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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

AWARDS CEREMONY

Friday, April 23, 1993

2:00 p.m.

Great Hall
Main Justice Building
Washington, D.C.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. COLGATE: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, principals and teachers, and invited guests.

Welcome to the Department of Justice's third annual ceremony in celebration of National Volunteer Week. My name is Steve Colgate, and I'm the Assistant Attorney General for Administration, and I'll be your master of ceremonies for today.

I'd like to start off this afternoon's ceremony with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Anthony Pitts, a 5th grade student in Goding Elementary School, and Anthony is accompanied by his tutor, Tyrone Wood who's a volunteer from the Justice Management Division.

[Pledge of Allegiance, led by Anthony Pitts.]

MR. COLGATE: Thank you, Anthony. I don't think when I was a 5th-grader I could that as well as that. We appreciate it.

Next I'd like to introduce the Watkins Glee Club. We first met the Watkins Glee Club at the Capitol Hill Cluster School three years, when they were going to sing at our first volunteers award ceremony.

We were so impressed that we invited them back

again last year, and we have successfully gotten them to come this year. So without further ado, I'd like to introduce the Watkins Glee Club, under the co-direction of Ms. Laura Hadley and Ms. Thomasena Allen.

The Watkins Glee Club.

[Musical Selections by the Watkins Glee Club.]

[Applause.]

MR. COLGATE: Thank you. That was outstanding.

President Clinton created the White House Office of National Service to provide leadership and direction to community service initiatives in the Federal government. Peter Edelman, the Counselor to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Senior Policy Advisor to the President, was scheduled to be here today.

Unfortunately, he was called to Chicago on urgent business, and will not be able to attend and join us today. However, on behalf of the Office of National Service, he sends his congratulations to the Department's continuing volunteer efforts, and wishes well in the task of building upon that.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce Ms. Cushenberry. In 1991, the Department of Justice signed a

partnership agreement with the District of Columbia Public Schools to make available Department employees to serve as tutors to elementary and junior high school students, and we began with seven schools.

I'm really pleased to announce that over the last two years this number has climbed to 13 schools. We are pleased to have Ms. Cushenberry, Coordinator of Partners in Education, District of Columbia Public Schools to be with us this afternoon and offer some remarks on this Partnership in Education.

[Applause.]

MS. CUSHENBERRY: Good afternoon, Attorney General and distinguished volunteers and guests.

On behalf of the Office of the Superintendent and Dr. John Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, thank you for volunteering your time and your talent to the students, staff and parents of the D.C. Public Schools.

The volunteers for the Department of Justice constitute one of the largest departmental partnership groups who volunteer at 13 of the school sites, and enrich our schools through mentoring, tutoring, lecturing, planning and judging contests, taking field trips, assisting PTA and HFM

groups, serving as school advocates and many other supportive activities.

The community is a vital part of the educational process, and students need to be able to connect and become familiar with many different types of careers in the governments, and students need your one-on-one guidance in becoming productive and responsible global citizens.

With the growing awareness and absolute necessity of community involvement in schools, the D.C. Public Schools Partners in Education program has grown over the past few years to 377 new partnerships, either in place or in current negotiation, with 46 partnerships established this school year.

We are very excited about this overwhelming response to our improvement efforts. Your schools' students, staff and parents look forward to your return for the rest of the school year, and for the future years. We cannot commend you enough for your donation of quality time and enriching experiences.

Thank you for becoming a member of our D.C. Public School family of volunteers.

[Applause.]

MR. COLGATE: Thank you.

Now it's my honor and privilege to introduce the Attorney General. Attorney General Reno has only been with us for a few weeks; however, she has shown real keen interest in the Department of Justice's work life and volunteer programs.

It is my absolute honor and privilege to introduce the Attorney General of the United States, Janet Reno.

[Applause.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you so very much.

And I want to thank the Glee Club. You all are volunteering today for us, and you have made a difference in our lives, in volunteering to come here and reach out and make a difference.

I remember a young man at home who wanted to reach out and help somebody. He was only 11 years old, but he decided he was going to tutor somebody in the second grade, and he made a difference.

Each one of us, even young people, can reach out and make a difference by caring, and with the beautiful music you made today, you surely made a difference in my life. Thank you very, very much.

I'm so pleased to be here. Each day, as the day goes by, and even in these very difficult days, so many people have reached out and made a difference to me. This is a great and caring Department. It cares about this Nation and it cares about justice, and it cares about the people around you, and I am very proud to be here.

I keep being so wonderfully heartened by steps that the Department has already taken, and I don't have to worry about -- programs such as this, in terms of recognizing volunteers, and I think it's important, because I've discovered that hundreds of Department employees, both here and throughout the Nation, are involved in volunteer efforts.

Just look at the book, and look at how many people have volunteered, and that's probably not everybody who's reached out throughout America to help people. It's a great tribute to some very caring people.

I'm fascinated by the range in volunteerism. More than 300 Department employees are currently involved in Legal Advocates in Education Program that has just been described. Students at 12 elementary and junior high schools who are at risk academically are tutored for up to eight hours a month at their school during school hours. That can make a

difference.

Where I come from, in Dade County, we had a tutoring program. We had a young man who really was on his way to trouble. He'd already been picked up by the police once or twice, we looked at his academic background. He could be a lawyer, an engineer -- he could be so many different things, but he wasn't applying himself.

And we got him a tutor in there, and five years later he came up to me and he says, "I'm graduating from high school now, and I'm on my way to college, and I want to thank you," and I said, "Don't thank me, thank the person who tutored you and made the difference and turned your life around because he cared about you."

If any tutors are here, all I can say is thank you, you are making a difference for the future of America. And at a difficult time during the holiday season last December, 36 Department employees from 24 organizations collected food for our Care and Share Program, another example of reaching out in a different way, a material way.

I'm profoundly impressed with the extent, diversity and calibre of community volunteer service performed by Department employees throughout the United States. Lawyer

Service Advocates for the homeless, battered women and abused and neglected children.

Many lawyers perform pro bono work on behalf of the disabled and other disadvantaged persons and groups. I want to tell you how proud that makes me. I have had lawyers involved in public service tell me, "Well, I don't have to do pro bono work because I'm already serving the public."

Phooey!

[Laughter.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: To reach out and make the law accessible to somebody who can't afford it is one of the most important things a lawyer can do, and I'm just so proud that this Department is engaging in their pro bono effort.

My mother was a cub scout den mother, and we've got cub scout master, Boy Scout and Girl Scout leaders in our midst, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, readers for the blind, hospice volunteers, and companions for persons living with AIDS.

Many of you serve as hospital and nursing home volunteers, choir directors and Sunday school teachers, and counselors and listeners on crisis hotlines. That makes such a difference.

For somebody who will visit with an elderly person at home, who will reach, who will be there, possibly saving them from a nursing home, you're giving them a loving home that can make a difference.

To reach out to a mentally ill person, and just be a 24-hour hotline can make a difference.

There are so many people who can live good, strong, constructive human lives if you'll just reach out and give them a hand every now and then. We all surely can make a difference.

We've got enough volunteer fire fighters, both men and women, for our own fire department, I'm told.

[Laughter.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: And enough baseball, basketball, soccer and field and track coaches to start our on league. We should challenge the other departments.

[Laughter.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: And we have many people working on the cutting edge of social issues that affect all Americans, such as health care for the elderly, teen pregnancy, early childhood education, day care, and civil rights issues, and that is so important.

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If we can reach out to all Americans, if I could leave here as Attorney General someday and say that I helped, and the people at the Department of Justice helped, to ensure every American got an opportunity for a strong and healthy life by being on the cutting edge, I'd feel so good.

President Clinton will be pleased to know that we are putting people first, both at work and in our free time. It's not just individuals who engage in these important efforts. A number of Department employees have formed together, as a group, or an office, to take on a special volunteer service project.

U.S. Attorney personnel from 13 District offices volunteer in a variety of projects in their communities. A group of 12 Hispanic employees from seven Department organization joined together last year to form a Hispanic membership program at Lincoln Junior High School here in the City.

The Denver office of the United States Trustees sponsored one the city's shelters for battered women and their children last Christmas. More than 70 employees of the FBI Washington Field Office served as tutors at four elementary schools in the District.

Working together we can sometimes multiply our strength.

We value all of these individual and group effort for the dedication and spirit of selflessness that they represent.

And now I'd like to recognize one department, one group, especially, for the institutional commitment to volunteer service. Recognizing the need to support its own employees volunteer efforts in communities throughout the Nation, and the need to expand citizen participation programs, the Federal Bureau of Prisons established a National Office of Citizen Participation in June 1992, to oversee a multidimensional effort to reach out to the community.

This novel, three-pronged effort attempts to inspire volunteerism at all levels. Through pilot comprehensive section sections, the Bureau is encouraging the enhanced use of private citizen volunteers in community correction centers' programs for the first time.

The Bureau has established contact with many churches in metropolitan areas, with the Rainbow Coalition, and with local missionary societies to enlist their help in sponsoring returning offenders, and assist them in

reintegrating into the community.

One of the goals of the criminal law system, whether it be police, prosecutors or correctional officials, is to prevent crime. Sending people to jail and then picking them up and putting them back in the community without providing an orderly return to the community, so that they can get off on the right foot, is one sure way of not preventing crime.

It takes the very kind of the effort that you have undertaken here in this really remarkable effort to get people back to the community with half a fighting chance of getting off to a fresh, good start.

In January 1993, Director Hawk signed a policy statement, allowing for inmate voluntary community service projects -- community based service project developed and sponsored by local governments or nonprofit charitable organizations.

These project are designed to help inmates in providing for the public good by supplementing community resources.

You know what I've discovered about some youngsters who get in trouble? They get in trouble because they don't

feel good about themselves. They don't feel like they've contributed, they don't feel like they've made a difference.

And when we can give people something to do that makes them feel good about themselves, it's one of the first things that we can do toward getting them off to a good start, so that they're not going to get in trouble anymore.

And the Bureau has encouraged its own employees, too. Outreach efforts to the District of Columbia Public Schools through the Public Service Academy and the Justice and Safety Academy resulted in Bureau staff volunteering to work with students who were at risk academically.

During the academic year, students tour the central office and attend seminars hosted by the staff. During the summer months, some students serve as interns.

In the search to identify a Department of Justice component that exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism for the Department's Volunteer Service Award, we looked immediately to the National Office of Citizen Participation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Director Hawk, could you come up, please?

It is my pleasure to present the National Office of Citizen Participation, Federal Bureau of Prisons with the

Department's National Volunteer Service Award, in recognition of exemplary organizational commitment to employee and community volunteer efforts nationwide.

Thank you and your staff for a job well done.

[Applause.]

MS. HAWK: I would just like to comment that, as the Attorney General indicated, accomplishments like this, and recognition like this, really goes to the many, many hundreds and thousands of people throughout the country. We have roughly 4,000 volunteers from the who work within our institutions, and then we have several hundred of our own staff who go out in communities and volunteer, as well as the inmates being involved.

So it really is very much a team effort, and so I accept this on behalf of all of the staff and all of the volunteers and the inmates from throughout the Bureau of Prisons, and I thank you very much.

[Applause.]

MR. COLGATE: Thank you.

I don't know about you, but I'd like to hear another number from the Watkins Glee Club.

[Applause.]

[Musical Selections by the Watkins Glee Club.]

[Applause.]

MR. COLGATE: Thank you, thank you very much.

I'd like to thank you all for being here today, and I'd especially like to thank the proud parents who are out there, and the students and the teachers.

This concludes our celebration, but if you'd like, please join us out in the courtyard.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 3:25 p.m., the awards ceremony was concluded.]

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