

Memorandum

Date: March 12, 1993

To: Dan Stanley

From: Alec Vachon

Re: Rainbows United, Inc.

I spoke with Judy Brown in Topeka regarding the invitation for the Senator to speak on March 19 in Wichita in a video for Rainbows United, Inc. She referred me to Cathy Yager in Wichita, who indicated that this program was well known to the Senator, and that he would recognize its name.

Briefly, Rainbows United is a pre-school for children with severe disabilities from impoverished backgrounds. It was founded in 1973 by Linda Wier-Enegren (resume attached). The purpose of the program is to give these children a "head start," including training in basic self-care skills. In principle, this type of program is extremely important for children with disabilities; for example, too often they fall behind very early in their academic careers and are never able to catch up. This is especially true for children with disabilities who also have a second "dose" of disadvantage, such as poverty.

Cathy indicated that this program is highly regarded locally, and that last Fall the Senator's Wichita Office prepared and presented this organization with a "Gold Seal" letter recognizing its efforts on its 20th anniversary.

The purpose of the video is apparently promotional; a copy of the draft script for the video is also attached which includes suggested remarks for the Senator. The video script appears non-controversial, but if the Senator decides to accept this invitation, I recommend that his remarks be rewritten (and of course am prepared to do that).


In the future, if we have a serious concern about a non-profit organization, we can request from the IRS a copy of that nonprofit's annual IRS Form 990 "Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax," which would provide detailed information about its finances, accomplishments, and officers (including their compensation). This form is publicly available, and a member request to the IRS usually takes about 8 weeks to fill (but can be expedited).

If I can be helpful in rewriting the Senator's script or otherwise, please let me know.

Linda Weir-Enegren  
10725 W. Central  
Wichita, Kansas 67212

November 14, 1991

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS  
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1972  Founded Rainbows United, a pre-school for severely handicapped preschoolers as an alternative to institutionalization. This was prior to the passage of public law 94-142 which gives all children the right to public education. The program began in a church basement with five students and an all volunteer staff. Today, Rainbows United is a United Way Agency with professional staff, serving nearly 200 children at two centers and with in-home services.

Over its 20 year-history, it has served nearly 2000 children, directly affecting the quality of their lives and the lives of their immediate families. Thus, it is estimated that Rainbows United has impacted directly on the quality of the lives of more than 12,000 people in Sedgwick County.

During its first six years, gave over 1000 community presentations on retardation to help prepare the community to accept these children. Produced two films and numerous pamphlets to assist in community education.

1981 Founded Roots and Wings and the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocacy) Program in Sedgwick County. The objective of Roots and Wings is to sponsor programs which assure foster children of permanent, loving homes, either by helping stabilize their families or assisting them toward adoption through the court system.

Roots and Wings is now a United Way Agency which serves more than 150 children a year.

1978 With spouse, founded LS Industries, a manufacturer of blasting and degreasing equipment. Company is stable, profitable and provides employment to 30 Kansans.

1988 Founded "Pathways", a supportive, curriculum driven program for children who are spending their developmental years growing up in an alcoholic or drug-abusive homes. "Pathways", which receives United Way funding, served 200 children last year and is centered at the Mental Health Association.

1974 to Present

Mother to seven children, including two natural children, four adoptive children, three of whom are handicapped or who have special needs and one special-needs foster child.

DRAFT FOR RUI VIDEO SCRIPT

RAINBOWS UNITED -- A PROMISE OF HOPE -- FOR CHILDREN, FOR FAMILIES, FOR THE COMMUNITY.

RAINBOWS HAS A TWENTY YEAR HISTORY OF IDENTIFYING UNMET NEEDS AMONG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WICHITA COMMUNITY AND RESPONDING TO THOSE NEEDS.

NARRATOR

BACK IN THE EARLY 70'S, PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH MULTIPLE AND SEVERE DISABILITIES HAD NOWHERE TO TURN FOR RELIEF FROM THE TWENTY-FOUR HOUR A DAY CARE DEMANDS OF THEIR CHILD - NOWHERE TO TURN FOR HELP IN TEACHING THEIR CHILD THE BASIC SELF-CARE SKILLS SO NECESSARY IN GAINING SOME DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE AS AN ADULT.

NOWHERE, THAT IS, UNTIL LINDA WEIR-ENEGREN CAME ALONG AND, WITH A STAFF OF VOLUNTEERS, PROVIDED A "PROMISE OF HOPE" TO THESE FAMILIES.

LINDA (THE NEED SHE SAW -- WHAT PROMPTED HER TO START A DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER - THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT SHE RECEIVED - THE DIFFERENCE THOSE SERVICES MADE IN THE LIVES OF PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN - THE GROWING RECOGNITION THAT THE COMMUNITY HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEANINGFUL AND PRODUCTIVE LIVES AMONG ALL ITS CITIZENS, ETC.)

SOCIETY'S RECOGNITION THAT ALL CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION CAME IN THE FORM OF LANDMARK LEGISLATION THAT WAS PASSED IN THE MID-70'S. PUBLIC LAW 99-142, NOW KNOWN AS THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT, MANDATED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR ALL CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR HANDICAPPING CONDITION. AS SCHOOLS ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AGES FIVE AND OLDER, RAINBOWS BEGAN SPECIALIZING IN EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES. RESEARCH DESIGNED TO MEASURE THE EFFECTS OF EARLY INTERVENTION HAS SHOWN THAT INVOLVING THE FAMILY AND CHILD IN SERVICES AS SOON AS A DISABILITY IS SUSPECTED HAS A POSITIVE AND LONG-LASTING IMPACT.

NARRATOR

SENATOR DOLE - OBSERVATION OF SOCIETAL CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD THOSE WITH DISABILITIES OVER TIME - NOT ONLY EDUCATION LAWS - BUT OTHER LEGISLATION AS WELL, PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO ASSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WILL NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN EMPLOYMENT - THAT THEY WILL NOT BE DENIED EXPERIENCES THAT OTHERS ENJOY BECAUSE OF PHYSICAL BARRIERS THAT BAR

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DENIED RAINBOWS

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THEIR ENTRY TO SUCH THINGS AS EATING ESTABLISHMENTS, SPORTING EVENTS, THEATRES, AND SO ON. - CENTERS SUCH AS RUI ARE PREPARING CHILDREN TO LIVE AS FULL PARTICIPANTS IN SOCIETY, BY HELPING THEM BUILD UPON THEIR STRENGTHS AND BECOME AS INDEPENDENT AND RESOURCEFUL AS THEY CAN BE IN GETTING THEIR NEEDS MET.

YOU KNOW, LEGISLATORS ARE ALWAYS FACED WITH MORE REQUESTS FOR FUNDING THAN GOVERNMENT CAN POSSIBLY FILL. ONE OF THE TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE ASKED IN THAT DECISION MAKING PROCESS IS WHETHER THE RESULTS ACHIEVED BY THE PROPOSED FUNDING WILL BE COST EFFECTIVE. IN THE CASE OF EARLY INTERVENTION, THE ANSWER IS A RESOUNDING YES. CHILDREN HELPED THROUGH EARLY INTERVENTION ARE LESS LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL, ARE LESS LIKELY TO NEED INTENSIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR SCHOOL CAREER, ARE MORE LIKELY TO THINK WELL OF THEMSELVES THAN CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WHO DO NOT RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES AT A YOUNG AGE. EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES ARE A SOUND INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION. DURING MY BRIEF VISIT TO RAINBOWS, I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE AGENCY'S BUDGET AND NOTE THE MULTIPLE REVENUE SOURCES. IN DOING SO, IT WAS REASSURING TO OBSERVE THE LEVEL OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT THIS AGENCY RECEIVES. ITS OBVIOUS THAT WICHITA CITIZENS ARE WILLING TO INVEST IN THE FUTURE BY SUPPORTING THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AT RAINBOWS UNITED.

FROM ITS EARLY BEGINNINGS WITH A STAFF OF VOLUNTEERS, RAINBOWS HAS BECOME A PRIMARY PROVIDER OF SERVICES TO YOUNG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN OUR COMMUNITY. AN ANNUAL BUDGET OF OVER THREE MILLION DOLLARS SUPPORTS SERVICES TO APPROXIMATELY THREE HUNDRED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES. BETWEEN FIFTEEN AND TWENTY FUNDING SOURCES PROVIDE THE NEEDED REVENUE FOR PROGRAM OPERATIONS. THESE INCLUDE SUCH DIVERSE SOURCES AS WICHITA GREYHOUND CHARITIES, COUNTY HILL LEVY FUNDS, PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS, THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT, CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS, FEDERAL AND STATE EDUCATION DOLLARS, THE KANSAS HEALTH FOUNDATION, AND THE UNITED WAY.

PAT HANRAHAN - (STATES POSITION AND INVOLVEMENT WITH UNITED WAY AND THE OPPORTUNITY HE HAS HAD TO OBSERVE THE WAYS IN WHICH RAINBOWS HAS RESPONDED TO IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY NEEDS THROUGH THE YEARS) - HOME BASED SERVICES WHEN STAFF RECOGNIZED THAT THE FAMILY HOME IS THE MOST NATURAL AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR MANY INFANTS AND TODDLERS AND THAT FAMILIES PREFERRED THIS SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL TO THERAPY APPOINTMENTS AT A REHAB FACILITY. - TRANSPORTATION SERVICES - WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT THAT MANY CHILDREN COULD NOT OTHERWISE PARTICIPATE IN CENTER BASED SERVICES DUE TO SCHEDULING CONFLICTS OF THE FAMILY, UNRELIABLE OR NONEXISTENT PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION, YOUNGER CHILDREN IN THE HOME, ETC. - RESpite CARE SERVICES, ADDED RECENTLY - TO GIVE FAMILIES NEEDED TIME FOR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS OR TO RUN ERRANDS OR ENJOY AN EVENING ON THE TOWN THAT SO MANY OF US TAKE FOR GRANTED -

NARRATOR

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BENITH RAINBOWS

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HAVE ALSO OBSERVED THE EXTENT TO WHICH RAINBOWS WORKS WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES TO FILL SERVICE GAPS - I KNOW OF CHILDREN AT THE WICHITA CHILDREN'S HOME WHO ATTEND EARLY INTERVENTION SESSIONS AT RAINBOWS - OF FOSTER GRANDPARENTS WHO ARE ASSIGNED BY CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES TO RAINBOWS AND PROVIDE THAT EXTRA MEASURE OF LOVE AND ATTENTION TO CHILDREN IN CLASSROOM SETTINGS - OF RAINBOWS' ADOPTION OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED SPECIALTY PROGRAM FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS, FORMERLY PROVIDED THROUGH THE WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS - OF THE MANY COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE TRAINING IN CHOSEN SPECIALTY AREA BECAUSE OF RELATIONSHIPS RAINBOWS HAS ESTABLISHED WITH COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE, AND OF THE COLLABORATION NOW TAKING PLACE WITH THE KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE, THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND THE WOMEN'S RECOVERY CENTER TO DELIVER INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES TO CAREGIVERS OF SUBSTANCE EXPOSED INFANTS AND TODDLERS.

AND, I HAVE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH RAINBOWS STAFF ON VARIOUS COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES, AND HAVE OBSERVED THEIR STEADFAST COMMITMENT TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SERVICE SYSTEM THAT CAN BE ACCESSED BY ALL FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IS UNWAVERING.

AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED WAY OF THE PLAINS, I AM PROUD OF THE COMMUNITY AND ITS COMMITMENT TO BETTERING THE LIVES OF ITS CITIZENS THROUGH ITS FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH AGENCIES SUCH AS RAINBOWS UNITED.

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NETWORKING - COLLABORATION - COOPERATION - THESE ARE TERMS THAT ARE BECOMING HOUSEHOLD WORDS AMONG THOSE IN BOTH THE PROFIT AND NON-PROFIT SECTORS OF OUR COMMUNITY. OUR WORLD HAS SHRUNK WITHIN THE PAST TWENTY YEARS - TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES HAVE MADE US INCREASINGLY INTERDEPENDENT. THE ECONOMY OF ONE NATION HAS A RIPPLE EFFECT ON THAT OF OTHERS. WORKERS IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRODUCT WE BUY OFF THE SHELF THAT BEARS A "MADE IN THE USA" LABEL. SUCH INTERDEPENDENCE IS REFLECTED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AS WELL, WHERE EFFECTIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES IN BOTH THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS REQUIRE AN AWARENESS OF EMERGING TRENDS, CHANGING ATTITUDES AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND AN ABILITY TO DESIGN SERVICES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO CURRENT NEEDS.

HUMAN SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS ARE BECOMING COGNIZANT OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES LONG RECOGNIZED IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. CREATION OF INTERAGENCY BODIES SUCH AS THE KANSAS CORPORATION FOR CHANGE AND ITS BLUEPRINT FOR KANSAS CHILDREN, AND THE SEDGWICK COUNTY FAMILY AND YOUTH COMMISSION EXEMPLIFY THE NEED FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS TO WORK NOT IN ISOLATION, BUT IN TANDEM WITH ONE ANOTHER TO PROVIDE SERVICES WHICH ARE NONDUPLICATIVE, COST EFFICIENT, AND REFLECTIVE OF NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY FAMILIES IN KANSAS AND SEDGWICK COUNTY.

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BENITH RAINBOWS

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HALE RITCHIE OR DICK CHANCE, TALKING AS A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN - OBSERVATIONS OF THE PRACTICES THAT HAVE ENABLED THEM TO COMPETE SUCCESSFULLY IN TODAY'S BUSINESS CLIMATE - APPLICATIONS OF THOSE PRACTICES TO RUI AND WHAT THEY HAVE OBSERVED OF THE AGENCY THROUGH THE YEARS

- IDENTIFYING NEEDS AMONG THE CONSUMERS
- LISTENING TO THE CONSUMER
- DESIGNING SERVICES THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO THOSE NEEDS
- WILLINGNESS TO RISK
- IMPORTANCE OF STAYING ABBREAST OF HAPPENINGS AT NAT'L, STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS
- ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY
- NEVER BEING SATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO
- ALWAYS ASKING "HOW CAN WE IMPROVE - HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?"
- FEELING A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY NOT ONLY TO THE CONSUMER BUT TO THOSE WHO PLACE THEIR TRUST IN THE AGENCY'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES TO THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE TO HEAR THAT "TIMES HAVE CHANGED" AND THAT THE OBBIE AND HARRIST FAMILY OF YESTERDAY IS A RARITY IN TODAY'S WORLD. DIVORCE RATES HAVE INCREASED, IT TAKES TWO BREADWINNERS INSTEAD OF ONE TO ENJOY THE STANDARD OF LIVING REALIZED BY OUR PARENTS, JOB SECURITY IS THREATENED BY COMPANY BUY-OUTS AND DOWN-SIZING, GRANDPARENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO LIVE IN THE SAME COMMUNITY AS THEIR GRANDCHILDREN, AND SO ON AND SO ON. ALL OF THESE CHANGES HAVE HAD AN IMPACT ON THE SUPPORT SERVICES REQUIRED BY FAMILIES AS THEY ATTEMPT TO NURTURE AND CARE FOR THEIR OFFSPRING.

NARRATOR

OTHER CHANGES HAVE DIRECTLY AFFECTED THOSE WITH DISABILITIES - ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY HAVE IMPROVED THE LIVES OF THOSE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES BY ENABLING THEM TO BECOME MORE INDEPENDENT, AND HAS RESULTED IN SAVING THE LIVES OF MANY WHO WOULD NOT HAVE LIVED WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY.

SOCIETAL ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED AS WELL. NO LONGER ARE PARENTS EXPECTED TO KEEP THEIR CHILD WITH A DISABILITY OUT OF SIGHT OR PLACE HIM IN A STATE INSTITUTION. AS A NATION, WE NOW EMBRACE A PHILOSOPHY WHICH AFFIRMS THAT EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO DEVELOP THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND RECOGNISE OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN ASSURING THAT SERVICES ARE IN PLACE TO FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL PERSONS AND TO SUPPORT FAMILIES IN THEIR CHILD REARING ROLE.

FAMILY MEMBER(S) WITH CHILD

TALKING ABOUT INITIAL REACTION TO LEARNING THEIR CHILD HAD A DISABILITY - WHAT THEY WENT THROUGH, INCLUDING THE POINT AT WHICH THEY WERE TOLD THAT EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES WERE AVAILABLE

HOW THEY GOT TO RAINBOWS

HOW LONG THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM - WHAT A DIFFERENCE IT MADE TO REALIZE THEY WERE NOT ALONE - THAT OTHERS WERE THERE TO

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HELP THEM HELP THEIR CHILD - HOW THEY REACTED TO HEARING OTHERS  
POINT OUT THEIR CHILD'S POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND GET EXCITED  
ALONG WITH THEM ABOUT THE "SMALL" ACHIEVEMENTS THAT REPRESENTED  
SUCH MILESTONES IN THEIR CHILD'S LIFE

THEIR PERSONAL SITUATION - WORKING PARENTS? - FAMILY SUPPORT?  
IN WHAT WAYS HAS RUI HELPED TO FILL THE GAPS SO THAT THEY COULD  
"CARRY ON" WITH THEIR LIVES (PARENTING OF OTHER CHILDREN?)

(THIS SECTION HAS TO BE BUILT AROUND THE INDIVIDUAL CIRCUMSTANCES  
OF THAT PARTICULAR FAMILY)

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RAINBOWS UNITED - A PROMISE OF HOPE - FOR CHILDREN, FOR FAMILIES,  
FOR THE COMMUNITY.

NARRATOR