

**CCC Celebration Breakfast
October 18th 2011
Waldorf=Astoria, New York**

Remarks

**Charles M. Blow, New York Times Visual Op-Ed Columnist
Keynote Speaker**

EXCERPTS

“America’s children are in crisis. The statistics about the breadth and depth of that crisis are staggering...the impact of the recession on children’s well-being has been catastrophic.”

“People talk a lot about income inequality in America and rightly so. That is why thousands of people in this city and thousands of people in cities around the country and thousands more in cities around the world are standing up to say ‘enough.’ This level of income inequality is a moral failure. This is a profound problem for us as a country.”

“Nowhere in America is income inequality greater than it is right here on the island of Manhattan.”

“It’s possible to close income gap, but the developmental gap for children can have long lasting and in some cases permanent effects. This is a broad, silent wound that we are needlessly inflicting on ourselves.”

“We can’t expect children, without enough to eat or adequate access to health care or safe places to live, to perform at the same level as children with all the advantages in the world. We can’t expect children to concentrate on square roots when they have not had square meals. We can’t expect parents to plan museum visits when they can’t afford doctors’ visits.”

“I grew up poor. I know what it feels like to have a cold breeze slither its way through a drafty house and bite at your ankles. I know the weight of constant worry over not having enough to fill a belly or to pay our bills. Poverty is brutal. It is consuming and it is unforgiving.”

“Income inequality begets developmental inequality and developmental inequality exacerbates educational inequality and this should give us all pause...”

“I was raised to feel invisible and I learned how to make myself invisible...”

“It all turned around. I went from barely passing, to head of the class. I went from being placed in the slow class to being placed in the gifted and talented class. I went from being invisible to being valedictorian. And I made that transformation because the conditions around me were transformed. So every time I hear about failing school children, I see myself. I see children who could be transformed if only their conditions were transformed. So we must --as a country, as a state, and as a city-- do everything that we can to transform the conditions around those children. And we must do it now more than ever. If we do not, we risk creating a generation of lost, forgotten and disadvantaged children. And that, my friends, is a threat to us all and to this great country that we call home.”

**Lisa Philp, Vice President for Strategic Philanthropy
and Director of GrantCraft, Foundation Center
The Samuel P. Peabody Award for Pro-Social Corporate Action**

FULL TEXT

Thank you , Juju. Thank you Marcy Sandler, Chris Stern Hyman, Jennifer March-Joly, and the incredible board and staff of Citizens' Committee for Children of New York.

The award that I'm receiving this morning is in honor of longtime CCC board member and supporter Sam Peabody and, quite cleverly, it's a flexible category honoring community activism, corporate action, and journalism on behalf of children and families. When I look out at this audience—and see so many familiar faces of advocates, educators, service providers, donors, public officials, and journalists—I feel that so many of you should be up here with me to be honored for your work.

Frankly, I always think it's a little odd when a funder—or in my case, a former funder—receives this type of award. After all, we're a bit removed from the action, and it's our job to identify effective organizations like CCC and help provide them with the resources they need. But when Jennifer reached out to me last spring, I said yes because:

- a) I really love this organization and what it does
- b) I personally wanted to advocate on behalf of the City's premiere child advocacy organization, and
- c) she told me that it was looking pretty good for Charles Blow to do the keynote!

In my 13 years as a philanthropic advisor and grantmaker at J.P. Morgan's Private Bank, I worked with foundations and individual donors on strategy and implementation. I'm proud to say that several supported CCC for initiatives including Securing Every Child's Birthright, capacity-building efforts, and for the launch of its Youth Action NYC program.

The natural impulse for an emerging philanthropist—or really, any of us as individual donors—is to start with “give back” philanthropy... support for institutions such as universities and hospitals that benefitted us or our family. This is vitally important and much needed seed money for the field.

I'd say the next wave tends to be social gifting. We're social creatures and our family and friends get involved with important causes. We contribute because they ask. Many of you are probably here this morning for this very reason. Again, this “concentric circle discovery” process of giving helps us cut through the clutter of our busy lives to find worthy organizations.

But what made my “pro-social corporate action” job—you know, I never used that terminology before today, but I like it! What made my role rewarding was when I could work with a donor to go a little deeper. To understand, for example, that if they cared about kids in New York, they could and should support strong individual direct service agencies. There are so many examples in this room—organizations like Good Shepherd Services, the Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, the settlement houses, Harlem RBI, the Speyer School, and too many others to mention. But if these donors were looking for scale and impact, they also needed to understand the policy landscape and provide support for

advocacy. In fact, there are so many service providers here this morning because they need a voice in the political process.

Cue CCC: an advocacy organization with a legacy of achievement dating back to the 1940s, which blends the best of professional staff with citizen activism, which knows how to use data, which focuses on the whole child, and which includes community and donor education about the issues affecting kids as part of its mission.

As I transition to my new role at the Foundation Center—this is week #3 for me, so I’ve really got it all down!—I have the opportunity to continue my passion for donor education through GrantCraft, a program that captures the practical wisdom of grantmakers for grantmakers, and through a newly created position of Vice President for Strategic Philanthropy. I’m excited to join an organization that’s more on the “community activism” side of the fence and one that, like CCC, builds upon a legacy of innovation, has a deep respect for data, and which serves as a hub for the field.

In closing, I’m deeply honored to be here, and I thank you all for your support of CCC.

**Michael A. Corriero, Executive Director and Founder, New York Center for Juvenile Justice
Eleanor Roosevelt Award**

EXCERPTS

“[To extend a Charles Blow metaphor] Children are a like sparks of light and we have to prepare the ground for them so they can catch fire.”

“Your destiny is not dictated by the society or class that you are born into...this dream is embedded in the nature of being young. In order to survive, [children] have to believe in this dream.”

“Eleanor Roosevelt believed in the power of the American dream and what it represented. Why do I believe in the American dream so firmly? In 1945 when Citizens’ Committee for Children was founded by Eleanor Roosevelt and several prominent New Yorkers who cared about New York City’s children and their welfare, I was one of those children. I was just three years old living in a tenement in Little Italy... my father did the work of a longshoreman and my mother was a seamstress on lower Broadway. Neither of them was formally educated. Yet in one generation we went from that poor tenement household to a judge. That’s the American dream. That’s what animates me. That’s what Citizens’ Committee for Children stands for. That’s why I’m so proud to have accepted this award... it will continue to inspire me and it’s going to be the sword I use to cut down opposition to fair and reasonable justice. We are going to, together, transform juvenile justice in New York.”

Jennifer March-Joly, CCC Executive Director

FULL TEXT

Jennifer March-Joly, CCC Executive Director

Good Morning. I want to thank all of you here today for rising so early in support of CCC.

I would like to extend a special note of thanks to our Master of ceremonies Juju Chang, to our honorees Lisa Philp, Michael Corriero, and to our keynote speaker Charles Blow.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on CCC'S accomplishments and to identify key priorities for the year ahead.

This past year, CCC secured critical policy and budgetary victories on behalf of New York City's children:

We helped to restore and baseline \$30 million for child abuse neglect prevention and restore \$82 million for child care in the City's Fiscal 2012 Adopted Budget.

We helped to inform a State budget that closes juvenile placement facilities, establishes funding for alternatives to incarceration, and protects funding for home visiting programs.

Each of these victories was achieved in the face of profound state and local deficits – and because CCC's work is anchored in the facts, engages a broad cadre of New Yorkers, and initiates year round advocacy at City Hall and in Albany.

In terms of the facts – CCC's founders believed that advocacy could only be as good as the research behind it. We remain steadfast to this notion and our research and analysis of child welfare, child care, juvenile justice, children's mental health, and food insecurity informed our advocacy and the advocacy of others.

In terms of community engagement – CCC's communication initiatives are designed to educate New Yorkers and spur them to action. On a small scale, we nurtured and developed leaders in-house through our adult and youth leadership classes. On a larger scale, we held briefings for hundreds colleagues, hosted robust feeds on Twitter and Facebook, engaged an active e-advocacy list, and maintained strong relationships with journalists who reached hundreds of thousands.

In terms of advocacy – CCC's independence allows us to engage diverse groups, bridge differences and find common ground to support the best and most cost-effective ways of helping children.

This year:

- Our volunteers joined staff at press conferences, rallies, and advocacy meetings at City Hall and in Albany.
- Our online advocacy network secured over 31,000 constituent letters to policy makers.
- And so many of you, our colleagues in government, service providers, and fellow advocates worked alongside CCC to ensure that our budget and policy priorities were secured.

Critically, all of this work is made possible because our donors place high value on the role of advocacy in drawing attention to children's needs, mobilizing citizens, and getting elected officials to take action. We are indebted and grateful for your support as it makes our work and our victories possible.

It is on this foundation that we must continue to put the needs of New York City's children front and center – and the stark facts presented in new census data demand nothing less.

I would like to draw your attention to infographic distributed at your table. CCC thanks the talented staff at Boombox for working with us to create a product that make the new census data accessible while illustrating the profound obstacles facing children in New York City. ([View the full infographic at www.cccnewyork.org](http://www.cccnewyork.org).)

As you can see:

- 1 in 3 New York City children lives in poverty (523,000 living in poverty).
- Between 2007 and 2010, there has been a 50 percent increase in the share of New York City families with children receiving food stamps.
- Housing insecurity is also rising as 40 percent of households in New York City spend more than a third of their income on rent.

In short, the recession has had an especially devastating impact on New York's children and families.

In light of this sobering picture – we must take stock in the fact that solutions to the obstacles children face can be found in early, targeted and consistent investments in their well-being.

We know that research clearly demonstrates the cost-benefits of investments in primary prevention – with each dollar spent on prenatal care, early childhood education, or youth services, producing not only better outcomes for children but a range of \$3 to \$140 dollars in long-term savings.

Because the need for such investments has never been greater, we have a pressing obligation to persuade our elected leaders to reject the singular focus on budget cutting and advance a balanced approach to tackling the economic crisis – one that combines progressive tax increases with prudent public investments.

New York City and New York State have a record of using this approach in the very recent past. In 2003 and 2009, progressive increases on income taxes were enacted to produce the revenue needed to balance budgets while keeping essential services intact. These efforts also bolstered economic activity.

And today, New York State could raise \$5 billion annually by simply extending an existing surcharge on incomes over \$200,000 – a surcharge that is set to expire on December 31st.

Given how heated the public discourse has become, it is incumbent upon all of us to remind our elected leaders that a more balanced approach to weathering this crisis is not only prudent but possible.

While it might feel daunting to venture into advocacy on tax policy, CCC offers many ways – small and large – in which each of you can lend your voice.

We encourage you to:

- Stay informed by joining our [e-action network](#), following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and sharing our information and engaging in discussion with your colleagues and friends.
- Take action through our On-line advocacy tools to connect elected leaders at the touch of a button and help us reach thousands more New Yorkers by sharing our calls to action with friends via email, Twitter and Facebook, and
- Finally, we hope that many of you will join us in making calls and meeting with elected leaders.

Given the profoundly worrisome status of New York City's children - every effort large or small is critical and greatly appreciated.

In closing, I know that I am speaking to an audience of committed, passionate people – service providers, elected and appointed officials, advocates, and funders – together I am confident we can make a difference for New York City's children.

Thank you.