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Thursday, August 12th WND

Was like a campaign day. I had wanted to spend at least one day seeing PROJECT HEADSTART in operation. We chose New Jersey because it was close and I could see two contrasting projects, and because it had been the first State to enlist in the War on Poverty.

Helen brought me coffee a little before 7, and that was the last easy moment in the day. I was up and dressed and had read my little cards for speeches three or four times when we left for the airport at 8.

The plane was full of newspaper people. There were the regulars, Helen Thomas and Frances Lewin and Muriel Dobbins, and most unexpectedly, Eugenia Sheppard, who writes about clothes. I looked self-consciously at my coffee-colored linen trimmed in white. They served a big breakfast of steak and scrambled eggs on the short ride to New Jersey. I listened fascinated to Sargent Shriver, one of the most attractive men I know. He was talking about their new baby, who is like Santa Claus, so jolly, ^{about} and HEADSTART being continued as a year-round program.

And then suddenly, there we were in Newark. With Mayor Addondizio and Governor and Mrs. Hughes at the foot of the ramp. Mrs. Hughes was delightful, the most outstanding person I met all day. Her combination of good common sense, infectious humor,

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and industry made me forget all about her measurements, which are ample.

We got in the motorcade, and Dr. Kelly, who is the New Jersey coordinator for all the HEADSTART projects, took us to the Cleveland Elementary School, which is in the heart of a congested Newark slum. Concrete and screeching trucks and heavily black population, and there are 150 children there taking part in a project of HEADSTART. Dr. Maurice Feld, the head teacher, took me through, and Dr. Mildred Groder, white-haired, commanding appearance, very dignified (Liz called her "The grandmother of all HEADSTART programs") was with us. She is head of HEADSTART for the whole Newark area.

Two small starched and scrubbed HEADSTART children, both Negroes, Dawn Rudd and William Purdy, met me and escorted me to their homes across the street. A big old tenement building, with heads projecting from every window, and the stoop newly painted, bright green paint, some of it rubbed off on Liz's shoes. It was like company coming to anybody's house -- you get ready, you spruce up! I met Dawn's mother and William's mother, who told me that he got along better with the other children at home since he had started to school, and that he had learned to dress himself more

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dependably.

Back at the school, we visited two classrooms full of little 5-year-olds, saw one little group sitting around wide-eyed on the floor while a teacher's aide read to them, and another, a pig-tailed girl ~~in~~ ^{got to be wrong work,} ~~her new eyelashes~~ happily slapping purple paint on an easel, lots of paintings thumb-tacked on the wall. In one corner a make-believe kitchen, little pans of flour and salt and meal and milk and oatmeal. The youngsters are learning the words for the things that are common in a kitchen. They are getting one balanced meal a day and medical and dental care, inoculations, and hearing and speech tests, learning how to pay attention, to get along with others, learning new words, and, very importantly, going on field trips to such ordinary places as the grocery store or the postoffice or the police station or the zoo, but to many of these children they were places they had never been, their world is so narrow, and in their homes [^] frequently broken homes with only one parent or maybe an aged grandparent and on relief [^] the vocabulary is limited. Grunts, profanity.

We wound up inside by having sort of a makeshift press conference in the classroom, with Shriver, the Governor and the Mayor doing most of the talking. I answered such questions as what we hoped to get out of this -- we, the Government, we, the people. Fewer dropouts 13

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years from now, children that would grow up with a prospect of being responsible citizens, taxpayers, not tax-eaters. Some of these folks are third-generation welfare folks!

You have to start somewhere to break the cycle, and this is the time, the malleable age, when you can change and mold. Many of them are bright-looking youngsters whose lives can be changed. But I emphasized over and over that eight weeks is a drop in the bucket, a flash of a lifetime.

And then we were enroute to Lambertville, the second of the HEADSTART projects, riding first in the Governor's car and then boarding one of the press buses, going up and down, talking to everybody, boarding another bus, sitting by Eugenia Shepard, while I wolfed an enormous lunch, elegantly packed in a basket, and wishing that it had been one-fourth this ^{much} ~~month~~, particularly since we were bound on a poverty trip and working on the project of trying to lend economic, constructive help to people who often didn't have enough to eat.

It surprised me how green and rural and pretty parts of New Jersey were! In Lambertville we went to a hill top known, for no reason that I can understand, as The Commons. A place of tar-paper shacks, dirt roads, not unlike Karnack 40 years ago,

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outdoor toilets, and a general appearance of complete shiftlessness.

We stopped at a little Mennonite church. It seems that the Reverend Winger, who is the pastor here, is one of the few folks who has a rapport with the parents of the children who are in this HEADSTART project that will make them want to come out. And Dr. Kelly, Sarge, and everybody in charge wanted at all times to have the parents participate, to meet them, to have me meet them.

The little church was as bleak and poverty-stricken as any I have seen in the back woods of East Texas or Alabama, and yet it opened its arms to people in need, and that should be the way of a church. I was very much struck by the quality of the teacher in charge of the HEADSTART project, Mr. Patori. Earnest, excited, devoted, full of life, absolutely thrilled at what was happening to the children in the course of their 8 weeks. I met them and saw their parents, and it was then that the impact of HEADSTART reached me most of all.

Some of them are factory workers, some of them are migrant farm laborers who work in the truck gardens and corn fields along the Delaware River and live in the shanties and trailers here on The Commons.

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I do not want to turn my America over to an increasing generation as listless and dull as many of these parents looked. I hope for better from their children. And that is what it is all about.

And then we had a delightful half-hour of movies, made by Mr. Patori, all just as unprofessional as my own home movies, but an exciting record of the field trips the children have taken. Great material! Visiting a farm, walking up to a cow, having their picnic by the banks of a little pond and one little boy fell in, filing into the grocery store and getting the great treat of a candy bar, and taking a sightseeing trip on the river. It was impossible to keep the children quiet. They kept on giggling and whispering and pointing out, "There's Susie, there's Jim." But best of all was the interested quality of the teachers, the aides, and Mr. Patori himself. These children were lucky to have him.

Lambertville has only a 4500 population, and this was in great contrast to the very urban project I had seen before.

And then, back we were in the buses, waving at the crowds along the way, and heading back to Morven, the Governor's Mansion. —
Already 75 years old at the time of the Declaration of Independence!
My delightful hostess led me into her own room, where she had candy

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and fruit and a bed turned down, and I got the not-so-restful news that we would be going to Texas when I got back from New Jersey. But it was an hour's respite before I changed into my blue linen (a good idea with Eugenia Sheppard along that I'd picked a smart, fresh dress for the tea).

And then down to the back lawn of Morven, where a tent had been set up and several hundred New Jersey educators, clergymen, and HEADSTART officials had already been having an hour or so seminar on their problems, their achievements, and how they could carry forward the work of HEADSTART into the school year.

Governor Hughes spoke, and Dr. Kelly, and a mother, who was a volunteer in one of the programs, the last line of whose speech was the most moving. One of her little charges, who had come in silent and listless, ^{had} ~~and~~ blossomed during the ~~five~~ five or six weeks, reached up his hand to take hers as she was leaving and said, "I love you." And then, very delightful, there were two young people who, except for this, would have been the type to go into the Peace Corps. A nurse told about pinning a note with a big safety pin on all of her charges so that the Mamas and Papas, or whoever was at home would be sure to get it when the child reached there,

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requesting permission and an appointment to give the child a shot against tetanus, whooping cough, diptheria, the general routine. To her surprise, out of the 103 notes pinned to them, the very next day she had gotten back more than 80. The rest of them were harder to dig out, but finally every one of them had the shot.

And then the little high school teacher's aide, sweet-faced, trusting, ready to "take on life" and sure that it was going to be better. And then Dr. James Murphy of Princeton University's Institute for Teachers of the Disadvantaged, who talked about higher education's responsibility for training teachers for this sort of program.

My own small speech was just a sort of a montage of letters I have received from their fellow workers -- these New Jersey HEADSTART people's fellow workers all over the country. A line or two -- some of the best letters from Tennessee and Texas that really told the meat of the program.

On the platform was Attorney General Katzenbach's Mother, all of 90 and for many years an important figure in educational circles in New Jersey.

After the speeches, there was a reception and then tea and a little walk through the garden. One of the most delightful moments of all had been driving up to the front of Morven when I first got

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there. And there were about 8 of the 10 Hughes children awaiting me, some his, some hers, some theirs. They are quite a family. My admiration for her grew momentarily. We talked in the car about the need for raising the level of dignity and prestige of people who went into service work, maids or gardeners or housekeepers. This unrealistic emphasis on the desirability of white collar work, professional work, is a disservice we have given ourselves somewhere along the line. All of us who run a household don't feel any the less dignified for the cooking and cleaning we have done.

And then in the plane with a restorative drink, and Bob Thompson of The Los Angeles Times by my side for an interview, which turned out to be rather painless. And very soon I was back on the White House lawn, with word that we really were going to Texas, but I had a rather lengthy interim in which to sign mail and make phone calls, and then we choppered out to Andrews and I was joined by Lyndon, who had had a day that put my little activities to shame for the brains and energy they required.

His had included everything from a ceremony making Herbert Hoover's birthplace an historical site, attended by all of the Hoover family, the swearing-in of Cabot Lodge, a fiscal talk with Henry Fowler, interview with Ed Morgan, old friend Sam Gilstrup back

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from Malawi, where he was Ambassador, and then dinner on the SEQUOIA with 35 Ambassadors from countries scattered around the world, a three and a half hour session in which he talked to groups, moving from one part of the boat where there were 5 or 6 on up to another, covering the crowd in as personal a way as possible. But he arrived jubilant, almost refreshed by activity.

I tried to sleep, but it had been too exciting a day. The new Commander at Bergstrom met us and we were aboard the Jetstar for the ranch and in bed by 12 o'clock Central time, 2 o'clock for me.