

# Family Living

The Portland Observer

## When we stand for children, we don't stand alone

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

This past June 1, hundreds of thousands of Americans stood for children at the Lincoln Memorial as an American community to commit ourselves to putting our children first, to building a just America that leaves no child behind, and to ensuring all our children healthy and safe passage to adulthood.

The important thing is that we stood together: Red, White, Brown, Black and Yellow; young and old; rich, middle-class, and poor; female and male; physically and mentally challenged; Jews, Gentiles, Christians, and Moslems; Republicans, Democrats, Independents, liberals, moderates, and conservatives--each

an inextricable part of the amazing sacred mosaic of God's universe and of America's democracy. We came from every state and from over 3,700 sponsoring organizations, representing tens of millions of Americans.

We came by trains, planes, buses, and cars. Some of us walked, and some came by wheelchair. Some came with family, and some had no family. No one was excluded.

Some of us who came are working so hard at two or three jobs to make ends meet that we spend little or no time with our children. And some of us are so desperate for one decent job and child care that we do not enjoy the time we do have with our children.

Some of our children have access to the best health care in the world, and some of us live in fear every day that our children will get sick and be unable to see a doctor because we have no health insurance.

Some of our children are tracked to Princeton and Yale, and some of our children are tracked for prison and jail--for about the same cost but with vastly different dividends, for them and for America.

What Stand For Children Day revealed is that while we are not all the same and do not agree on everything, we do agree on one crucial thing: that no one in America should harm children and that every one of us can do more to ensure that our children grow

up safe, healthy, and educated, in nurturing families and caring communities.

Children depend on many adults--their families first and foremost, but also their neighbors, teacher, and religious and community leaders--to guide their way and support them on their journey to success and adulthood. That's why we stood for our children and families on June 1.

That day helped us realize that together we can give our children back their childhoods, safety, and hope, and improve millions of young lives right now. It helped us see that we a nation need to do more of what we know works for all our children, like every other wealthy, industrial-

ized nation.

We stood together because we know that government is only part of the answer and because we know we are the answer--individuals, families, community and religious leaders, and citizens who hold ourselves personally accountable and who hold our leaders publicly accountable with our voices and votes. As active citizens, we can make our leaders help rather than hinder our children, and make it easier rather than harder for families to raise healthy, safe, educated, and moral children.

We stood together because we realize that children require a seamless web of family, community, employer, and government support.

All children need strong family and social values; private charity and public justice; good home training, good school training, good job training, and good moral training; and parents and leaders who struggle to practice what they preach. So many of our children are morally confused because so many adults talk right and do wrong in our private, professional, and public lives.

Now that we have returned our communities, we must keep standing for children every day until all America stands with us. Take at least one step for just one child and you will make a difference. And from now on, remember: You do not stand alone. We stand together.

## Supervising what they watch

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

When dozens of movie stars and TV actors came to Washington, D.C., last June 1 to Stand For Children they let all of America know that there is a way to fight the violent, sexually explicit programming that invades our homes: Turn off the irresponsible programs and support the sensible ones.

Actor Edward James Olmos, whose movie "Stand and Deliver" praised the academic accomplishments of a group of mostly black and Latino students written off by the public school system, was one of the many big-name Hollywood stars to make that point. "We continue to produce things that the mass audience wants to see," Olmos says. "The reason you didn't see 'Stand and Deliver, Part 2' is because not enough people went to see 'Stand and Deliver Part 1.' I don't blame it on the movie industry as much as I blame it on people who go to see violent movies like 'Terminator Part 16' or 'Halloween, Part 5.'"

Olmos, who spent years as a police captain on the television drama "Miami Vice," says he had made a decision not to accept violent roles in films. "I have complete artistic control of all the characters I play, and even my character in 'Miami Vice' had a moral center," say

Olmos. "That's why I was never out there doing all of the violence on the program. There was a reason my character turned out that way. That's a personal choice, and I could have been a lot richer and a lot better known throughout the world if I would have accepted many of those other roles.

"The fundamental thing we must all remember," Olmos continues, "is that all of us have a choice, and we have a responsibility to make the right choice."

Actress Lynn Whitfield, who starred in "The Josephine Baker Story" and is scheduled to direct and star in "The Angela Davis Story," agrees. "There's the old adage, or you'll fall for anything," Whitfield says. "What you choose to see, what you put your money behind, and the letters you write to the networks all support the work we do in Hollywood. Responsibility lies with all of us. I have to be responsible and stand behind the roles that I choose.

"You have to be responsible in communicating that you have buying power. You have to say, 'I buy Pampers, I buy MacDonald's and I buy Revlon, so this is what I want to see on television.' I have tried to exercise my responsibility by choosing for myself roles that teach and in-

spire."

Both Whitfield and Olmos have the right idea. All of us adults must take more personal responsibility, for influencing the content of the entertainment our children see and by contacting network and program sponsors. In addition, we must monitor the amount of time our children spend in front of the TV.

According to Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, a professor at Texas A&M University, by the time a child reaches 18, he or she has been exposed to about 356,000 television commercials and public service announcements.

By the end of the day, the average American is exposed to more than 2,000 TV messages. And, according to a recent Nielsen study, a black child looks at more TV than any other child. On average, the study found that a black household watches about 72 hours of TV per week 49 percent more than all other households.

We need to spend more time with our children away from the TV set. Parents and children need to spend more time praying together, reading together, and sharing together. Let's take a lesson from the words of the folks in Hollywood and exercise our responsibility to encourage more sensible programming.

## Ever thought about tutoring

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On August 29th, Thursday, 10:30 AM - Noon, or September 4th, Wednesday, 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM, September 10th, Tuesday, 1:30 PM

- 3:00 PM, September 12th, Thursday, 10:30 AM - Noon, coffee sessions will be held to explain the program and outline the training involved.

The coffee sessions will be held

in the OASIS center on the tenth floor of the downtown Meier and Frank store. For more information call Ms. Michelitch at 241-3059 Tuesday through Thursday between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

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