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AMERICAN CAMPING ASSOCIATION
MRS. REAGAN'S REMARKS
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 1987

-- AND OF COURSE, YOU ALWAYS REMEMBER THE STAFF. CAMP KECHUWA WAS RUN BY THE THREE ROSS SISTERS WHO WERE WONDERFUL AND I HAVE MANY FOND MEMORIES OF THEM. BUT THE ROSS SISTERS BRING ME TO MY SERIOUS MESSAGE THIS EVENING -- THE INFLUENCE THAT CAMP DIRECTORS AND COUNSELORS HAVE ON THE YOUNG.

-- YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO HELP GIVE OUR CHILDREN SOMETHING ESSENTIAL TO THEIR DEVELOPMENT -- SELF-ESTEEM. SELF-ESTEEM WON'T HEAL A NOSE THAT'S BEEN SKINNED ON THE DIVING BOARD; IT WON'T DRY UP POISON IVY; IT WON'T TAKE THE SWELLING OUT OF A TWISTED ANKLE; BUT IT'S THE BEST CURE-ALL, THE BEST PREVENTATIVE CHILDREN CAN RECEIVE, TO BE TAUGHT TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES.

-- YOU KNOW, SOMEONE WAS ONCE SITTING NEXT TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AT AN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE. AND A WOMAN HAD JUST PRESENTED A PAPER ENTITLED, "FIRST TEACH THEM TO READ." DR. KING LEANED OVER AND SAID, "FIRST, TEACH THEM TO BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES."

-- I THINK THAT'S THE KEY.

-- I WAS ONCE ON A TV SHOW THAT INVOLVED AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION. A TEENAGE GIRL PUT HER HAND UP AND SAID, "NO ONE CAN POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND THE PRESSURES KIDS LIVE UNDER TODAY WITH TESTS AND SEX AND DRUGS AND EVERYTHING ELSE." AND I SAID SOMETHING AND WE WENT ON TO OTHER QUESTIONS, BUT I FELT I HADN'T REALLY GIVEN HER A GOOD ANSWER, SO I WENT BACK AND IN EFFECT SAID, "YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE PRESSURES YOUR ENTIRE LIFE, AND THE

ONLY THING THAT CHANGES IS THAT THEY GET WORSE. IF YOU DON'T LEARN HOW TO HANDLE THEM NOW WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG, YOU'LL BE IN GREATER TROUBLE WHEN YOU GET OLDER. YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO COPE."

-- I BELIEVE SELF-ESTEEM GIVES CHILDREN THE STRENGTH TO COPE, NOT JUST WITH AVOIDING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, BUT WITH LIFE ITSELF. THIS SELF-CONFIDENCE IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO OUR CHILDREN FROM LOW INCOME AND INNER CITY ENVIRONMENTS, BECAUSE THEY NEED EVEN MORE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES THEY FACE. I THINK CAMP HELPS THESE CHILDREN UNDERSTAND THAT THEY CAN HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER THEIR LIVES. THEY LEARN THAT THEY HAVE A CHANCE.

-- THERE'S A SAYING, "THE DAYS THAT MAKE US HAPPY, MAKE US WISE." HAPPY DAYS ALSO MAKE US STRONGER, BECAUSE THEY GIVE US CONFIDENCE THAT WE CAN MEET THE FUTURE. THAT'S WHAT CAMP CAN DO.

-- THAT'S WHAT YOU CAN DO. I REALIZE THAT WHEN THE CAMP BUS BREAKS DOWN OR THE SHED CATCHES FIRE, IT'S SOMETIMES HARD TO SEE THE LARGER PERSPECTIVE. BUT YOU'RE HELPING TO MOLD THE FUTURE GENERATIONS OF THIS COUNTRY. IF OUR CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND LOVING AND TOLERANT AND DECENT, AMERICA HERSELF WILL REFLECT THOSE QUALITIES.

-- I STOPPED BY THIS EVENING, BECAUSE I WANTED YOU TO KNOW HOW IMPORTANT YOUR WORK IS. AND TO EACH OF YOU, I JUST WANT TO SAY HOW MUCH I ADMIRE YOU AND HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'RE DOING FOR OUR CHILDREN.

-- THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.

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SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR CAMERON SCHOOL EVENT
FEBRUARY 26, 1987

-- THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THIS WARM WELCOME AND FOR LETTING ME COME TO YOUR SCHOOL.

-- AND TO ALL OF YOU IN THE "JUST SAY NO" DANCE TROUPE, I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH I ENJOYED YOUR PERFORMANCE. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL!

-- HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN SHOW BUSINESS MYSELF A LONG TIME AGO, LET ME TELL YOU THAT I SEE A LOT OF TALENT AND A VERY SPECIAL ENTHUSIASM. AND IT'S THAT ENTHUSIASM, WHICH COMES THROUGH NOT ONLY

IN YOUR PERFORMANCE, <u>BUT IN YOUR MESSAGE ABOUT DRUG ABUSE</u>, THAT MAKES THIS PLAY SO EFFECTIVE.

-- THE MESSAGE IS STRONG AND CLEAR -- THAT DRUGS LEAD ONLY TO PAIN, SORROW, AND CONFUSION -- AND WHEN YOU SAY NO TO DRUGS, YOU'RE SAYING YES TO A WHOLE LOT MORE.

-- I HOPE ALL OF YOU STUDENTS IN THE AUDIENCE WILL REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO JACK WHEN HE GAVE IN AND TOOK DRUGS. HE WAS CONFUSED, HE WAS SAD, AND HE LOST HIS BEST FRIEND. AND AFTER HE REALIZED WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM AND MADE UP HIS MIND TO SAY <u>NO</u>,

HE GOT BACK ALL THE GOOD THINGS HE HAD LOST.

-- EACH ONE OF YOU IS A VERY SPECIAL PERSON AND YOUR LIFE IS TOO PRECIOUS TO LOSE TO DRUGS.

-- IF ANYONE EVER OFFERS YOU DRUGS, PLEASE REMEMBER THIS PLAY AND WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED TODAY. PLEASE, PLEASE STAND TALL AND PROUD, AND ALWAYS "JUST SAY NO."

-- AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO BE HERE TODAY AND GOD BLESS YOU.

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