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Children's Charity Dinner. Oct. 7, 1987

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REMARKS FOR RONALD McDONALD CHILDREN'S CHARITIES DINNER
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1987

-- THANK YOU SO MUCH. AND THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF ALL THE CHILDREN THIS WILL HELP.

-- WE MAY NOT WORK FOR McDONALD'S, BUT BOTH MY HUSBAND AND I FEEL A PART OF YOUR FAMILY. JUST THIS PAST EASTER, WE VISITED YOUR RONALD McDONALD GOOD TIMES CAMP IN CALIFORNIA, THE CAMP FOR CHILDREN SUFFERING FROM LIFE-THREATENING DISEASES.

-- ONE LITTLE TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL NAMED LISA WANTED TO BE WITH US THAT DAY -- SHE DIDN'T WANT TO MISS ANY OF THE EXCITEMENT --

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SO SHE WAS BROUGHT FROM HER HOSPITAL BED. BEFORE WE ARRIVED, LISA TRIED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SINGING AND PLAYING, BUT SHE WAS SO FRAIL SHE COULDN'T HOLD HER HEAD UP AND WAS CARRIED TO A SPOT AWAY FROM THE ACTIVITIES.

-- WHEN OUR TIME WAS UP WITH THE OTHER CHILDREN, WE SAW LISA AND WENT OVER TO HER. I WILL NEVER FORGET THAT SIGHT OF THE LITTLE GIRL NESTLED IN BLANKETS UNDER A TREE. LISA IS STILL UNDERGOING THERAPY, AND THE DISEASE AND THE PAIN STILL PERSIST,

BUT YOU -- THE PEOPLE OF McDONALD'S -- MADE THAT ONE DAY A VERY MEMORABLE ONE FOR HER AND FOR A WHILE YOU TOOK AWAY THE PAIN. AND FOR THAT, YOU SHOULD BE VERY PROUD.

-- THE GIFT YOU'VE GIVEN TONIGHT WILL ALSO BE USED TO EASE PAIN -- THE PAIN OF DRUG ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE.

-- I'VE SEEN SO MUCH OF THAT PAIN OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS -- SO MUCH HURT, SO MUCH CONFUSION. BUT I'VE ALSO SEEN STRENGTH AND DETERMINATION AND EVEN VICTORY. I'VE BEEN TO TREATMENT CENTERS

WHERE I'VE SEEN TEENAGERS STANDING UP BEFORE AN AUDIENCE OF PEERS AND FRIENDS AND SAYING TO THEIR PARENTS, "MOM AND DAD, I'M DRUG-FREE. I LOVE YOU AND I WANT TO COME HOME."

-- I THINK YOU IN THE RESTAURANTS AND THE FRANCHISES UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON OUT THERE BETTER THAN MOST ADULTS. YOU'RE IN DAILY CONTACT WITH YOUNG CUSTOMERS AND YOUNG EMPLOYEES. AND I'VE NOTICED SOMETHING ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATION: WHILE MANY INSTITUTIONS IN OUR SOCIETY MAY CHANGE, WE CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON

MCDONALD'S COMMITMENT TO ONE THING IN PARTICULAR -- AMERICA'S CHILDREN.

-- A FEW WEEKS AGO, I WAS WITH HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II IN LOS ANGELES. SPEAKING TO A GROUP OF SCHOOLCHILDREN, HE SAID, "WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT HOPE. WE HAVE TO HAVE SOME PURPOSE IN LIFE, SOME MEANING TO OUR EXISTENCE. WE HAVE TO ASPIRE TO SOMETHING. WITHOUT HOPE, WE BEGIN TO DIE . . ."

-- I BELIEVE YOU HERE TONIGHT UNDERSTAND THAT LESSON,

BECAUSE WHAT RONALD MCDONALD CHILDREN'S CHARITIES PROVIDES IS NOT JUST MONEY, BUT HOPE. THAT IS WHAT YOU GIVE.

-- BEFORE CLOSING, I DO WANT TO THANK YOU FOR THIS WONDERFUL AWARD. I AM VERY PROUD TO BE HONORED TONIGHT TOGETHER WITH DR. ROLAND SCOTT. WE ARE BOTH WORKING TO SAVE LIVES AND WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOUR GENEROSITY AND DEDICATION.

-- THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

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