

10-21-00 Video taped
Children's hope Foundation Gala

**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
VIDEOTAPED REMARKS FOR THE
CHILDREN'S HOPE FOUNDATION 14TH ANNUAL BENEFIT GALA
NEW YORK, NY
TAPED OCTOBER 21 – TO BE AIRED OCTOBER 24, 2000**

Good evening. I am honored to welcome you to this year's benefit gala for the Children's Hope Foundation. I only wish I could be there in person to thank all of you for helping to lift up the lives of children living in the New York area.

Because of you, more children with HIV/AIDS have access to the doctors and treatments they need to live longer, more fulfilling lives. More children have the kinds of things that all children deserve – such as gifts during the holidays, clothing, and computers to keep them from falling behind in school. And because you have donated your time and resources, more children have love, and care, and the everyday joy of life. And there is no greater gift than that.

It's amazing to think of the progress made since the founding of Children's Hope Foundation. We've seen a decline in death rates and AIDS cases – and new life-saving therapies approved by the FDA. We've seen funding for the Ryan White Care Act increase by 300 percent -- and the perinatal transmission of AIDS drop by a full 75 percent. But, as you know so well, we have much more to do.

In my trips to Africa and Asia, I have seen the devastating effects of a pandemic, which, if unchecked could wipe out decades of development around the world. And here at home, I have seen the tragic faces of HIV/AIDS, which are increasingly people of color, women and, yes, children. As of June, there were more than 2,150 cases of pediatric AIDS cases reported in New York. And there are more than 44,000 teenagers and adults living with HIV in this state.

We owe it to these children, and to all the children who will follow, to never give up the fight against this disease. We owe it them to keep working tirelessly until we find a vaccine – and a cure. But until that day, we must do everything in our power to prevent HIV, and heal those it strikes. And until that day, we must continue to give all our children the hope and quality of life they deserve. That is what all of you are doing. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. And I wish you Godspeed as you care for our most vulnerable children in the days and weeks ahead.