

E d u c a t i o n

Summit Plea: Youth Mentors

Retired Gen. Colin Powell, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, and former President George Bush closed a three-day "summit" on volunteerism Tuesday, urging all Americans to adopt the goals of the event.

"Now the real work begins," Mrs. Clinton told several hundred summit delegates and dignitaries from across the country at closing ceremonies in front of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

Said Powell, "The message I want to give to all of America is that every town, every city and every village should be thinking as we have over the last three days:

'What can we do to make this real? What can we do to bring this message home to every corner of America?'"

The summit drew some 3,000 participants, including state and local delegates, civic and corporate leaders, and celebrities, to encourage volunteerism in support of disadvantaged youth.

President Clinton, Bush, and former presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter also took part, leading ceremonial events and joining in a neighborhood clean-up Sunday.

The specific goals of the summit were to help 2 million of an estimated 15 million disadvantaged youth by providing health care, mentoring, education, a safe place for after-school activities and an opportunity to serve their community.

On Tuesday, the 150 local delegations wrapped up their work by meeting in state-by-state groups to present plans for fostering volunteerism in their communities.

Most delegations planned to hold local versions of the summit.

"We hope to hold one for all Indian tribes that weren't able to come here," said G. Wayne Tapio of the Oglala Sioux Tribe in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, one of two Indian tribes represented at the summit.

Tapio and fellow tribe member C.J. Clifford, of Mandeson, South Dakota, said they wished more time had been allotted for the summit, to establish contacts and partake in of all the activities.

But they said they had received pledges for assistance — from the National Football League to present a football camp for reservation youth, and from television news anchor Tom Brokaw to help, through a South Dakota radio station Brokaw owns, with a local summit.

A challenge to the returning delegations will be to relay from the summit a sense of urgency to address problems of disadvantaged youth, said delegate Peter Zielinski of Plattsburgh, New York.

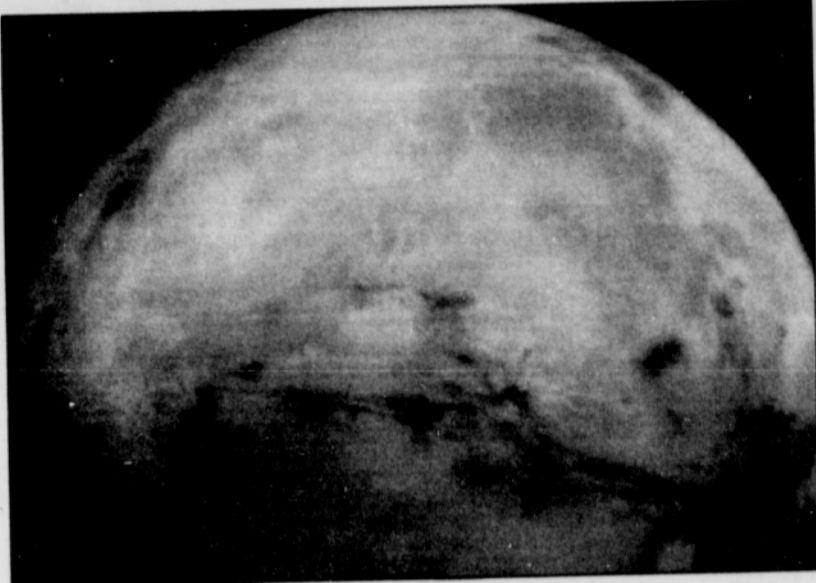
"We have to get people to believe that there is a significant problem ... people don't want to hear about problems, but that's what we have," he said.

Delegate Bryan Hartman, also of Plattsburgh, said strong local leadership was essential.

"Colin Powell has been such an inspiration for this summit and for the nation.

However, in each community, we need to find our own Colin Powell who can rally the troops back home."

Cambodian refugee Hoang Taing, introduced at the closing ceremonies by Powell, is planning to show her dedication in an unusual way, by running some 3,000 miles from Philadelphia to San Francisco to encourage Americans to join in the summit's goals.



Mars, courtesy U.S. Geological Survey

Path to Mars

Interest in a manned flight to Mars has been rekindled lately and cable television's TLC Elementary School's "The Path to Mars" can help you learn more about our nearest planetary neighbor.

Segments explore the possibilities of sending astronauts to Mars as well as the chances for manned space flights to other planets.

Other segments explore the Lowell Observatory, a space shuttle and plans for a new space station.

Meanwhile, Assignment Discovery presents an entire week of programming around the theme "Earth to Mars" including Destination Mars, a documentary that gives students a sense of what it would be like to

travel to Mars.

Life on Mars? examines the theory that life once existed on Mars and also looks at the public's fascination with the red planet through Hollywood films and the press.

More Martian revelations can be found on Sci-Fi Channel's Inside Space.

On May 5, the series looks at the Martian meteorite found in the Antarctic that is widely believed to contain fossil evidence of microscopic life on Mars.

The program also looks back at the 1975 Viking mission to Mars, explains how meteorites are formed and explores how meteorites can be distinguished from Earth rocks.

Quick Study Soars At Spelling Bee

After all the buzz settled down after the Housing Authority's Fourth Annual Spelling Bee, second-grader Charly Mederos emerged as the day's two-fold champion.

When Charly, 7, won second place in his grade category last Saturday, nobody could have guessed that less than four months ago, he did not even know how to read English.

"I can't believe I won!" Charly said, jumping up and down after being announced the second place winner of the first- and second-graders' category.

It was just four months ago that Charly, who currently attends Pacoima Elementary School, enrolled in the Housing Authority's Reach Me-Teach Me Reading Program at the San Fernando Gardens housing development where he lives with his parents and younger brother.

He started out reading simple words, then moved on to preschool level books, and was quickly able to read short stories with minimal help.

"Reach Me-Teach Me is a direct

response to the epidemic of illiteracy that has plagued the nation's youth. Through Charly's example, I know this program will increase our children's arsenal so they'll be able to go out and make a positive impact on the world," said Executive Director Don Smith, HACLA.

The spelling bee was open to all elementary school youth from all the housing developments. Preliminary rounds were held last weekend at the San Fernando Gardens, Ramona Gardens, Nickerson Gardens, Mar Vista Gardens, and Rancho San Pedro housing communities.

Three participants in each of three categories (grades 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6) were sent from each participating community to compete in the main event.

Charly placed first in his grade category, out of over 50 participants, at the San Fernando Gardens preliminaries.

"I am very proud of Charly for his great progress," said his Reach Me-Teach Me tutor Sheila Johnson, an

AmeriCorp member. "I remember when he first sat with me to read and he couldn't read a word. Now he can read and he feels good about himself."

The Reach Me-Teach Me program was created by Mario Matute, a youth case manager at San Fernando Gardens who saw the need for children's literacy in the neighborhood.

"By observing the kids in our tutorial and computer programs and by speaking to local teachers, I found that many of these kids didn't know how to read," said Matute. "Then the kids feel embarrassed in school because they can't read and get teased. It's no wonder there are so many kids who don't like to go to school and eventually drop out. We want to prevent kids from dropping out of school by helping them to read."

Anyone interested in volunteering for the Reach Me-Teach Me program is urged to call Mario Matute at the San Fernando Gardens Community Service Center, 818/834-9266.

Hong Kong History Rewritten

Hong Kong must revise its history books to bring them in line with the views of the Chinese government, a state-run newspaper said Tuesday.

The commentary in the China Daily gave examples of what China wants changed when it resumes sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1.

The paper said Hong Kong textbooks teach that British gunboats waged the Opium War of 1839-1842 to force open China's markets and end the imperial government's restrictions on the opium trade.

China views the war as the beginning of its slide into semi-colonial status at the hands of

European powers.

It maintains Britain was forcing sales of opium at a high cost to China in social disruption.

The article also said Hong Kong textbooks are wrong to say China invaded Korea in the 1950-53 Korean War. China calls it the "War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea."

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