ministry in order to reach out to the poor, the suffering, and the dying. In 1952, Mother Teresa opened the Nirmal Hriday, Pure Heart, Home for Dying Destitutes in Calcutta. The Missionaries of Charity which continues to fulfill Mother Teresa's mission now has more than 400 of these homes worldwide. Her order of missionaries has grown to include approximately 5,000 sisters.

With such resources, Mother Teresa, late in her life, continued to help those that were fighting for their lives by giving her time and energy to those who were sick from the horrible illness known as HIV/AIDS. Mother Teresa's work has known no borders, from houses in New York City, San Francisco and Tirana, Albania, to helping the radiation sick in Chernobyl, the hungry in Ethiopia and earthquake victims in Armenia.

In 1979, Mother Teresa deservedly received the Nobel Peace prize for her continuing work to help the sick and the poor. In 1985 she received both the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Foundation for Hospice and Homecare. It has been said though, that no matter how prestigious these awards, Mother Teresa's most beloved reward was the feeling she received from taking care of those who needed her help.

Mr. Speaker I can stand here and recount for hours all of the wonderful things that Mother Teresa has done for this world. Mother Teresa's greatest accomplishment however is the lasting love that she has left behind with her mission and its continued work to serve those who cannot help themselves any longer.

In recognition of Mother Teresa's birthday, beatification and all of her accomplishments, I ask my colleagues to join with me to honor the memory of this wonderful woman.

A TRIBUTE TO RICK KNOTT UPON HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2003

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Richard Knott on his retirement after 30 years of service to the San Diego Unified School District. It is an honor to recognize the contributions that Rick has made to this school district and to our Nation during his career.

Rick has dedicated his life to the education system and has had numerous accomplishments throughout his 30 years with the San Diego Unified School District, the National Association of Federally Impact Schools, NAFIS, as well as many other education-related organizations.

I personally have worked closely with Rick in his role as the Controller of the San Diego Unified School District, and as a member of the Board of Directors of NAFIS. As a member of the NAFIS board, Rick has been an advocate of the Impact Aid program, a program designed to reimburse school districts for a loss of tax revenue as a result of a Federal presence. Rick has worked not only to increase funding for the Federal Impact Aid program, but also to ensure that the program's authorizing law is applied fairly to school districts, and maximizes the value of the program dollars.

On behalf of San Diego Unified, Rick has sought to ensure that the school district is receiving its fair share of impact aid dollars under the law. In addition to being a liaison to the Department of Education for the school district's basic support payments, Rick aggressively sought new sources of Impact Aid dollars. Rick even identified a section of the law, Section 8002, that had previously not applied to the district. Since 1994, Section 8002 has yielded in excess of \$35 million for students in San Diego. Through Rick's work, San Diego City Schools identified and qualified for Voluntary Integration funding resulting in over \$100 million of income to the district since 1985. This was done at the time when districts were not thought to qualify for the Voluntary Integration fund. Rick has drafted several legislative concepts and language to increase funding to the district or improve business/finance operation at both the Federal and State levels. Rick has also been asked to testify before the U.S. Congress, House of Representatives Subcommittee on Education to discuss the importance of Federal Impact Aid issues.

I would also like to thank Rick for his service to the 50th District of California. Rick frequently joked with me about the strong voting

block that he controlled—that of his wife and children—in my Congressional District. Rick worked hard to ensure that my staff and I maintained a thorough understanding of the Impact Aid law, and the issues and challenges facing the program. This program is important to my Congressional District because of the presence of a number of large military installations. Rick's dedication to strengthening and improving this program has improved educational opportunities for military children in my Congressional district, and for military and Indian children all across our country.

Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Richard Knott on this occasion of his retirement from the San Diego Unified School District for his dedication to education and his continued role in enriching the lives of students in my district and across the country. I thank him for his service and wish him continued success in the future.

DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 25, 2003

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2861) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Nadler-Velázquez amendment. The amendment restores \$150 million in funding for the Section 8 voucher program. The underlying bill cuts funding for housing vouchers. If this bill is passed into law in its current form, 85,000 people will lose their vouchers, including over 3,200 families in Illinois. I strongly believe that we should expand, not reduce, funding for the Section 8 voucher program and low-income housing in general. The Nadler-Velázquez amendment would help restore voucher funding for thousands of families in need.

In a letter I received today, several faith-based organizations wrote, "As faith-based organizations, we are committed to strengthening our communities by assisting those who are the most vulnerable, and we believe that our work is not simply a matter of charity, but of responsibility, righteousness, and justice. We urge you to assist us in our work by renewing Congress' commitment to fully fund and expand the Section 8 voucher program." I encourage my colleagues to read the full text of the letter and urge all members to support the amendment.

July 25, 2003.

To: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives

Re: Funding for the Housing Choice ("Section 8") Voucher Program

As members of the faith community, we are writing to express our concern about funding for the Section 8 housing voucher

program. Our organizations serve millions of low-income individuals and families who, despite their best efforts, are struggling to meet their basic needs and to achieve economic stability. To many of those we assist, the lack of affordable housing presents a considerable obstacle, and the Section 8 voucher program offers in turn a critical form of assistance. Through our work, we are witness to the important role that housing vouchers play in preventing homelessness, and in helping low-income individuals and families to make progress towards economic stability.

Congress has for many years expressed a strong commitment to the Section 8 voucher program, consistently voting to increase the number of vouchers authorized and to fully fund all authorized vouchers. This commitment has been important, as the need for housing assistance has continued to expand. In most communities, there are long waiting lists for Section 8 vouchers, and it is estimated that only one third of eligible households receive voucher assistance.

To our disappointment, however, Congress appears to be retreating from this commitment. In the appropriations law for 2003, Congress failed, for the first time in recent memory, to include funding for incremental Section 8 vouchers. This week, the House Appropriations Committee reported out a VA-HUD appropriations bill for 2004 that would, by its own estimate, fund only 96 percent of authorized Section 8 vouchers, and again includes no funding for incremental vouchers.

Moreover, while we appreciate that the House Appropriations Committee has made a sincere effort to improve on the President's budget request for the voucher program, and we recognize that estimating future voucher costs is difficult, there is reason to believe that the Committee's estimate is overly optimistic. Recent analyses performed independently by the Congressional Budget Office and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) suggest that the Committee's estimate is based on voucher cost assumptions that are too low. For example, in an analysis of the most recent voucher cost data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, CBPP estimates that the Section 8 appropriation in the House bill would be sufficient to renew only 91 percent of authorized vouchers, and is approximately \$580 million short of the funding that will be necessary to fully renew vouchers leased in 2004. A shortfall of this magnitude would have a destructive impact on thousands of vulnerable households—85,000 households, by CBPP's estimate—the great majority of which are working families, elderly, or disabled.

We therefore urge you to renew Congress' commitment to fully fund the Section 8 voucher program. Specifically, we ask that you increase the Section 8 appropriation sufficiently to ensure that all authorized vouchers will be funded, and to make certain that no households using vouchers in the coming year will be denied funding.

As faith-based organizations, we are committed to strengthening our communities by assisting those who are the most vulnerable, and we believe that our work is not simply a matter of charity, but of responsibility, righteousness, and justice. We urge you to assist us in our work by renewing Congress' commitment to fully fund and expand the Section 8 voucher program.

Sincerely,

American Baptist Churches USA; Call to Renewal; Catholic Charities USA; The Episcopal Church, USA; McAuley Institute; NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office; United Jewish Communities; Volunteers of America.

HONORING ESPERANZA MARRERO

HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2003

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to pay tribute to Esperanza Marrero—a resident on the Lower East Side of my New York City Congressional District.

Esperanza is the oldest person in New York State at 110 years old and 4 and 1/2 months. She has lived through two World Wars, and has seen the changes in culture and life in Puerto Rico—and in New York City—over the decades.

Born in 1893 in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, Esperanza is the proud grandmother of 15 and has dozens of great grandchildren. She credits her long life to getting a strong start growing up in Puerto Rico.

Like her grandmother before her who lived to be 120, Esperanza continues to live a full life, playing bingo at the Lillian Wald Senior Center, shopping on 14th Street, or watching the boats on the East River. Her companion is a dog named Benji, who is said to have saved her life many times.

Esperanza, which means "hope" in Spanish, was named appropriately—her life and her story are truly inspirational.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Esperanza Marrero, and join with my colleagues in the House of Representatives to recognize her extraordinary life.

TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT INGRAM

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 4, 2003

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a versatile and committed public servant in my District, the Rev. Dr. Robert Ingram. This honor has long been in coming for his service to our community in various capacities. Among the roles he has held was that of Chief of Police, City Manager and subsequently Mayor of the City of Opa-Locka. His current elected position as Vice-Chairman of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the fourth largest school system in the nation with some 370,000 students, is what occupies his waking hours as he doggedly tackles the awesome task of balancing the learning needs of students amidst the dwindling education dollars that now fund our schools.

In its most recent article entitled: "Robert Ingram: The Ascension of an Ex-Miami Cop," the FLAVOUR Black Florida Life & Style Magazine succinctly quoted the City of Miami's first Black Police Chief Clarence Dickson when he described Dr. Ingram's service record thus: "... his life is legend and is about as close to the impossible dream as I have witnessed ... not in my wildest dreams would I have predicted the accomplishments, the challenges, the risk, the courage, the sacrifices, the victories and the successes this man would achieve though all of the evidence was there in those early days."

He has spoken clearly on such issues as money, reparations, black-on-black crime, affordable housing, civil rights, love, equal rights