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REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

MINNESOTA SPECIAL OLYMPICS

MACALESTER COLLEGE

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

JUNE 1, 1971 - 7:30 P.M.

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IT IS A PRIVILEGE TODAY TO JOIN IN THE WELCOME TO
THE KENNEDY FOUNDATION OLYMPIC PARTICIPANTS. I HAVE
OBSERVED OTHER OLYMPIC EVENTS, BUT NONE HAS BEEN MORE
THRILLING TO ME THAN THIS ONE IN WHICH YOU YOUNG PEOPLE
ARE PARTICIPATING.

NOT ONLY DO I HAVE A GRANDDAUGHTER -- AND A MIGHTY
PROUD GRANDDAUGHTER -- IN THE SWIMMING COMPETITION, BUT
IT IS EXCITING BECAUSE WE ARE HERE TO FOCUS ON YOUR
ABILITY -- NOT YOUR DISABILITY, TO SHARE IN THE JOY OF
YOUR ACHIEVEMENT.

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TOO OFTEN IN THE PAST WE HAVE NOT GIVEN YOU ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE SUCCESS. WE KNOW THAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING, BUT WE HAVE NOT OFFERED THE TRAINING, THE PROGRAMS, THE ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD ASSURE A FEELING OF ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR YOU.

TO BE HAPPY AND WELL ADJUSTED EVERY HUMAN BEING NEEDS TO SUCCEED AT SOME TIME, TO HAVE HIS TALENTS RECOGNIZED, ACCOMPLISHMENT MOTIVATES AND BUILDS THE CONFIDENCE NECESSARY TO UNDERTAKE OTHER CHALLENGES.

ONE OF THE GREAT STRENGTHS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WHO ARE MENTALLY RETARDED IS THAT THE SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES IS SUFFICIENTLY EXTENSIVE TO ASSURE EVERYONE A CHANCE TO SUCCEED.

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THOSE WHO TEACH KNOW, TOO, THAT PHYSICAL PLAY AND GAMES CAN AROUSE AND MAINTAIN THE INTEREST OF THE DISTURBED AND SEVERELY HANDICAPPED. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY TEACHES NOT ONLY MOTOR DEXTERITY, BUT IT STIMULATES INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AS WELL. THUS, THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR PHYSICAL AND RECREATIONAL EXPRESSION FOR THE RETARDED.

THE KENNEDY FOUNDATION, UNDER THE FINE LEADERSHIP OF EUNICE SHRIVER, IS MAKING AN IMPORTANT EFFORT TO ASSURE THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT. BUT WE IN OUR VARIOUS MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES NEED TO REVIEW THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT ARE AVAILABLE AND STRENGTHEN THEM WHERE NECESSARY.

MANY OF OUR REGULAR RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS COULD BE OPENED UP AND MADE AVAILABLE TO THE RETARDED WITH LITTLE DIFFICULTY. ALL THAT IS NEEDED IS A LITTLE IMAGINATION, SOME RESOURCEFULNESS AND GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT.

IN THE PAST MANY OF THE RETARDED HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED FROM THESE PROGRAMS FROM WHICH THEY COULD BENEFIT SIMPLY BECAUSE WE ARE ALL TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN WITH THEIR SIMILARITIES TO THE REST OF US. WE WERE RELUCTANT TO EXPERIMENT, TO GIVE THEM THE CHANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT OUR OTHER CHILDREN TAKE FOR GRANTED.

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AFTER ALL, OUR REAL EFFORT SHOULD BE TO INTEGRATE AS MANY OF OUR MENTALLY RETARDED CITIZENS AS POSSIBLE INTO OUR COMMUNITY LIFE, NOT TO CONTINUE TO SEPARATE AND ISOLATE THEM AS THEY HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST,

IT IS TRUE THAT THE RECENT YEARS HAVE BROUGHT SLOWLY CHANGING VIEWS OF COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE RETARDED, BUT THERE IS A LOT YET TO BE LEARNED ABOUT MENTAL RETARDATION AND MUCH WORK TO DO BEFORE THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE AUTOMATICALLY AVAILABLE FROM BIRTH TO OTHER CITIZENS.

THE LETTERS THAT MRS. HUMPHREY AND I RECEIVE REGULARLY FROM PARENTS OF THE RETARDED CLEARLY REVEAL, IF WE HAD ANY DOUBTS, THAT WE ARE A LONG WAY FROM THE MILLENIUM AS FAR AS FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR THE RETARDED ARE CONCERNED.

PARENTS STILL HAVE TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTY FINDING ADEQUATE GUIDANCE AND EVALUATION WHEN THE RETARDED CHILD IS BORN. MANY FAMILIES, PARTICULARLY IN SMALL COMMUNITIES, SEARCH IN VAIN FOR SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE MONEY TO PAY FOR TRAINING WHEN IT IS FINALLY FOUND.

LATER IN THE TEEN YEARS THERE IS THE SEARCH FOR TRAINING FACILITIES THAT CAN EQUIP THE YOUNG RETARDED PERSON WITH WORK SKILLS, SO THAT HE MIGHT BE EMPLOYED AND SELF-SUPPORTING.

AND THEN WHEN HE IS PREPARED TO WORK AND HAS THE MUCH SOUGHT AFTER JOB, WHERE DOES HE LIVE? WHERE ARE THE RESIDENTIAL HOMES LOCATED IN THE COMMUNITY CONVENIENT TO BUS SERVICE AND OTHER FACILITIES THAT WILL GIVE THE SUPPORTIVE ASSISTANCE NECESSARY TO ASSURE A GOOD ADJUSTMENT TO COMMUNITY LIVING?

AS YOU SEE, THERE IS MUCH TO DO.

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SUCH ORGANIZATIONS, AS THE KENNEDY FOUNDATION, THE
MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR RETARDED CHILDREN, AND OTHER
IMPORTANT SPOKESMEN FOR THOSE WITH THIS HANDICAP MUST
CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP, TO PROD GOVERNMENT AT
ALL LEVELS TO RESPOND AS IT SHOULD IN OPENING UP OPPORTUNITY
FOR THOSE MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILY WHO NEED A HELPING HAND TO
SUCCESS.

AND NOW I LOOK FORWARD TO WATCHING YOU YOUNG PEOPLE
TODAY SHOW US WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN OPPORTUNITY IS
AVAILABLE. SUCCESS TO YOU ALL. IT IS WONDERFUL TO BE
WITH YOU.

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