

Cornerstones Community Partners
Reception "Save Americas Treasures"
Sandra E. MH 5/22/99

Cornerstones Community Partnerships Reception
“Save America’s Treasures” Tour
Remarks by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton

Santa Fe, New Mexico
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Thank you so much. Let me start by apologizing for being so late. As some of you may know, we originally planned this tour starting yesterday in the Grand Canyon, continuing on today here in Santa Fe, going on tomorrow, and ending Saturday in Mesa Verde. Well then we really wanted to—and felt the necessity to—go, Bill and I, to Littleton, Colorado, to meet with the students, the faculty, and the community that were so terribly affected by what happened at Columbine High School just a month ago. And so I had to leave Flagstaff, where I spent the night, fly—first of all the plane didn’t work [laughter], but other than that... But it was an incredibly moving experience, and one that started with Bill and I meeting all of the family members of all the victims of the killing. It was just an emotional and very moving time. Then we met at the large gymnasium at the other high school with all of the students. But that isn’t why it lasted longer than we predicted. We felt the need to stay and visit with a lot of people there who were both very willing to share their feelings, but also wanted to suggest ways that we can work together to prevent a tragedy like this.

I apologize for being late. We got here as soon as we could. But I know that you had a wonderful time in a beautiful setting. [Laughter.] I can’t imagine that you have not enjoyed the incredible hospitality of our hostess. I have admired Glenna’s work ever since I became aware of it five or six years ago now. And if you’ve visited the Mall, you’ve seen her fabulous addition to the Mall with the Vietnam Memorial to the women who served. You will soon see, if you haven’t already, the work that she did for the new coin honoring Sacagawea, who led Lewis and Clark on their expedition. You can just see all around you the extraordinary talent that she is sharing with us who are lucky enough to be here. And Glenna, I want to thank you for your commitment to your art, and your commitment to public art, and opening your studio to all of us tonight. It’s a great pleasure.

And I’m so delighted to be with Clara again in New Mexico. She has been a great friend and a supporter, and I am always pleased to see her, especially under these circumstances where she is playing such an instrumental role in such an important project that we’re here to highlight and honor. Anyone who knows Clara, as I think everybody in New Mexico does, understands how committed she is to any cause she takes on. I’m sure that a number of you are here simply because she asked, and I’m grateful to her and thank you for being here.

I know that Mayor Delgado is here, and Governor and Mrs. King—Bruce and Ellen King. And Governor Tortelita of the Acoma Pueblo, where I will be tomorrow, I’m delighted that you could be here. And I also thank Peter Chapin and the entire board of directors of Cornerstones Community Partnerships for providing such leadership—and such creative leadership—through

this organization. And to the executive director, Beth Johnson, thank you for your tireless efforts on behalf of Cornerstones. And community liaison Sam Baca, who has been a guiding light as well. I know that Sandy and Jim Fitzpatrick, who came also from Washington along with Clara and me here, I thank them as well.

I'm also very grateful to the Fannie Mae Foundation for their very significant gift of \$100,000, and to their New Mexico partner for a contribution of \$5,000. I'm very pleased that we could have this breadth of support that really spans the nation, and I am grateful to you. I also want to thank Rebecca Mandich for her individual gift of \$10,000, and Peter and Lynn Conway for their \$10,000 contribution. I want to single out and thank Intel, CNN, and Bank of America each for their corporate gifts of \$10,000 as well.

I also want to thank Dick Moe, who is here. If you don't know Dick, I hope you get to meet him. He's the president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He is the private partner of the White House Millennium Council and our efforts to "Save America's Treasures." He, along with Susan Eisenhower, are co-chairing the Millennium Committee and are really helping us to forge a national program of awareness and additional resources to do the kind of work that Cornerstones is doing. I am also very grateful to Bobbie Green who works for the Trust and also serves on the board of directors. Bobbie, as some of you may know, worked for me at the White House before she was stolen away to head up the resource part of the Save America's Treasures effort at the National Trust. She is indefatigable, and she does it with grace, good humor, and a gentle spirit. I am extraordinarily proud of and grateful to her.

You know, what we are doing here tonight by celebrating Cornerstones is really exactly what the President and I had in mind when we created the White House Millennium Council. And then, through that, we began a number of initiatives that we hope would encourage people to take this moment in history and not just celebrate it on New Year's Eve or have a product like "millennium" toothpaste that you buy and it runs out—but instead to really think about the gifts that we could give to the future. To that end, we've chosen a theme: "Honor the past; imagine the future." Through that theme we have seen some remarkable events occurring around the country because people are really taking the millennium challenge seriously. They're looking at what is around them—their natural landscape and their man-built landscape—and thinking about what differences it makes in their lives, what the significance is, not only a reminder of the past but something that embodies values that we can carry with us into the future as well.

Yesterday, at the Grand Canyon, I was privileged to inaugurate a Millennium Trails Initiative. And I see Roger Kennedy, the former director of the National Park Service, and I'm very glad to see him here and to really celebrate the work that is done every day, throughout our country, preserving our natural heritage, and taking care of it so it is there for our children and our children's children.

Then I went to Flagstaff where I visited the local observatory. And in one place you could really feel the exploration and scientific discovery of the past, but also the continuing excitement and enthusiasm about what else we might find out there and how we can use the work of today to imagine a better future.

Well what you are doing here with the Cornerstones Community Partnership Program is really bringing together people who understand the significance of preserving the adobe churches and teachings—young and old alike—to teach the skilled work that is necessary for that preservation. And tomorrow I will be visiting a particular site that I know needs a lot of work. The work is required to repair the mission at the Pueblo of Acoma. And it's going to be expensive work. Roof repairs alone will cost about \$875,000. But I know that Cornerstones is committed to the success of that project.

Because when we began thinking about treasures around the United States, some very obvious ones came to mind—the Star Spangled Banner that hangs at the Smithsonian is literally deteriorating right before our eyes; the Thomas Edison Invention Factory where he was in many respects one of the most influential people of the entire millennium because of his scientific and innovative genius and what he did to create the 20th century—places throughout the country that really popped into our awareness. And the adobe churches of New Mexico were right at the top of the list because what they are, and what they stand for, and what they say to us, and how they can still often be used as well as be admired and studied, is a real lesson in how we “honor the past and imagine the future.” In creating the opportunity, through Cornerstones, for people to learn the skills so that they can continue to repair and maintain those treasures is a real way of living up to that old proverb of how if you want to help someone in the short run “you give them a fish,” and how if you want to help someone in the long run “you teach them to fish.”

Well Cornerstones is teaching a lot of people to fish, if you will—teaching them how to take care of their treasures, giving them the skills that are not only important for maintaining the culture of this state and this region of our country, but of really demonstrating a very clear sense of purpose in their own identities. So this is a very unique partnership, one that has very far reaching implications that I hope will not only teach, grow, and flourish here in New Mexico, but which will serve as an example for people throughout our country.

It was interesting today to go from my visits yesterday—the grandeur of the Grand Canyon, the wonder of the Lowell observatory—knowing that I would be here with all of you tonight, hoping that we could go out to Bandelier, which, because of the time, unfortunately got cancelled. Which I deeply regret and hope someday to be able to return. It was interesting, though, to think about this particular trip and all that it means, and what I hope it will inspire here in New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado.

And then to go to Littleton, a suburb that has just literally grown up, house after house, without any trees. They are creating their identity; they're building their community. And then this incredibly horrific event that has ripped apart their peace and serenity. And what they thought was a place where they could raise their children in safety and build a future, has caused a lot of soul searching, not just for them but I think for the entire country. Both my husband and I said today that there is something about the events of a month ago that people can't get out of their minds. They talk about it, they think about it, they worry about their own children, they are concerned about what is happening in their own communities. And if that helps us think more deeply about what kind of community we want to have and what kind of nation that we want to

be, then maybe some good will come out of it. And certainly, if you think about how to build a stronger, more connected community for our children and ourselves, then we have to think about what values we want to bring from the past, how we preserve what is best among us, and how we make whatever changes we need to go forward.

It may seem like a great leap from Cornerstones to Columbine High School, but I see that it is all connected. Because as we end this century and this millennium and begin anew, we have a lot of new challenges facing our great nation. And each of us in our own way will have to think of the gifts we can give to the future. It may be something as simple as hugging our own child or our grandchild, or spending more time with that child. Maybe contributing to Cornerstones to maintain the culture and traditions here. It may be doing a lot of things. But whatever it is that we choose to do, we all have an opportunity now to make a gift to the future and to see that gift then multiply many times over as other people come together to make and build a future for all of us. Thank you for your contribution.