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Remarks (Transcribed) by  
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This is Vice President Hubert Humphrey. I only wish I could be in Atlanta with you today to talk to each one of you personally about a favorite subject of mine -- young people. Yes, our own young people -- your young friends, and your listeners.

I don't suppose that I qualify for membership in this new generation, if age is the criterion. And I confess that I still enjoy Glenn Miller now and then, but I also want you to know that James Brown and the Supremes are good friends of mine, too. The Supremes helped me the other day dedicate a swimming pool for our young people here in Washington. In fact, I might as well confess it -- they stole the show. I don't recall that anybody remembered what I had to say.

I have a special interest in the young people of our nation. At the direction of President Johnson, it's my privilege to serve as chairman of the President's Council on Youth Opportunity.

I want to tell you a little bit about this Council. Well, it's not the kind of an organization that just studies a subject and then submits a report which is subsequently filed away and gathers dust. We submit some reports, but that's not our main task. The Council is an action group. It cuts through red tape. It prods people. It prods even people who some people frequently don't dare to prod. It stings people into action. You see, we're interested in results.

Now we've been busily engaged in asking questions of city hall, and of newspapers, and state houses, and business and business leaders, and labor unions, recreation departments, neighborhood groups, educators, and many others. We're asking questions like these:

Why don't these youngsters around town have a playground? Why isn't this playground lighted? Where is the swimming pool? Why is the camp empty? Why is that young man or young woman out of work? Why are the schools, the gyms, and the auditoriums closed all summer when they're needed the most? And why can't that National Guard armory be used for recreation for athletics? Why can't those entertainers get out into the neighborhoods where the "happenings" are? Why can't you provide free movies for the disadvantaged youngsters? How about getting the kids out to the ball game?

Those are just a few of the questions that we're asking. But the Council doesn't just ask questions. It provides answers, too. And it tries to get people to provide their own answers. Answers like these -- and here are some of the results:

We have new National Guard regulations now, making Guard facilities and equipment available for youth programs for our disadvantaged young people. We opened up a new National Guard camp in Arkansas, not long ago, that will provide camping opportunities for better than 1,000 youngsters.

There was a two-day Job Fair in Houston, Texas, where local businessmen hired about 1,100 disadvantaged young men and women -- hired them right on the spot.

There have been free jet airplane rides for disadvantaged youngsters in 30 of the biggest cities in the nation. And our airlines are cooperating. If you ask them, they'll even do more.

There are free tickets to the big league ball games -- the American League and the National League clubs are cooperating. See if you can't get a few more of these youngsters to the ball games.

Free movies for 40,000 disadvantaged youngsters who are in Washington, D.C. alone. And up at New York City, the producers and the distributors of first-class, top-grade films -- they are making those films available for free showings in the neighborhoods.

There are free camperships for thousands of disadvantaged youngsters in practically every major city in the nation.

And we have what we call these "tot lot" playgrounds -- that is, playgrounds for the little ones. These are often located on tax-delinquent property in the low-income areas. For instance, out in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, there's a good example. We've called upon and had private cooperation, businesses, buy the playground equipment, and the city closes off a street and makes it into an immediate playground.

Now these are the examples of things that are going on right now in American cities. And if you want more, we can provide you with hundreds of them: the Showmobile, for example, over in Baltimore; taking over the Navy warehouse out in Chicago on the old Naval pier and making it into a massive gymnasium that provides athletic events and free recreation for 7,000 youngsters a day.

Now these items don't grab the headlines. You don't see much about them. But things are happening, and we need your help to get more things happening. We can do much more, much much more, and we will.

We can help our young people help themselves, and really that's what they want to do. They want a chance. They want a voice. They want an opportunity to make something of themselves.

And this doesn't necessarily mean spending much more Federal money. What it mostly implies is making better use of what we have -- the facilities and resources already available.

Now mind you, we need to tap these unused human resources. There's great energy there for good or for bad. It just depends upon what we do with it.

Now I'm not telling you all of this because I want you to go back or get on that microphone and tell your listeners that Hubert Humphrey is a swinger. I'm telling you about the work of the President's Council because I want you to go back into your communities and start asking the questions that need to be asked. And help find some answers to these questions.

You know, more people listen to you and to the music you play than listen to me and the words I speak. Because that's the way it is, I'm going to ask you once again to help us. Not to help me, but to help the young people of America.

Encourage them to stay in school or go back to school if they've already dropped out. Encourage them to find a job and encourage an employer to offer a job.

Now a word about schools. Maybe schools aren't what they should be. Maybe you've had some experience in that. And maybe some of the young people can get by without a diploma. In fact, of course, many have. But I want to tell you that in the days ahead, most of our young people are going to need that high school diploma.

We can improve our schools, and we are and we will. But this won't happen overnight. And it won't happen until enough parents, enough teachers, enough students -- yes, and enough disc jockeys -- put the pressure on in every community to see to it that education is first-class, and that the education relates to the needs of the people.

If there are youngsters in your city who can't go back to school this fall because of financial reasons, why not use your radio program to ask some businessman or some organization to provide them with a part-time job so that they can stay in school. I know that if you ask for that kind of cooperation, you will get it. People do want to help out these days; they just need to be informed how best to do it.

If a boy or girl drops out of school because school is uninteresting, and that often happens, why not take the lead in getting the school system in your community to improve the school program, and make it much more practical and much more related to the individual needs of the students? You can do this. People listen to you.

We live in a changing world. I guess everybody says that, and it's true. But we don't have to sit down and just watch this world drift by us and do nothing about it. We can meet this world head-on and spin it around, if we want to, and make it do a double take. It belongs to us.

Now a final word about our young friends -- these young people. They're a lot smarter today. You can't kid them anymore. They want you to level with them. They don't buy the old stories wholesale. They know that life can be better and more wholesome than it is. They know it because radio tells them so, you tell them so, television shows them, too. This is a changed world with that camera and with that lens and with that picture tube. And I say it can be better, and it's up to us to make it that way.

It's, of course, better for countless numbers of young Americans. But countless numbers of our young people are not enough, when you start adding up the others that have been left on the sidelines. And I talk to you now about the millions of disadvantaged youngsters on the sidelines that you can help. Get them into the game. Get them on the field of action. You can help, perhaps, more than anyone else, because they listen to you.

Yes, young people do like you and listen to you. You know how to reach them. You know their problems, their concerns, their hopes and their fears. In other words, you know how to get with it. And I think they know how to get with you, too.

So I ask you to do much more than just to play music to soothe their souls or start their feet dancing or alleviate their fears. I know that all of that helps. But I'll tell you something else that helps -- worthwhile jobs, and you can help get those jobs. You can get your community excited about doing something for young people -- job training that relates itself to job opportunities. You can see to it that there's rewarding recreation. You can see to it that recreational equipment is there for the youngsters. And you can see to it that meaningful education is provided.



I guess what I'm saying is that you're leaders. I know it, you know it, and the kids know it. So lead, will you?

In the next few weeks you will be receiving copies of spot announcements which I hope you'll feel free to use. They'll come from many sources. From athletes, from people in public life, in the entertainment field -- all kinds of people. Such artists as Carla Thomas, Otis Redding, Barbara Feldman, Pearl Bailey, Andy Williams, Bill Cosby, the Supremes. They will be making a pitch to the youngsters to stay in school. Let's see how many you can get back to school.

I urge you to play these spots. And then I want you to do something else. Talk to the kids yourselves. They'll listen to you. Add your own appeal.

So, as your convention theme suggests, responsibility does bring a new profile. Make that profile more than a shadow, and do it now. I really look to you to help us to do this job.

I only regret that I can't be with you, because, frankly, I always wanted to be a disc jockey, and I never was able quite to make it.

Thank you.

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