

Roma Children Foundation  
Sofia, Bulgaria  
October 11, 1998

PHOTOCOPY  
PRESERVATION

**First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton  
Remarks at the Roma Children Foundation  
Sophia, Bulgaria  
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I join in thanking you for being here today to greet me but more for what you do every day on behalf of the children. I have visited homeless children in my own country and in South America, and in Asia, and in Europe. And I know how important it is to reach out to these children to give them the security, and the love, and the hope, and the faith, which as human beings they deserve to be given.

So I was looking forward to visiting the *Faith, Hope, Love Center* and to meeting Mr. Panitza and others of you who have worked with the *Democratic Bulgaria Foundation* to make this commitment to children a reality.

I have always been struck by how street children are able to survive in conditions that would often not be possible for us. And seeing the children here today, as I have, I have seen the same brightness and intelligence, and quickness that enable them to survive under difficult circumstances, and will permit them with proper help to become productive citizens in this society.

I know that many Roma children are particularly at risk. I have visited programs for Roma children in the Czech Republic and in Hungary, and now here, in Bulgaria. And I am so impressed that you see so clearly that all of our children in today's world have to be given opportunities to succeed. Because every child's future will affect our own.

And so I am pleased to announce today that the United States is committed to working with this Center and all of you -- the Mayor's Office, to the Foundation, to others -- to make sure that these children are given the opportunities they need -- to be educated, to have the skills required in today's world.

In order to continue the important work you are doing here, I am pleased to announce a grant of 50 thousand dollars from the United States Democracy Commission, as well as the donation of two vans from the Department of Defense to help this Center provide its vital services to the children.

*(Applause)*

Now, the children have been very patient. And it is very warm. So, I think we should go outside and see these new vans for ourselves.

*(The children, in appreciation, give Mrs. Clinton gifts for Chelsea, for the President, a diploma and other small presents.)*

I will take this back and I will put it in the White House. And any time anyone asks me, I will tell them about the beautiful and smart children I met when I came to Sofia.