

*Soroptimist
Speech
1989*

(APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO INTRODUCTION)

IT IS INDEED A PRIVILEGE AND A PLEASURE FOR ME TO SHARE IN THE WEST CHESTER SOROPTIMIST CLUB'S ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY.

AS I LOOK AT THE LIST OF AWARDS GIVEN OUT I AM IMPRESSED BY THE WIDE SPHERE OF ACTIVITY THEY REPRESENT--WOMEN HELPING WOMEN, ART, SECRETARY OF THE YEAR, JUST TO NAME SEVERAL...

I AM EVEN MORE IMPRESSED BY THE CALIBER OF WOMEN I SEE IN THIS ROOM. AND, BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE VOLUNTEERS, GIVING WILLINGLY OF YOUR TIME AND TALENTS TO HELP OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE.

BY SO DOING, YOU ARE MAKING A SOLID CONTRIBUTION TO THIS COMMUNITY.

ACTUALLY, YOU ARE THE TRUE DEFINITION OF A COMMUNITY--PEOPLE JOINED TOGETHER FOR A COMMON GOOD.

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WHEN WE THINK OF THE WORD COMMUNITY, MANY OF US THINK ONLY OF A PHYSICAL LOCATION. WHEN ASKED WHAT COMMUNITY WE LIVE IN, WE USUALLY ANSWER WITH THE NAME OF OUR TOWN OR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

WEBSTER DEFINES A COMMUNITY AS SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST A PLACE. THE DICTIONARY STATES: "A BODY HAVING COMMON RIGHTS, INTERESTS AND PRIVILEGES." IT IS SUCH A COMMUNITY WE FIND OURSELVES IN HERE RIGHT NOW.

AMERICAN POET WALT WHITMAN WROTE: "BEHOLD, I DO NOT GIVE LECTURES OR A LITTLE CHARITY. WHEN I GIVE, I GIVE MYSELF."

THAT'S A VERY MEANINGFUL THING TO THINK ABOUT. WE ALL KNOW HOW EASY IT IS TO OFFER LIP SERVICE TO A CAUSE AND THEN TURN PROMPTLY TO SOMETHING ELSE. HOW VERY EASY TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION AND THEN TURN AWAY.

BUT, HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO GET INVOLVED. TO BECOME AN ACTIVE PART OF A GROUP SUCH AS THIS SOROPTIMIST CLUB. AND TO GIVE OF YOURSELF OVER AND OVER.

I HAVE ALWAYS MARVELED AT PEOPLE WHO GIVE OF THEMSELVES. WHO COME FORTH, QUIETLY, UNASSUMINGLY, TO DO A JOB THAT NEEDS DOING. THAT IT GET DONE AND GETS DONE WELL IS SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU DO IT! YOU GIVE OF YOURSELVES SO THAT THE TASK IS ACCOMPLISHED. THAT SAYS TO ME THERE IS A TREMENDOUS SENSE OF UNITY, AND COMMUNITY, PRESENT IN THE WEST CHESTER SOROPTIMIST CLUB.

AS A MEMBER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY, I'M IN A GOOD POSITION TO SEE THE VALUE OF PROGRAMS AND EFFORTS PUT FORTH BY ORGANIZATIONS IN ALL TYPES OF ENDEAVORS.

AS A MATTER OF FACT, ALL TAXPAYERS SHOULD APPRECIATE THE ADVANTAGE AND VALUE OF THE HARD WORK AND THE HUNDREDS OF HOURS THAT GO INTO THE SERVICES YOUR CLUB, AND MANY ACROSS PENNSYLVANIA LIKE YOU, RENDER. YOU SAVE PENNSYLVANIA A LOT OF MONEY IN HUMAN SERVICES.

YOU FILL A GAP THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE LEFT UNATTENDED. PEOPLE WHO ARE WITHOUT HELP--WITHOUT HOPE IN SOME CASES--CAN TURN TO YOU. YOU CONTRIBUTE YOUR TIME.....YOUR EXPERTISE.....YOUR CARING.....YOUR DEDICATION TO CARRY OUT THE GOALS OF THE SOROPTIMIST CLUB IN OUR COMMUNITY.

IT IS HEARTENING TO SEE SO MANY OF YOU WILLING TO ADD TO YOUR OWN HEAVY SCHEDULES AND TAKE ON STILL ANOTHER TASK, ANOTHER CHALLENGE.....THAT OF OFFERING YOUR SERVICE TO CLUB AND COMMUNITY, WITH YOUR ONLY THOUGHT BEING: "I WANT TO GIVE SOMETHING TO MY COMMUNITY."

THE SPIRIT OF HELPING OTHERS AND CONTRIBUTING CAN BE SATISFYING.....FOR THAT'S THE ONLY--BUT GREATEST--REWARD....THE SELF-SATISFACTION THAT THE EFFORT HAS BEEN WORTHWHILE. AND YOU CAN SAY: "WHAT I DID REALLY HELPED."

DEDICATION....COMMITMENT....JUST LOOK AROUND THIS ROOM. LOOK AT YOUR FRIENDS...YOUR NEIGHBORS. YOU ALL LEAD BUSY, PRODUCTIVE LIVES. YET, YOU FIND THE TIME--YOU MAKE THE TIME--TO GIVE UNSELFISHLY OF YOURSELVES SO THAT OTHERS MAY BE HELPED.

EACH OF YOU IS A SPECIAL KIND OF PERSON BECAUSE OF THE SERVICE YOU DO AS A MEMBER OF THE WEST CHESTER SOROPTIMIST CLUB.

TO ALL OF YOU WHO ARE PART OF THIS COMMUNITY, THIS CAUSE, WHO WORK FOR THE COMMON GOOD--I COMMEND YOU. I THANK YOU.

IN CLOSING, I SHOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE RECIPIENTS OF THE AWARDS
PRESENTED HERE (TONIGHT/TODAY). THE AWARDS ARE SYMBOLIC OF YOUR OBVIOUS DEDICATION TO
OUR COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO SHARE MY THOUGHTS WITH YOU ON THIS HAPPY AND
SIGNIFICANT OCCASION.

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