

Commission on Systemic Interoperability: Herbert Pardes, M.D. of New York.

PERMITTING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR A CEREMONY TO AWARD A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 357, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant journal clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 357) permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Dr. Dorothy Height.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the concurrent resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 357) was agreed to.

CONGRATULATING FOCUS: HOPE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 92 submitted earlier today by Senator LEVIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant journal clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 92) congratulating and saluting Focus: HOPE on the occasion of its 35th anniversary and for its remarkable commitment and contributions to Detroit, the State of Michigan, and the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today with great pleasure to speak in commemoration of the 35th anniversary of Focus: HOPE and to support this concurrent resolution commemorating its many achievements. Focus: HOPE has served as an invaluable, multifaceted resource for the people of Detroit and Michigan and is a model of success for the entire Nation. From its inception, Focus: HOPE has been committed to taking "intelligent and practical action to overcome racism, poverty, and injustice." For three and a half decades, Focus: HOPE has worked toward that goal.

In 1968, Father William T. Cunningham, a Roman Catholic priest, and Eleanor Josaitis, a housewife,

joined to form Focus: HOPE as a positive reaction to the devastating Detroit riots the previous year. While having few material resources at their disposal, Father Cunningham and Ms. Josaitis possessed a singular and indefatigable desire to help residents of Detroit take control of their lives. Their faith has been matched by a love for all of humanity, irrespective of religion or race. That love has helped Focus: HOPE flourish as it seeks to assist many in metro-Detroit.

Focus: HOPE has been involved with myriad activities that address both the immediate and long-term needs of our people. In the 1970s, Focus: HOPE began several innovative programs to provide nutritious food to young children, their mothers and senior citizens. Through its USDA Commodity Supplemental Food Program, the largest of its kind, monthly supplemental food is provided to 43,000 low-income pregnant and postpartum mothers, infants, preschool children and seniors throughout Southeast Michigan. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program can now be found in 32 States.

While caring for the basic needs of individuals, Focus: HOPE also seeks to lift the dreams and spirits of all who study, work at, or visit its 40-acre Detroit campus. Father Cunningham was a firm believer in the ability of education and technology to inspire people and bring out the best in them. By helping people to harness their dreams and imagine what is possible, he sought to develop a series of training and educational programs that challenged students to fulfill their dreams while learning marketable career skills.

To achieve this end, Focus: HOPE developed a four-part educational and training system that requires that students meet rigorous competency standards before they are able to proceed to the next academic program. The first two parts, fast track and the Machinist Training Institute, opened in the 1980s during a time of radical evolution for Focus: HOPE. Fast track, is a computer assisted course which improves the reading and math skills of high school graduates or GED holders to prepare them for advanced study in the Machinist Training Institute where individuals prepare for careers in advanced machining and precision manufacturing. Fast track ensures that all those who enter the MTI program have the skills needed to succeed in this program and industry. The MTI uses a unique combination of classroom instruction and hands-on manufacturing experience producing high quality products in industry.

By maintaining clear and rigorous standards, MTI is able to train individuals that industry wants to hire. Since its foundation, nearly 2,500 graduates have learned high-demand skills and gain access to the financial mainstream. One indication of the success of this program is that industry often seeks to hire the students ever before they have completed their training.

In 1993, Focus: HOPE expanded its educational programs by adding a third education and training program—the Center for Advanced Technologies, CAT. At the center, "candidates," as all students are called at Focus: HOPE, are able to continue their education by working toward an associate's or bachelor's degree in manufacturing engineering. Through a unique partnership with several universities, CAT students are awarded their degrees in a rigorous process that combines hands-on manufacturing experience and academic instruction within a leading edge technology environment while working and studying at Focus: HOPE. These candidates produce the highest quality and precision parts for the auto industry—a very demanding challenge. This innovative Focus: HOPE program has been cited as enrolling the largest number of African Americans studying manufacturing engineering in the Nation.

In 1999, Focus: HOPE was able to further diversify its training resources through the establishment of the Information Technologies Center, which provides industry-certified training in network administration, network installation, and desktop server administration enabling students to gain employment in the growing Information Technology sector of our economy.

These innovative and successful programs have caused Focus: HOPE to receive considerable national attention for its efforts. As a result of its many successes, Focus: HOPE has been visited by many national, State and local officials who wanted to examine this remarkable place in person. Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton have visited Focus: HOPE as well as Energy Secretary Spence Abraham, Army Secretary Thomas White, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, the Honorable Colin Powell when he served as Joint Chiefs of Staff, and many others. These quests quickly learned as I have on many visits there, that the achievements of Focus: HOPE can hardly be described in just a few minutes or digested in even several visits.

Focus: HOPE has provided practical and compassionate assistance to people of all ages, from young children who receive quality child care at their Center for Children, to young adults who receive vital training through hands-on manufacturing projects, seniors who are fed by the Commodity Supplemental Food Program as well as those who are still young at heart who continue to persevere in the never-ending fight against racism, poverty, and injustice.

I have been privileged to witness and support Focus: HOPE's extraordinary achievements throughout the years. Like thousands of others, I have also been inspired by its positive energy and tireless commitment to providing opportunity for all people. For 35 years, Focus: HOPE has repeatedly amazed me with its spirit, grace, and vision.