

**Gesu Institute for Inner-City Education presents
The Eighth Annual Gesu Symposium on Inner-City Education
December 6, 2005**

**Topic: “How Colleges and Universities Can Partner with Faith-Based Schools
and Urban Communities to Serve Children in Need”**

Transcript of Remarks

[The symposium panel discussion was preceded by music from the Gesu School Choir, a welcome from eighth-grader Ashlei Tinsley and introductions by Christine S. Beck, president of Gesu School, and Gesu Board of Trustees Chairman Win Churchill.]

CHRISTINE S. BECK:

Thank you, Ashlei, and thanks to H.L. Ratliff and the Gesu gospel choir.

I am Chris Beck, president and CEO of Gesu School, and we are thrilled to have all of you here this afternoon. Our topic is an interesting one, an exciting one with many creative ideas hopefully for our common interest: how to improve the quality of inner-city education.

Actually, today represents a wonderful example of partnership between the University of Pennsylvania and Gesu School. For seven years we have held the symposium in our school basement, as many of you remember, but we're in the middle of a huge renovation project right now, adding two stories to the top of the building. It is very exciting but very disruptive. So we thank Penn's Fox Leadership Program – especially John DiIulio, Joe Tierney and Marc Segal – for hosting us today in this beautiful Houston Hall room. We're grateful. Many thanks, also, to our generous sponsors of today's symposium, all of whom are directors of our newly created Gesu Institute [for Inner-City Education], which you will be hearing more about.

Gesu School is a proven success story in North Philadelphia's inner city – a beacon light, a safe haven where children learn and achieve with good outcomes and results. But our safe haven cannot and should not exist in a vacuum, so to fulfill our mission successfully we try very hard to partner in as many ways as we possibly can.

We partner with the Jesuits and the I.H.M. Sisters, who believe in outreach – even to a student body that's only ten percent Catholic. We partner with volunteers who tutor our children, we partner with the Rosemont School of the Holy Child, the Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis Center, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Art Aware and with the Old St. Joseph's Church, just to name a few. But we are especially proud of our varied partnerships with this City's universities – the University of Pennsylvania and the Fox Leadership Program's Community Tech Serve, with St. Joseph's University, with Drexel University and with Temple – all of which we celebrate today.

Some of Gesu School's most important partners are our trustees. Lots of people chuckle when they hear the size of our board. It is sixty strong, but each one gives his or her time, talents and vision in a variety of ways to serve our mission and to serve our children. Our board chairman personifies the ideal partner with loyal sound visionary commitment. He is managing partner of SCP Private Equity Partners, serves on a number of corporate boards and is a trustee of Georgetown University and Fordham University. He founded and chairs the Young Scholars Charter School and still makes time for Gesu School. It is a pleasure to introduce Win Churchill.

WIN CHURCHILL:

Thank you, Chris, and thank you all very much for taking time to be with us today. I was reading last week that if you take the history of human institutions, our universities are the second oldest surviving human institution – some 800 or more years old. The oldest are the great religions, the great and ancient religions – some 3000 plus years old. The cities are also very old, and for as long as there have been cities, of course, there have been inner cities. The idea of universal primary and secondary education, though, is new, relatively new – maybe 150 years old – and largely an American idea. And it has been a great success in our country – except in the inner cities.

During the middle ages and at other times of challenge to civilization, the universities and the houses of study of the great religions – the yeshivas, the monasteries, the houses of study of the religion in Islam and so forth – kept civilization alive. So we owe a tremendous debt to the universities, and to these other institutions of such ancient origin, for really keeping us here.

So it's very generous of the universities now to open their hearts and hands to the problems of the inner city, because it wouldn't necessarily be necessary. I mean this is not a monastic model, if you will. So we want to thank very much all of the universities that helped the cause of inner-city education, particularly here in this city, and you are going to hear from our panel members many of the projects that are going on for this. It is not just advisory help – you know, it would be one thing to just sit back and advise – this is **help**, you know? Feet on the street, help in the classroom, and help in the halls of our inner-city schools. So it is a very, very important alliance. It's a very generous act on the part of the universities.

Of course, at Gesu and other of our schools, we owe a large debt to the great religions. So there is an intercept here that is going to be discussed, and I keep thinking about it, but it really has to do with the preservation of our civilization – not just in this country, but really, world civilization. So it's very, very important work, and even on a Tuesday afternoon, I hope it's going to be worthy of our few hours' attention. So thanks again for being here.

CHRIS BECK:

It's a pleasure to introduce our distinguished panelists this year. We welcome each of you.

Evan Dobbelle is President and CEO of the New England Board of Higher Education. Since 1987, he has served as president of four colleges and universities. As president of Trinity College, he created the Center for Religion and Public Life and initiated the learning corridor project to revitalize Hartford. As president of the University of Hawaii, he forged a groundbreaking pre-school through 20 educational initiative. Previously he served as chief of protocol of the United States in the Carter White House with the rank of Ambassador, and he is widely published and has received many honors and awards, including honorary degrees from six colleges and universities.

Darla Romfo is President and COO of the Children's Scholarship Fund, a national nonprofit that provides scholarships to independent and Catholic schools for low-income children in kindergarten through eighth grades. I might add that many Gesu children benefit from this scholarship help, which is so valued. Previously she was Legislative Director and Counsel to Senator John Brow of Louisiana, and before that was Tax Counsel and Legislative Director to Senator Kent Conrad of North Dakota.

Ira Harkavy is Associate Vice President of University of Pennsylvania, and I kept hearing John DiIulio call him a saint. He is also Founding Director of Penn's Center for Community Partnerships. Dr. Harkavy chairs the Coalition for Community Schools and co-chairs both the Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development and the International Consortium on Higher Education, Civic Responsibility and Democracy. Under his initiative, Penn has made a major commitment to education in this West Philadelphia neighborhood with the creation of the university-assisted Alexander Public School, and in many other ways, I might add.

Constantine "Taki" Papadakis has been President of Drexel University since 1995. Under his leadership, Drexel has more than doubled full-time undergraduate enrollment, tripled freshman applications, quadrupled the endowment from \$90 million to more than \$500 million, and quintupled research funding. Previously Dr. Papadakis was Chief Civil Engineer at Bechtel, Vice-President at STS Consultants and Vice President of Tetra Tech. He was lured back to academia when he realized that strong management could revolutionize an institution. He, too, is widely published, serves on numerous corporate and non-profit boards and has received many prestigious awards and honors all over the world.

Linda Wing is Senior Lecturer and Deputy Director of the Center for Urban Schools Improvement at the University of Chicago. She designs, opens and supports schools under the University of Chicago charter and has been instrumental in creating a research and development network of twenty schools on Chicago's south side. Previously she was lecturer and Co-Director of the Urban Superintendent's Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and also has numerous publications to her credit.

John DiIulio is a Frederick Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion and Civil Society and professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania. He is founder of Penn's Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society and Director of the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program. In 2000 he served as Assistant to the President of the United States as the first Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives. He is also widely published and acclaimed, but as far I am concerned, one of John's most important contributions has been as a long-time and loyal trustee of Gesu School.

JOHN DIULIO:

Part of what we are about here is hope in the unseen. We are really a very great and diverse panel here, and we are looking forward to your questions and comments later on in the program. But we are united by a belief that it is possible to do the impossible if you have partnerships, especially partnerships among and between faith communities, schools and universities. And that is really what we are here to talk about today: how is it that we can improve the life prospects of truly disadvantaged inner-city children, youth, families and communities by having partnerships where universities step up to the plate and really play their role in human and financial terms?

Usually it's a practice to hold any additional thank-yous until the end, but because of a scheduling issue I want to just say, before we get started, a thank-you to our main University of Pennsylvania benefactor, also now with me a trustee of the Gesu School, Bob Fox.

Part of our mission at the Fox Leadership Program is to stimulate leadership in all sectors of human excellence and endeavor, and that includes the non-profit sector.

CONSTANTINE PAPADAKIS:

It is a real pleasure to be with you today. I am honored to participate in this important discussion about the education and well-being of inner-city students. At Drexel, our primary vehicle for working with children is the Drexel University/School District of Philadelphia partnership. Through this partnership, Drexel students, faculty and staff members provide University City High School, and also its eight feeder schools, with support for academics, for business practices, for operations, for information technology and for improving the school climate in general.

Services offered by the partnership participants include mathematics and English tutoring, college prep assistance for high school students, art and music education for elementary school students, instruction in nutrition and physical activity, information technology infrastructure assessment and training, and counseling and library support.

Drexel is committed to preparing our students to be good professionals but also to be good citizens. Our school district partnership is one of the chief ways in which our students fulfill the community service component of our curriculum. Some examples of the wide range of positions our students fill include science fair coordinator, literacy program coordinator, IT specialist, music instructor, art instructor, as well as reading, math and science tutors. We believe our students derive almost as many benefits from this service as the children they serve.

2004-2005 was the second full year for the Drexel University/School District of Philadelphia partnership in its present form. The program is built around a series of explicit, measurable goals, so we conduct a host of assessments to determine the impact of the partnership interventions. We are encouraged by those results year after year.

We surveyed every teacher in our eight partnership schools. 93% were aware that they worked in a partnership school. That's important. 73% participated in some form of partnership activity. 86% of the responding teachers agreed that the partnership supports academic achievement in their classrooms and helps motivate their students. 92% agreed that the partnership should continue, and 79% of those respondents indicated that the full potential has yet to be reached. 100% of principals in our partnership schools agreed that our services responded to existing needs and that there has been measurable improvement in some aspects of school climate since the inception of the partnership.

But actual measures of student performance must be viewed cautiously, as you well know. We all know how difficult it is to attribute changes in achievement to any specific intervention, especially in at-risk population of students. However, we have seen positive changes at some of our partnership schools, and we can assume that those changes are at least in part due to the provision of Drexel resources. In classrooms where the partnership provided at least 10 hours of support per week, nearly 12% more students achieved a reading level of proficiency, 14.5% more students achieved a reading level of proficiency, and about 16% fewer have required intensive intervention than have their peers in classrooms not receiving significant partnership support.

100% of the eight partnership schools showed an increase in student attendance in the first year of the program – 100% percent. In 89% of the partnership classrooms, the attendance gain beat the school average. At University City High School, there was a 26% increase in students taking the SATs from the previous year, with a 10-point increase in SAT math scores. Ten points is a lot of change!

From the time the partnership began, to date there has been a 21% increase in the number of University City High School students matriculating at four-year colleges and universities. A 21% increase! We have provided through our students the mentors.

So those very exciting results are preliminary because the partnership is only two years old. However, the results demonstrate the potential of success when we bring together the resources and the talent of the great university and the passion and the dedication of inner-city educators and service providers.

We have other partnerships with a strong history of success that go far back in our historical relationship with the School District of Philadelphia. For example, our Office of Informational Resources and Technology hosts summer camps every year for Philadelphia students. This year they worked with summer youth as part of the Philadelphia Futures Camp Program and with the Philadelphia School District's Teens Using Technology Program. Drexel also partners with Squash Smart, a Philadelphia youth enrichment program that combines the sport of squash with academic tutoring for city kids.

Another important example for us is the 11th Street Family Health Services of Drexel University. This health clinic involves an integrated partnership among the community, the City of Philadelphia and our College of Nursing and Health Professions to serve the 11th Street Corridor, a federally designated medically underserved area and health professional shortage area. There are three housing projects in the 11th Street Corridor, housing families with income under \$15,000 a year. The 11th Street Family Health Services clinic provides health promotion and disease prevention services. And we do that through registered nurses who work in that particular location. And also, we have spearheaded a great public health outreach into the community that reaches the students, that reaches the sons and daughters of the families who live in that community. Because baseline health services are so critical to improving the educational potential of children, the 11th Street Family Health Services can be considered a component of educational services of major importance to inner-city kids.

One of the things that Drexel has done best and we are most proud of is actually the engagement of the freshmen to service learning. We call our program "Civic Engagement," and it is mandatory engagement of our freshman students. This is the largest such program in the United States of any university. 2,500 freshmen engage themselves in extended service learning through a program, through a course that we call "University 101," for credit. They have to perform a certain number of hours of public service, and they have to do that in such a way that it enhances their educational objectives.

We have a very unique technology, a proprietary, interactive website. Of course, you wouldn't expect anything else from Drexel University, right? We support this website through relational databases, and we can find jobs. We can find assignments for every one of those 2,500 freshmen over the course of their freshman year. Within this academic framework, this course is a two-term, two-credit-hour course. Every freshman has to complete about 10 hours of community service that is integrated into the curriculum through focused assignments, discussion and written reflection. In fact, given the attractive variety of assignments and flexible time frames, many students contribute many hours beyond this requirement.

Through our Center of Civic Engagement, which is the Center guided by Professor Mark Greenberg that organizes all of this activity, Drexel students are not only engaged in the School District of Philadelphia, but some of them rebuild homes in West Philadelphia or complete internships at cultural institutions like the opera, the Franklin Institute and the Philadelphia Zoo. They gain valuable

pre-professional experience through volunteer work at local hospitals and community agencies and try to improve the educational outcomes of thousands of Philadelphia public school students through the Drexel/School District of Philadelphia partnership that I discussed earlier on.

This is one of the major contributions that we feel our university is making in our effort to fulfill our mission, which is not only to prepare a great professional out of our students, but also to prepare a great citizen of our society.

Furthermore, one element of the Drexel education which I think, hopefully, will be very pertinent to the Gesu School, is the Cooperative Education Program. The Co-op is a professional engagement of our students. It is learning through doing. It occurs, by the way, for 9,000 full-time undergraduates at Drexel University, who all have to do a co-op. Co-op is 100 years old, and 80 years old at Drexel University. The fact that every six months we place about 3,500 students [shows] we have the biggest placement service in the United States. Nobody can place 3,500 employees in six months, every six months. But we have the system in place and we have the tradition.

And what happens there is the following, and I hope that this will reflect in the planning of the Gesu program in the future. The students who co-op get a professional job, and suddenly they realize they need that knowledge that is provided by the university or the high school to do the job and to excel. After an internship, a period of co-op assignment, they come back to school and have a different attitude about learning, and that creates a better environment in the classroom. It creates more attentive and goal-focused students, and it provides the opportunity for the school, being the university or being a high school, to create pipelines to employment, opportunities after graduation.

Our success in that particular area is that 87% of our students, before they graduate, have a job. It helps retention; we retain. Drexel University retains more than any other university in the region, because of the co-op, at a rate of about two out of three students who graduate from Drexel University and stay in the 11-county area around Philadelphia after graduation.

IRA HARKAVY:

I would like to actually have my time focus on the issue of not just what Penn does but why the partnerships between universities, schools and communities of faith are absolutely essential for the quality of life of this society and for transforming the American city.

One issue that was revealed as we all saw the horrors of Katrina was what Katrina revealed – not just the disasters of New Orleans, but the daily disasters, the daily inexcusable disasters occurring in the cities of this great country. And therefore it is calling on all of us, our great institutions with decades and decades and centuries of history, to devote themselves to that primary issue of how do we assure a fair, decent and just quality of life for all of America's citizens? And I would argue that without universities, schools, churches and communities of faith working together, that is not a possibility.

Penn has moved increasingly in this direction, as have universities all over the country, with three core propositions that animate its work. The first is, we all know that our future is intertwined with the future of the city. The future of West Philadelphia, the future of Philadelphia, will determine mightily the extent that Penn is able to recruit and retain outstanding students, faculty and staff. But it is also a recognition that the University of Pennsylvania, the largest employer of the city, with extraordinary human resources, can make a profound difference in the quality of life of the city. Four of the five

largest employers in this city are higher education and medical institutions. And Penn and Drexel, as pre-eminent institutions, can play very major roles.

Third is what my friend, the president of Drexel, indicated: this helps his students. The notion is that the University of Pennsylvania, in the third proposition, will be a greater institution, that these partnerships will be genuinely and deeply mutually beneficial, helping the University of Pennsylvania to realize the vision of its great founder, Benjamin Franklin.

When Franklin founded Penn, which was the first colonial institution not with a religious purpose, he still held up service as the goal. He said, "Educate every student with an inclination joined with an ability to serve." Moral inclination joined with an ability, the intellectual ability, to serve mankind, one's friends, one's country, friends and family was the great aim and end of all learning. This engagement will help Penn realize Franklin's vision.

Now what has happened, and what is Penn doing? The first thing I need to note is in saying that we have had extraordinary presidential support. Just as Taki has taken the lead at Drexel, we have been deeply fortunate to have Sheldon Hackney and Judith Rodin take major leads in Penn's engagement, and they did extraordinary things. And we have a current president, Amy Gutman, who actually began her term as president calling for this great institution founded in 1740 to fulfill a Penn Compact. She said this – and I have been to many inaugurations, I have spoken at a number of them, and I have been at Penn inaugurations – she said the compact has three components.

The first component is access of education for children, no matter what their income level, [so they] could attend the institutions/universities such as Penn, and if they have that ability, they should never be held back on economic grounds. Second, that there should be an integration of the arts and sciences and professional schools together to make a difference in society and the world – so that we can, as she said, rise to the challenge of the diverse democracy. But third, and I would say most central, is she called on Penn to engage locally and globally, and cited specifically our work with our neighbors in West Philadelphia as the exemplar of that work and in fact went further to note that all engagement, global engagement, begins at a local level. How does that translate in terms of the University of Pennsylvania on the ground? It translates in a number of ways, and I'll focus first on schools and echo some of the things President Papadakis said a moment ago.

At the University of Pennsylvania, we currently have about 2,000 Penn students engaged with the schools and communities of West Philadelphia through ongoing forms of service learning called academically-based community service. Now, what is academically-based community service? It indicates that students should become engaged in ways that integrate, through their classes, their research, teaching and service. That is that students in classes are involved by helping to solve the problems of the community.

What we pose is that it is wonderful and appropriate for a great university to be involved in tutoring. But, a great university should be involved in problem solving – in solving the structural problems such as the problems of poor, inadequate schooling. It is appropriate and the right and the necessary thing to do to feed the hungry. But what a great university should be involved in is involving its students and faculty to help solve the problems of hunger and homelessness in partnerships with their communities.

It is appropriate and right, to be sure, that everyone in society has a good place to live and to build homes, but universities need to be involved with schools, communities and communities of faith to create community economic development that strengthens those neighborhoods, long-term and

permanently. So we have developed courses in which leading faculty work with students to engage their academic activities to make a difference in the community, and I will talk about that and give two specifics as we go further – but again, part of their academic work.

So we have a program existing since 1990 with a leading nutritional anthropologist in the world who turned his work from focusing on nutrition and health in Guatemala to trying to solve the problems of health and nutrition in schools in West Philadelphia and schools throughout this city and schools throughout this country. His students develop stores with students in public schools to sell fruits and vegetables. They develop a curriculum in which the students learn about the ecology of food and the difference between poor and rich neighborhoods in this city. Students in public schools learn by developing farmers' markets on this campus and at schools in West Philadelphia that sell more produce than similar farmers' markets in Union Square in New York. The students developed a business called "A Taste of Everything," where they sell fruits and vegetables to the community.

A colleague of John's in political science at Fox Leadership teaches a course on the politics of food in which students learn by trying to stop the onslaught of fast food into their neighborhoods. And what we found with the students we work with in that group, 200 high school students have the highest academic performance in their high school, outperforming the academic track of students. And Penn undergraduates work together and do research in ways that they have never done before.

One of our main thrusts is to do something we worked on with Gesu, and that is the issue of schools as centers of neighborhoods. [We are] developing a concept called university-assisted community schools, where schools are open for extended hours to serve the population of that neighborhood from zero to ninety-nine. Where there is job training, nutritional programs, health programs, GED programs, sports programs and recreation, but where the student's curriculum focuses in the public schools on improving the neighborhood as a way to learn.

So young people in school work to improve nutrition, but they also work with a leading faculty member who is the greatest figure in socio-linguistics to solve the problem of the reading differential between African-American and majority students. In which a faculty member, Bill LaBove, looked at his work and was told by a group of Penn undergraduates that he should focus not just on studying how African-American dialect was a language, but on making a difference in West Philadelphia. And a number of years ago he took his work right here to the Drew School and did neighborhood narrative with Penn students and community students, studying neighborhood culture using not the language but the rhythm of hip-hop beat to teach English. He said, "Dr. Seuss didn't work with these students." And at the Drew School in 1999, with Penn students working with the students in that school, they had the highest reading increase in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

But the partnership I want to focus on for about five more minutes is the one we've developed with our communities of faith in schools, because the learning we've had is these three pillar institutions. These faith-rooted institutions are absolutely central to the quality of life in the community. My Center for Community Partnerships works with the Chaplain's office of the university on an extraordinary program with a terrible acronym, called the Program for Universities, Community, Faiths, Schools and Neighborhood Organizations.

My colleague, Will Gibson, the Chaplain of the University of Pennsylvania – this program would not have moved forward without his activity and the work he has done. And we have developed with schools and churches 30 computer labs throughout this city, in West Philadelphia, with computers centers for children and community members. And they have developed after-school programs that

have been extraordinary in linking schools and churches and health fairs and health programs in West Philadelphia.

Let me give two examples to exemplify what this work is doing. I will start with the example of the communities of faith working with a school. West Philadelphia has some of the greatest gospel music traditions in this country. A colleague of ours in the music department, Carol Mueller, who is a South African, comes to the United States and says, “I want to work on this work here,” and she arrives here. She works in West Philadelphia, and she says, “I want to connect these great musical traditions and have them shared at Penn.” And what she did is, she worked in Monumental and Millennium Baptist Churches, a High Baptist and a Low Baptist church, and I’ll let Reverend Gibson explain the differences to you, but the differences are clear.

And at the two churches, they work and do studies, and these are Penn students. And they work and start studying what their differences are and the history of their congregations, the forms of music, and they do a video digital archive of these churches, and they show schoolchildren, who become involved in this work with them. And then on a rainy day two years ago – just this season, on a rainy, snowy evening – we were going to have a program at, not Houston Hall, but actually right next door to Houston Hall at the auditorium of the University of Penn. Students go to the Amado room, and they are waiting for the churches to come. We don’t think anyone is coming. Four busloads come of 150 congregants from these two churches, talking about how much difference it made for them to learn about their culture and tradition and how much difference it made to the children in the community to have that work legitimized. Like a prayer meeting, the students from Penn got up and talked about how this changed what they thought, what they felt and what they believed in.

Last quick example: one of the pressing problems we have in this community, and in all poor urban communities, is the terrible difficulty of poor urban health. We have health statistics right north of this campus that are more similar to a developing country.

A student of mine – this is why Penn undergraduates need to be so involved in this work – came to me in a summer program and said, “Dr. Harkavy, you are trying to solve the health problems and you are doing it all wrong.” We had been trying since 1988. One great thing about undergraduates, they have a lot of energy and guts. And he said, “Rather than saying, ‘Let’s set up a school-based community health center,’ why not ask not just the community but every school and college at the University of Penn what they can do to solve the health problems of West Philadelphia?”

Those Penn undergraduates wrote a proposal and got funded by the City of Philadelphia in 2002. They did it by a combined seminar of arts and sciences, engineering, Wharton students coming together, and nursing students. They wrote a proposal and received funding to have an after-school program, an added program on community health. That program then was established, and they convinced the Dean of Medicine that it was a good thing. The program opened in 2003; it’s started, just beginning. As we speak in 2005, just a note that in 2004, President Gutman kicked off her inauguration not on Penn’s Campus, but at the Sayer School where this health program has begun. And why did she do that?

She did that partly because a thousand young people in a Philadelphia school are going to have their whole curriculum focused on improving community health. Learning English, math, science, social studies, but she also did it because medical students are learning to be physicians by working at that school, dental students are delivering dental care, social work students, arts and science and political science. How do you develop a more democratic community? Students are running nutrition projects;

a member of our faculty in neuroscience is running a program on learning neuroscience by teaching it to poor youth in West Philadelphia who are learning. So that 14 Penn classes are working together with communities of faith, and they do tutoring and mentoring programs at that school, for that school and community.

Let me just conclude then by noting that in this great university, there is a slogan. It is called, "One university." "One university" says Penn would be the greatest university in the world if every school and college would work together. That's very hard to do. Academic institutions, you may be surprised, are highly conflicted, highly divided, often feudal institutions. Martin Meyerson, the President at Penn that founded that idea, called me and said, "What Penn is doing with schools, churches and communities of faith at the Sayer School – to improve community health by focusing on a real-world problem – is fulfilling the idea of 'One university.'" Making it real, by working with the communities of faith and with the school.

Let me conclude by noting what Penn has gained from working in West Philadelphia is certainly as great as what it has given. It is through those kinds of partnerships that we together at Penn and other institutions will make sure that the aftermath of Katrina, that often occurs in the shadows of America's great universities, will never occur again. And that inexcusable daily disaster will in fact be solved by our collective efforts in partnership with schools, communities of faith and the universities.

DARLA ROMFO:

Thank you very much. I would like to say, too, that we have representatives from several of our programs around the country here today. We have 38 partner programs and, like John said, we are a scholarship program [that's] privately funded. We provide scholarships to children in kindergarten through eighth grade to go to private school. In doing that, we work with over 7,000 private schools across the country. We've learned a lot of things through that effort. One, that there is a huge demand for alternatives among the poor. They are not very satisfied with the options they have. Two, they are willing to sacrifice a great deal on their own account to have an option, because we require that they pay a minimum of five hundred dollars. In truth, they pay probably as much as half of the tuition to go to these private institutions. The third thing we have learned is how grateful they are for this option. I mean, you don't think you are giving them that much, because our scholarship's maximum amount is \$1,900, but to these people, it is literally a hand into a lifeboat. It is huge. I mean, the gratitude is genuine.

So, one of the things I'd like to pick up on, [is] the point that you made about structural change in communities. One of the things in working with this program for almost seven years now is, I really do see school as a place where you can have a very highly leveraged point to bring about change in the community. One of the things that makes a school particularly effective – more so than getting outside help here and there in sporadic places – is to have really good school leadership.

I know there are pockets of places where this is happening. I know Marquette University, for example, has [something they call] Action Research for Urban Schools. It is a self-guided sort of process that a school leadership will take themselves through to determine where their strengths and their weaknesses are. Then they will actually, through the university, offer a course, in the education and business departments combined, to train leadership in the business of the school.

I know there are lots of efforts all over the country to improve school leadership, but in an effort this year that we just did, we gave away over 2,000 new scholarships in three boroughs in New York that

we were focusing on. Particularly we worked very closely with the Archdiocese. We were focusing particularly on schools that were under-enrolled. We were, in addition to helping the families to have an option, also trying to stabilize these schools. These schools, like I said, are an anchor in the community. When these schools close, there goes the community. When the schools reopen, the community improves. So we were focusing in the places that were under- enrolled.

Well, guess what? Leadership in schools where they are under-enrolled -- they have a problem. They don't know how to get their enrollment up. The schools that already didn't have very many empty seats, they didn't have a problem giving away more scholarships. You can see what it really pointed out, because we did it school by school. We looked at allocated slots by grade, and you could almost see, week after week, who was really getting it done and going after it. Week after week you'd see who was having problems and just kind of took the summer off and really didn't really get at it.

It's a little bit disheartening, but on the other hand, we learned a lot. I think if we could, for example in New York City, if we could work with the Archdiocese in New York City to have a plan or a program where you say look, we want to improve the leadership in these schools that underperformed in this area...

I'm also involved with the task force out of Notre Dame that is looking at Catholic schools in particular. These are best practices, and all the things can apply to all small independent and faith-based schools. But we're working at, how do they improve their marketing strategies? How can they? What specifically can be done to train leadership, to develop leadership potential and be able to hear it from an outside independent third party about hard choices that need to be made within education structures, within a Catholic institution or whatever institution it might be? One of the great things about a private school is there should be a lot more flexibility. You shouldn't have to come up against, technically, those barriers you come up against in public school where you can't get rid of people. An independent evaluation where some body from the outside says, "This is what it takes to be a good principal at one of these schools, and these are the skills you need to have," and then working with somebody who can integrate some of these other things you are talking about. The school is a wonderful place to do it.

Recently we went to visit [a school]. Last year we had two CSF kids in this school on 118th Street in Harlem; this year we have 63 because of this program. In the meantime, they have also had someone take an independent interest in them and improve a lot of the facilities and the library. You can tell when you have leadership in a school that embraces change, embraces "let me learn" new tools. It makes all the difference in the world.

John mentioned that you have a CSF program here in Philadelphia that's 1,500 children strong. It started from zero, basically, seven years ago. [It] has developed local leadership, people that are very concerned and interested. You also have a tax credit here that helps to raise some of the private dollars that you need to fund these scholarships. Again, it is a highly leveraged way to not only help individual children, but in the process when you add 63 scholarships to a school, you have strengthened the financial situation in the school.

One of the things that we know, secondary to the leadership, is also the financing of these schools. This needs to be addressed creatively. What do you do? How do you do it? I come back to it's Catholic schools, technically, that I am talking about here because that is the largest body of available schools in that price range. You don't want that system to go away. It is an alternative system that has

been around for a long time, serves a big need in the community and does not serve Catholics for the most part. These are inner-city kids who need a stable, nurturing environment where they will learn.

One other thing I would like to add in terms of faith-based organizations that are out doing work in the community. You know you get really busy trying to raise the money and to do all the things it takes just to keep things organized and going. One of the things you get asked all the times when you go out to meet donors is, “Well, show me how your program works. What kind of test research have you done? How can you show me?”

Usually, with our program, it’s test scores, test scores, test scores. Research is very, very expensive and one of the things you come up against. Unless you find somebody who just loves to fund research, you are in a quandary about spending a couple million dollars to do research when it will help so many kids. [I’d like to say,] “I know it works. Come with me to a school,” but that is not always a good answer.

So organizations need help thinking outside the box about what kinds of things, what kinds of tests and what kinds of research you can show to a donor that will satisfy them in terms of saying, “Wow! That is great! This really does work.” One of the really important things is that the notion of civic consequences of what all these organizations do is just as important as the academic consequences.

One of the things that is unique to CSF is people always ask, “How do you pick your kids?” They think you are putting them through some type of process where you are picking an elite group of children. No, we’re not. Frankly, everyone is not an “A” student; that’s the truth. We’re kind of in a world where everybody thinks they should be, but if everybody is an “A” student, then something is very wrong. What we need are people who are well-formed individuals – body, mind and soul – who might be a “C” student, but they are a great “C” student. They are a great contribution to the community, and that is a wonderful thing. We need help saying that that is OK, it’s good to be that person and there is great value in it.

When you lose sight of the fact that every individual has unique value and worth, whether they are an “A” student or a “C” student. ..! It’s not all about test scores, and with education we have gotten so into that – it’s all about academics. It’s really not, because every person is uniquely wonderfully made, and whatever it is that they are capable of doing in terms of grades... I mean, we want them all to read and write and be at grade level, but they don’t all have to be “A” students. We need help changing that dialogue, that discourse, because it’s damaging. It’s not based on the truth of how we are actually made and what these schools can actually do.

EVAN DOBELLE:

Good afternoon. When I was listening, I was thinking of what college and university presidents do. I was always fond of the story about Earl Long, the less famous but still popular governor of Louisiana a number of years ago. The story goes that one day a young legislator came into his office, and he looked at him and said, “Son, I need your vote.” The young legislator looked at him and said “Governor, when you are right, you’re right and I’m with you, and when you are wrong, I can’t be with you. And on this issue I just think you are wrong.” Old Earl leaned across his desk and said, “Son, when I’m right, I don’t need you.” We all need each other...

Many of us lived – and others study historically – how stable this country was in the heart of the last century, where we had Franklin D. Roosevelt for twelve years, Harry Truman for seven years and

Dwight Eisenhower for eight years as President of the United States. Then we have to realize that when Ronald Reagan was sworn in as President in January, 1981, he was the seventh president in 21 years. What do you think of a country that would have seven presidents in 21 years? A country that lived through the 10,000 days and 10,000 nights, at war with Vietnam. A country that lived through the murder – we call them assassinations – the murder of John Kennedy, the murder of Bobby Kennedy, the murder of Martin Luther King, and the various scandals with the abuse of power in the White House. We all, deep down, know the truth. We lost confidence, and we still have lost confidence in our government to do the right thing. We have lost confidence in our politicians to do the honest thing. We accept and applaud spin and spectacle.

In [the] meantime, this administration serves in Washington being elected by 12% of the eligible voters in this country, and so would have his opponent. 50% of the people over the age of eighteen don't register to vote. 50% of the people registered to vote choose not to vote, and less than 50% – and that would include Mr. Bush and Mr. Kerry – received half of that vote. Less than 12% of the people eligible to vote actually voted for this administration; 88% of the people did not. We have a country today that continues to ignore the fact, as Columbia University pointed out last week, that a 1% increase in high school graduations – a 1% increase – has a direct correlation with 100,000 crimes and a cost of \$1.4 billion a year in the criminal justice system. We have a country that ignores the fact that if we had the ability to have the one-third of the single women who are mothers have an associate of arts degree, we could reduce social welfare costs by \$3.8 billion annually.

I certainly don't choose to engage anyone in what is right or wrong about policies in this country. But I do know we are charging on a "Chinese credit card" a \$300 billion war in Iraq. It does not make any difference who is in Congress anymore, because everybody spends. Democrats tax and spend; Republicans charge and spend. If you can charge a \$300 billion war on Chinese and Japanese credit cards, then you can find \$46 billion to charge to pay for Hurricane Katrina. You can find \$6 billion to fully fund "No Child Left Behind," and you can have fully funded money to be able to do faith-based initiatives.

We also have to, in the big picture, understand the complications we sometimes have with schools at the Pre-K to 12 levels. We have to remember the numbers, because we all have our own opinions, but we can't really have our own set of facts. This is the reality: if a child goes to school at the age of six and graduates from high school – and we all know that 75% of the students who reach ninth grade graduate from high school and 25% don't, and when the number comes to the inner city and students of color and immigrants, that number can go up to 50% who get to ninth grade but don't actually graduate – but if they do graduate and they started school at the age of six, at the age of 18 they get their diploma. If they never missed a day of school – if their parents never took them out of school for any reason, if they were never sick for one day – they will have spent 9% of their life in school. Not the first five years, not 18 hours a day, no weekends, no holidays, no vacations and no summers.

91% of their life is spent in the community, and we have an obligation not only to fix schools – the schools are symptomatic – we need to fix community. We need to fix this America that has lost its way, where the polity has been broken between the people and the government. We have to be respectful of the fact that we are a great democracy and the only multi-racial one in the history of this world.

But we face enormous competition in this world. We have 3,200 institutions of higher education in this country. We have 16 million students. China announced last year that, in the next 10 years, they will educate and graduate 300 million college grads, all of whom will speak English. So nine years from

now there will be 300 million 32-year-old and younger men and women who are college graduates who speak English – more than the entire population of the United States. People say, “Do you think that is a threat to us? Do you think that’s a problem?”

I would say, with 60% of human beings who are breathing in the world today breathing in two countries, India and China...! Two countries, 60 % of the world’s breathing today. And we with a multi-racial society, not homogeneous, not the same faith, not the same morés and not the same folkways, trying to deal with those kinds of challenges and complications underfunding the primary reason for success, the primary ability which is to educate our young people with critical thinking, with skills, the capacity to have self-confidence, the ability to have an effortlessness and be able to walk with grace with people who are different, [which] is lacking at the local level, at the state level and at the federal level.

On October 6th – and it’s only six weeks ago; we are an impulse/visual world today – it was easy to miss on October 6th that the Congress of the United States cut \$14.5 billion out of financial aid in a committee meeting on a 22-19 straight party vote. \$14.5 billion limiting access for the first time in the history of this country to people to be able to have the aspiration to go to college and to go to university. We have a situation where in the middle of the civil war, we established the Morrow Act for land grant colleges, we established the G.I. bill and we established the Pell grants in the early 1970s for working-class kids with gross incomes in the family of \$35,000 or less. And yet, for the first time, we are standing in the door and saying you cannot come in if you cannot afford it.

The land grant colleges and universities of this country are privatizing. Every state in this union has cut state expenditures to public education and higher education and made up for it with a spike in tuition costs. They are extraordinary. Then they allow most of these universities in most of these states to retain tuition. When you have the ability to retain tuition, it isn’t complicated to take the full-paying student versus the working-class kid. This is becoming a society not so much divided as much by race anymore as economic class. It is one that is becoming a desperate problem.

At Trinity, as I tried to do at Middlesex Community College, City College of San Francisco and the University of Hawaii, we tried to engage the community. At Trinity, in a city where the community demographics had changed, it was in self-interest. An institution founded in 1823 [was] finding itself surrounded by people that didn’t look like themselves. They answered it by building higher fences and closing off roads. Instead, we took the fences down and opened up the roads. We embraced the community. We built a Montessori elementary school, a middle school, a community center, a science and math high school and a high school of performing arts. The engagement of that neighborhood and that community changed so dramatically the institution that, instead of accepting the 65% of the students that applied, in six years we became the ninth most selective college in the country. Not because they were the most brilliant and highest SAT scores, but they applied because they wanted to go somewhere that lived their values.

And all colleges and universities need to do it, because a lot of us in colleges and universities want to be somebody else. Trinity always wanted to be Williams. I’d go to Williams; they wanted to be Duke. I’d go to Duke; they wanted to be Stanford. Go to Stanford; they wanted to be Yale. Go to Yale; they talk about Harvard. You go to Harvard; they talk about Oxford. I went to Oxford – I said, “This must be it!” – they talked about Cambridge. I finally went to Cambridge; they didn’t talk about anybody. So maybe that’s where it is, but the reality for all of us is we have responsibilities to be able to engage community, to be able to have that kind of civil discourse, and to be able to give people hope.

Hope is such a key ingredient. Youngsters at 10 or 11 years of age have lost hope. Their families have lost hope. They don't have any jobs to lose; they don't have any futures to lose; they don't have any home ownership to lose; they don't have any transportation to jobs to lose; they don't have any jobs to lose. Then you pretty soon have a community that has nothing to lose. We have a responsibility to help it, and we have to tell the truth to each other.

When I was a young man 35 years ago in my city of Pittsfield, Massachusetts – a city of 60,000, a working-class, GE town – I had the privilege to be elected to my first of two terms as mayor. I remember on a particularly difficult day, my city solicitor came in, and I told him all the problems I had. He said, “You have an easy job!” I said, “How do you figure I have an easy job?” He said, “You are a public official. All you have to do is tell the truth and do the right thing.”

And that is what we have to do, to hold accountable our elected officials today. Tell us the truth; we know the truth, so tell the truth and listen to us. Listening does not mean waiting for me to stop speaking so you can start speaking. Listen to the problems of the communities. Put together, in the federal government, a plan that takes the Department of Education, [which was] not founded until 1979, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Labor, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development and says, “Fix these communities where these kids spend 91% of their life when they are not in school.”

LINDA WING:

I thought I should begin by telling you a little bit about who I am in terms of how I think about faith. It seems to me that faith is based on one's core values. Some years ago, when I moved from California's warm weather to work at Harvard on transforming urban education across the country in collaboration with superintendents, I was trudging through 110 inches of snow in my first winter there, and I thought to myself, “Why am I here?” and doubted my decision to move across country. I happened to stop at the corner of Hardy Elementary School, and for whatever reason I looked up [and saw] on one side of the school was chiseled these words, which I have never forgotten, and which do represent one-half of my deepest core belief: “To every child the deepest reverence is due.”

On the other side of the school was chiseled these words: “Here,” meaning in this public school, “we prepare the mind, heart and hand for the common good.” Meaning to me, that we prepare children's minds so that they can use the power of knowledge to contribute to their communities; we speak to their hearts so that they can develop passionate commitment to serving their families and communities; and that we prepare their hands for action to act upon their knowledge and their commitment.

Based on those core values, what I have the most deep and abiding faith to [is] in children's unlimited potential to learn and define faith as an action verb. That is why we must act upon that, and so I have tried to act throughout my life to improve the quality of teaching for every child in the cities. To me, it is first and foremost the case that children will learn if they are provided with high-quality teaching. Second of all, to act on that faith by helping teachers, principals, parents and others not only to focus on instructional improvement but to do that together and in leadership. Because done together – by exercising leadership, not only in that one individual child's parent, or one classroom's teacher or one school's principal – children will learn. But working all together, children can learn at scale in all of the schools across the city. So I take faith as an action verb.

I came into education because as a child I grew up in the inner city. I am a graduate of Sacramento High School in Sacramento, California, which was disestablished by the school system some years ago

because of generations of failure. It was reconstituted as a charter school. I decide to go into teaching to change that, because I was one of only 25% of my school who graduated and went on to college. I happened to have some wonderful teachers who not only tried to teach us well, but who acted upon their faith in us by not only trying to teach us well every day but at that time trying to improve community life.

I had two teachers who went and lobbied very vigorously for enactment of fair housing. I am old enough that when my parents tried to buy their first house, we couldn't because of racial covenants. I had teachers who lobbied in the California State Legislature to change, and they missed days of school because they were in jail after having protested and been arrested. I always saw that as a connection between education and social justice.

I went into teaching, and by coincidence, I was in Berkeley, California, in the Urban Task Force at the University of California Berkeley, preparing to be a teacher in the inner city. I saw this ad that parents in that small urban city were organizing. They had started off meeting over coffee klatches in individual homes and had gotten to the point that they wanted to have a citywide meeting, and there was a notice in the newspaper and I went. There were 300 parents there. They talked about their hopes and dreams for public school for their children. They not only expressed their concerns but also said they would take responsibility. They offered to the superintendent that they would act upon their action by taking on their responsibility to help build a curriculum that would improve the schools.

The superintendent took them up on it. From that first moment of my being in the profession of teaching until now, I have always seen that the way to transform urban education across the country was not to work alone, but to work in partnership. If you go alone, you can go fast, but if you go in partnership, you can go far. I have always believed in that, to build upon the community's assets and for the school system to transform itself while taking advantage of those assets. In other words, it is not a one-way situation where the school system takes its benefits and the community doesn't. Both take responsibility, and both benefit.

In the last two years I have come to the University of Chicago, which has decided that it is at a point in its history when it realizes that we are in a country where we have many of the greatest universities in the world but many of the worst public schools in the world. It is time for those two entities to join together. The University of Chicago has many assets upon which to draw. If you go to our website, you will see our many, many Nobel Laureates. I think, though, that one of our assets is that one in seven [students] of the college where our great Dean John Boyer heads goes into teaching. Individuals who come to the University of Chicago have deep faith in the unlimited potential of children to learn, and one of seven goes on to teach children. So those are some of the great assets of the university.

We also approach this work with great humility. The University of Chicago is located on the south side of Chicago. In history, the south side of Chicago is the location of seven of the 10 poorest census tracts in the United States of America. During the first Mayor Daley [administration], the Robert Taylor homes were built, the Ida B. Wells homes were built, the State Way Gardens, Dearborn homes extended across an expanse four miles of the city of Chicago. In the Robert Taylor homes alone there were 27,000 residents in deep poverty, and 20,000 of those were children. Those homes are now coming down under the second Mayor Daley [administration], and there is an opportunity to change the history of the south side of Chicago, where it is no longer the place where poverty is concentrated and where poverty persists across generations. Where there is hope for what could be in that part of the city.

Initially, the Ida B. Wells [housing project] was built in 1947 as a way up and a way out for people who were in poverty. A way up out of poverty into the middle class, so that is the hope of the south side of Chicago at this point. The University of Chicago has decided to make an extraordinary commitment to this. It's going to launch an urban education initiative that will be a university-wide initiative. The capital campaign actually will be centered on urban education initiatives to build endowment, to do this work. There are many pieces to the work that would take me hours to describe and explain. I am just going to focus on one of them.

The Center for Urban School Improvement has taken responsibility, on the behalf of the University of Chicago, to design, start and support five public schools on the south side of Chicago. They are charter schools. Also, to form a network of 15 other schools across the south side of Chicago, where all together we can form a pathway for parents from pre-kindergarten to grade 12, leading to success in four-year colleges. That would demonstrate to the city of Chicago that, given the right circumstances and conditions and a focus on teaching and learning, we can enable children to graduate from high school and go on to college – four-year colleges – and succeed.

Currently, if you are an African-American or a Latino child in the city of Chicago and you make it to the ninth grade – which is not all that many children – by the time you are 25, only two of you will have graduated from a four-year college. We know that graduation from four-year colleges today is the gateway to high quality of life. That is the gateway to a job that will help you support your family, that will sustain your interest in your work and enable you to contribute to your community. It is the goal of our network to demonstrate that we can educate children well if we work in partnership.

We started that with the charter schools of the University of Chicago. The first one, which was started in 1998, was called North Kenwood Oakland. We opened a second one, which is called Donahue, in September of this year. We have a high school in the works that we will open next September, and then two more after that. Except for one child who is Asian, 100% of the children of our schools are African-American. 75 to 85% come from families who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. They are from poor backgrounds.

At North Kenwood Oakland Charter School, which is now in its eighth year, the children outperform their peers throughout the city in reading and mathematics on all standardized test in every grade. They outperform children in the state of Illinois in writing and, increasingly, across certain grades in mathematics, so that sets a bar for us that we still have to reach. But the children are doing extremely well. We have not been around as long as Gesu School to have children go on to college yet, but, of our children who have graduated from the eighth grade (these are schools from pre-kindergarten to grade eight), they are all in school and are headed for college, and we expect that they will succeed.

What we hope is to embed in these schools not only high quality in teaching and learning, but to embed them very deeply in the community. The way that we started these schools – given the fact that the University of Chicago not only exists on the south side of Chicago, where deep poverty existed, but contributed to it – is by being advocates of racial covenants in the past. We need to overcome that history and build trust among community members.

Eventually, in the end, we are accountable to parents for the quality of our schools. So we've tried to do due diligence and work very hard to gain the trust of parents so that they would see that our schools are a place where they can realize their hopes and dreams for their children. Our schools are open six days a week, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. On Saturdays at our new school, Donahue, we have our Boy's Leadership Academy; the Urban League is our partner in that. We have children ages 5 to 8 who are

in a year-long program from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. They start off with yoga and then study academics for the rest of the day, and we hope to continue that.

When we were in the design of that school, we sent a team here to the University of Pennsylvania to learn from Ira. We have tried to mime lessons learned from other universities across the country; that was a very meaningful experience for our team. I would just say we have high aspirations. John began this panel by saying we all have hope in the unseen. I think that what you have seen from all of our talks is that we have actually demonstrated what the seen can be. Hope is one thing; faith is another. Faith is built on demonstrated results. I think that is what we have now. We moved from hope to faith.