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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY  
FOR FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

STATE DINING ROOM

10:40 A.M. EDT

A very popular song tells us what the world needs is love, sweet love. Offhand, I can't think of any other Federal program, and we have quite a few of them, as you all know, that meets this any better than the Foster Grandparents Program. And I congratulate all of you for being a very vital part of it.

It is one program that I am familiar with that everybody is for and, as far as I know, no one is against. Again, I think that is a rarity, and I congratulate all of you for being a very vital part of it.

It is my understanding that this month is an anniversary month of the Foster Grandparents Program. In its first year, 21 projects were started by 1966, some 33 projects were operating in 27 States with 782 people totally dedicated, like yourselves, caring for grandchildren.

Today I am proud to say that the records indicate that some 13,600 people are actively participating. And I join with all of the others in our society who feel this has been a superb record.

You are a family, you are a friend, and, more importantly, a champion for the children that you have adopted. Their lives are richer for it and, needless to say, so are all of yours.

I wish to personally congratulate the twenty of you who are here. You are among the 178 persons to have served the full ten years since the Foster Grandparents Program began. I know how you react to being senior in a program of foster grandparents, but, if you were, I would be very, very proud.

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You are demonstrating, and have demonstrated, that older Americans are a great, great natural resource. Your love, your patience, your wisdom are desperately needed by the children who have become a very vital part of your own lives.

And who else could fill that role as well? I don't think there is anybody. After all, you have two things to give which few other Americans have today -- time and yourselves. That is what all children need and some lack tragically these days.

It is a very special treat for me to join all of you here and to tell you why. A good part of my job is trying to bring people together, trying to get them to agree, trying to reconcile differences in the interest of the Nation.

Here I don't have to bring anybody together, for you are together and I congratulate you for it. You are united in one thing -- concern for the children that you serve.

It is my very special pleasure and privilege to present each of you with a ten year pin and a special award in the form of a plaque. It is one very small way that we can reward you for your wonderful effort, your total dedication and the spirit in which you have participated.

END

(AT 10:50 A.M. EDT)