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LUNCHEON ADDRESS | INTRODUCTION

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LUNCHEON ADDRESS

INTRODUCTION

PETER SWORDS*

My contribution to this symposium is to introduce Hildy Simmons, the corporate contribution officer with the J.P. Morgan complex, and also to give you the basic view of nonprofit organizations towards corporate contributions. The first thing I want to say is that they are not in the least bit repugnant, and, in fact, the little black line on the graph identifying corporate charitable contributions as hovering at one percent, looks somewhat like the serpentine snake that infected Eden a long time ago. I think maybe we could get back to Eden if we could get that snake to start moving upward. I will talk about two of the nonprofit subsectors, the human services subsector and the arts subsector, and share with you my thoughts on how these subsectors feel about corporate contributions and how they view the corporate community.

Regarding the human services sector and monetary contributions, my sense is that corporate contributions in terms of money are not very big factors because the United Way plays a major role in soliciting monetary donations from corporations. I think that the biggest interface between the corporate community and community-based human service sector is in the in-kind contribution area,¹ and in addition to the traditional contributions of having a brochure printed or getting cast-off computers, there is the new field of job training that is becoming very important.²

The human service sector probably understands as well as anybody that the real crisis of this society is the lack of jobs, and that most of our social pathology can be traced to the inability of people to find work. Thus, from the human service community-based group perspective, there is nothing more important than work that is done to assist peoples' efforts to find jobs. One example of the kinds of job training contributions going

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1. See Paul Sweeney, *Corporate Giving Goes Creative*, N.Y. TIMES, May 15, 1994, § 3 (Business), at 3 (stating that many corporations with little or no cash make in-kind contributions of products or expertise).

2. See Leonard Felson, *State Moves Toward 21 Month Welfare Limit*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 19, 1995, § 13 (Connecticut), at 1 (discussing the need for job training for welfare recipients in light of the push to place limits on the amount of time that a recipient may receive welfare); see also Louis Uchitelle, *Reviving a Role for Apprentices*, N.Y. TIMES, June 18, 1990, at D2 (noting that the Commission on the Skills of the American Work Force, a panel of business and union leaders, proposed to Congress that a nation-wide government-regulated apprenticeship program, financed partly through payroll tax, be created).

on in New York City can be seen in the practice of certain banks allowing people to come in during the evening and learn to use modern computers and get job training from experts in various fields. Furthermore, some corporations dispense employment advice and conduct seminars on how to conduct job searches. Nonprofit agencies also perform these services, but when these services come from a corporation, the contribution seems more important and more believable to a lot of the people, and it also gives these people a sense that there is hope and that others care about them.

There are many other things going on, for example, with female executives doing one-to-one mentoring with young women. There are also many internships that assist students from alternative high schools, the ABC Capital Cities project being one that comes to mind,³ and there is the recently created New York City Partnership Investment Fund which is very aggressive about job training.⁴

Issues are very different in the arts subsector. Money matters in that sector. Arts groups, such as small dance companies and theaters have very small budgets compared to some of the larger human services organizations, and any amount of money can make a tremendous difference. However, I think the most significant effect for arts groups in receiving corporate contributions is that they provide a kind of "good seal of approval." It reassures both the small individual donors as well as some of the larger ones that their instinct to give to this particular company is the right one. Corporate contribution to the arts is obviously extremely important in New York City, San Francisco, and Atlanta as well.

I will end by saying that generally, there is a sense in the nonprofit community that if the business community is joining in solving the terrible social problems we confront, either through giving money, in-kind

3. See FOUNDATION FOR MINORITY INTERESTS IN MEDIA, INC., FACT SHEET. Capital Cities/ABC is a supporter of the Media Careers Program, founded in 1989, which provides minority students with internships in such media fields as television and radio. Students usually begin participation in the program during their junior year in high school and can continue through their graduation from college. There are currently 30 graduates of the program who have gone on to a career in media at one of the companies that participate. Capital Cities/ABC has several companies, such as their radio, daytime television, and sports television interests that participate. *See id.*

4. See Thomas J. Lueck, *Fund Set Up to Help City with Projects*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 22, 1994, at B1 (describing the fund, which was set up in 1994 by a group of executives attempting to raise \$100 million in private funds to invest in projects that create jobs throughout the city). Individuals and corporations have been asked to donate as much as one million dollars each, which, after fifteen years, the donor could receive back, along with additional sums to account for inflation. *See id.*; see also Editorial, *New York City's Pot of Gold*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 24, 1994, at A16; Editorial, *Private Help for Public Woes*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 3, 1997, at A16.

contributions, or working together in collaborations and partnerships, then there must be hope. Corporate contributions provide the sense that if everyone works together, problems can be solved.

On that note, please welcome our luncheon speaker, Hildy Simmons.

