

TOM PUTNAM: I'm Tom Putnam, the Director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. And on behalf of John Shattuck, CEO of the Kennedy Library Foundation, and all of my library colleagues, I welcome you to this very special forum.

Let me begin by expressing appreciation to our underwriters, including lead sponsor Bank of America, the Boston Foundation, Boston Capital, the Lowell Institute, and the Corcoran Jennison Companies. And our media sponsors, *The Boston Globe*, WBUR, and NECN. We also appreciate the special support for today's program from Facing History And Ourselves for helping to distribute the film and educational materials related to it to schools throughout the country.

The genius of Sargent Shriver changed my life. At a formative moment in my life, I served one summer as a counselor for Upward Bound, a federally funded program launched by Sargent Shriver to help low income students be the first in their families to attend college. After experiencing the power of that work, I was hooked. And I went on to work for Upward Bound for 16 years, first in rural Maine, and then in the inner cities of Springfield, Hartford, and Holyoke, before coming to work at the Kennedy Library. There are countless others who could say the same. Either those whose lives were transformed by the services provided by the many programs that Mr. Shriver created, or those who worked or volunteered for those institutions.

During our annual Veterans Day forum, we paused to recognize veterans in our midst. I'd like to ask anyone in today's audience who has served our country through the Peace Corps, VISTA, or any of the programs launched by Sargent Shriver to stand and be recognized.

[applause]

Having long revered Sargent Shriver, I was still astounded a few years ago, when reading Scott Stossel's magnificent biography, which is on sale in our bookstore, and which portrays not only how many initiatives Mr. Shriver launched, but the manner in which he

translated vague mandates to create an international service program, and wage a war on poverty into the creation of some of the most successful social programs of the past half century. Programs such as the Peace Corps, Head Start, and Legal Services for the Poor. As one of our speakers, William Josephson describes, “Sarge has a remarkable knack for creating institutions that survive and somehow work. He made it easy to believe in the potential of public service.”

We welcome all of you here today to watch Bruce Orenstein’s new documentary, *American Idealist: The Story of Sargent Shriver*, which will air on PBS on January 21st. Immediately following the documentary, there will be a conversation with Mr. Orenstein, the film’s writer, director, and producer, Shriver biographer and *Atlantic Monthly* managing editor, Scott Stossel, and two of Sargent Shriver’s close friends and early colleagues, Edgar May and William Josephson, who went on to their own distinguished careers outlined in your program, and who are both featured in today’s film.

Those of you who were fortunate enough to be here last month when we paid tribute to Eunice Shriver know that perhaps her and her husband’s greatest accomplishments are the incredible children they raised, each of whom carries, in their own unique way, their parent’s mantle to new generations. Joining us today is their daughter, an award-winning journalist, a best-selling author, and an empowering community organizer. Please join me in welcoming the executive producer of *American Idealist*, and the First Lady of California, Maria Shriver.

[applause]

MARIA SHRIVER: Thank you. That was a beautiful speech about Daddy. Good afternoon. It gave me goosebumps when you asked everybody to stand here who has served in a program that Daddy started. And I think that’s a great place to start my little introduction, because people often say the War on Poverty was a failure. Those programs didn’t help anybody, nothing was accomplished. The Peace Corps was too small to have had any impact. And to see everybody stand up, and actually see millions of people

across this country standing up and saying that their lives were changed, as you just said, by your involvement.

A day doesn't go by when someone doesn't come up to me and say, "I served in the Peace Corps and it changed my life." "I'm a Head Start kid. It changed my life." "I am a Legal Service lawyer. It changed my life." Or, "I worked for your dad. It changed my life." It just happens every single day. And, as a daughter, that makes me incredibly proud. And also as a daughter, it enraged me, actually, several years ago, that more people didn't know the story of what Daddy had accomplished.

And that's really the purpose of this film, which Bruce Orenstein has done, and the purpose of this book that Scott Stossel wrote, was really to tell Daddy's story, which is an American story. And it's an idealistic story. It's the story of a man who was an incredible patriot, but really a creative force who worked within government to change people's lives. Who didn't work to accumulate power for himself, but really went out and used his creativity, his genius, his tireless work ethic, to change people's lives from the bottom up, or from the inside out. And everybody who has seen this film comes away and says, "I didn't know anything about that time, and I thought I knew everything about that time."

And our goal really for this film, once it airs on PBS, is to really ask every person who worked in a program that perhaps Daddy started, was touched by a program that Daddy started, who has a child in college, who has a child in high school, to really sit on Monday, when PBS airs this film, and have a house party, and talk about the concept of service. Talk about the nobility of service. Talk about the power when people can make a difference in service to their country. Yes through the military, but all these other ways that we can serve. And we have, and Bruce will talk, I think at the end, after the panel, about the different ways we've set up to include people today. Calling on presidential candidates to emphasize service. Calling on presidential candidates to double the size of the Peace Corps or AmeriCorps. And really emphasize that there is something that we

can all do as Americans, regardless of our age, to be a part of the success of America and telling the story of America as we know it and as we see it and as we feel it.

So if my father were here, he wouldn't want any amount of time being spent on how incredible he was. He would want to be challenging each of you to think about what you believe in and to think about how you can be a part of the process. He never really much liked to talk about his accomplishments. I don't feel like that. So I can talk about his accomplishments, because he did that enough to my brothers and I. So we're always running around going, "What am I doing? What is my mission? Where am I going? What am I accomplishing?"

But I've learned so much about my father in working on this film with Bruce. I learned about his humility, I learned about his generosity of spirit, I learned a lot about his faith and how it really infused everything he did. I learned about how really complicated it was for him in my own family. That as a child I was never quite-- I kind of got a little inclination of, but I didn't really know that much. And as I've said to people, it's complicated when four people in one family want to run for President of the United States. And how you have to navigate that.

A *Boston Globe* reporter was just interviewing Bruce and I, and said, "Well, your father, a lot of people say, wasn't very political." I said, "To navigate that? You've got to be political!" But he was really an American servant and an idealistic man. And I hope that, after this film, you're left with an understanding of really how extraordinary he was.

And I believe that there are other people out there like him. And my hope is that this film inspires them to be of service, to be creative, and to work really from the inside out. So many people, I think, today, are working from outside. And his whole philosophy was to dig down, to dig deep, to reach high and reach out, and to believe. To believe in your country, to believe in your fellow man and woman, and to believe in yourself. And once

you did that, you could accomplish anything. He always said, "If you don't care about who gets the credit, you can accomplish everything."

So I want to thank you all. I know everybody's got a lot of things they could be doing on a Sunday afternoon. And I asked Amy, who's been so wonderful putting this together, I said, "Does anybody come on a Sunday afternoon?" She goes, "Yeah, you'd be surprised." So I'm wonderfully surprised. We're going to show this tomorrow night at the King center with some of the King children, which I think will be terrific. We showed it this week in Sacramento, after my husband's State of the Union address and got a tremendous reaction. And we really hope to take this across to all the Presidential Libraries, to Poverty Law Centers, to universities. And really, our work is just beginning. So we invite you to join us in our work and to join us in Daddy's mission, which is to have all of us be a part of the solution. So thank you so much, and I hope you enjoy the film and the panel. Thank you.

[applause]

[Video]

[applause]

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Thank you, thank you. My name is Bruce Orenstein. I'm the director, writer, producer of *American Idealist*. I want to thank everybody for coming and sharing this. Thank you.

[applause]

A few thanks, yeah, definitely are in order. I wrote, directed it but a film like this gets made by so many people. And I don't know if he's here or not. Sheldon, are you here? Sheldon? Shel didn't show up. Okay. Sheldon Mirowitz wrote the music, composed the music for this film. He's from the Boston area, he teaches at the Berklee School, and I just want to thank Sheldon, because he really brought the emotion out in the film.

But these three people on stage here, among many others, but particularly these three people were extraordinarily helpful in the making of this film. First we have Scott Stossel. Scott is the author of *Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver*. And that book came out, was published right at the time that I began to make the film. And it was the Bible to me. So I'm really indebted to Scott. And the book is really outstanding. So if you want to learn more about Sargent Shriver, that's the very, very first place you go to. And so it was the Bible to me, and it was a source of so much information and understanding of Sarge's life.

Edgar May. Edgar May was just great in helping give guidance as I made this film, besides a great interview. Edgar is a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter who Sarge recruited to the War on Poverty, and then he was something like the Inspector General for the War on Poverty. And Edgar was just really, really wonderful in helping support this film.

And then Bill Josephson. Bill was there to help me navigate through the Kennedy family and the Shriver family. And there's some navigation that's sometimes needed. But Bill, also, was just a great supporter and fundraiser. So much has to do with raising money and getting out there and putting you in touch with other people. And I'm just this filmmaker from Chicago. Used to be a community organizer. Had no contacts to be able to put together a budget like this. If it wasn't for these people and several others who were Sarge's friends, this film wouldn't have been possible. So I want to thank them all for helping make this film possible.

[applause]

We're trying to figure out how not to make this boring, because panels can sometimes be really boring. But these are not boring people, by the way. And they've got stories about Sarge, so many stories that I wanted to put in the film, but because of the pacing of the film or other reasons, they didn't get in. And I want them to share some of their personal

experience with Sarge, because that'll give you even more insight and feeling for who he was. And is. But I also want to take your questions.

So I'm going to mix the two together. And I'm actually going to start with questions, and we'll just see what happens from there. So if you've got a question, now's the time. And there's microphones. Please go up to the microphone. And fire away. Speak! It's on now.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm Daryl Danian (?) from Attleboro, Massachusetts. Scott, I had a chance to read your book. And I think the question I'm going to ask is best answered by you or Maria. When Maria was talking before, she said she didn't know her dad was such a person of faith. And Scott, in your book, you make reference to the spiritual aspect of public service. And that a Dominican, even, was a friend of Sargent Shriver, and was asked to work with the children, to teach them that spiritual aspect. There was one quote that I got from your book. Sargent Shriver asked himself, "Am I living my life as Christ would want me to?" Could you give some further comment on what you've learned about the spiritual aspect that he was talking about?

SCOTT STOSSEL: Sure, absolutely. And for me, this was one of the biggest challenges in writing the book. And in fact early on I talked to Bill Moyers, who you saw talking in the film, who was a great protégé of Shriver. And he said that what, for many people passes, is kind of introspect, conversations with themselves... Shriver has a running conversation with the Lord and with God.

And I think it's impossible to understand. I mean, I think that Bruce's film captured wonderfully the sort of relentless idealism that Shriver faced, often, sometimes. This coincided with greatly idealistic moments that were propitious to the programs that he wanted to start. Other times he was stacked up against enormous odds. And no matter what the obstacles against him, he had this sort of boundless confidence, optimism, some people would say almost naïve idealism. But Edgar had a great quote that I think I used in

the book, that if this is ...(inaudible), have more of it. All that emanates deeply from the depth of his faith.

And I talk in the book, and Bruce briefly touched on this in the film... Growing up in his household in Maryland where his godfather was the Cardinal Archbishop of Baltimore. And I think, when you have that kind of background, you react one of two ways. One, you either rebel against it and become an atheistic rebel, or you sort of live it.

And for Shriver, I think it's absolutely inseparable. His drive to do good works in this world. But it's a very significant kind. He's not concerned in his personal life or personal goals with getting into Heaven, per say, in a way that a lot of religious folks are. Although I'm sure that's an incidental concern. He's concerned with making the world a better place here on this earth. And this is something that derives from the social gospels of Dorothy Day and the common-wheel crowd that his parents were a part of. But I think it's absolutely impossible to understand Shriver without understanding how deeply intertwined this deep, spiritual, Catholic faith was from his feeling of a call to service. Good question.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Edgar, you had mentioned earlier, when we were having lunch, about the Office of Economic Opportunity, you know, OEO stood for something other than the Office of Economic Opportunity. What was that?

EDGAR MAY: Well, first of all, I think that in order to understand the film you just saw, what Scott just pointed out is crucial to it. Sargent Shriver was the best Christian I have ever known. In the ten years I worked with Sarge, I went to Mass much more than I ever went to synagogue, and that's what I was supposed to be.

SCOTT STOSSEL: And not only that, but if he was in Central Africa or East Asia, if he couldn't go to Mass there, he'd bring his own priest.

EDGAR MAY: Oh absolutely. Marie and I were talking about it a little while ago. We were one Christmas on vacation to Israel. And we had a priest with us every step of the way. Particularly at every station of the cross, where it was all explained. But what's the point here? The point is that this is such an extraordinary human being, because in part, every single day, whether it was a Peace Corps volunteer in Africa, or the VISTA volunteer on the Navajo reservation. Whether it's a community action person in Chicago. His religion was being practiced in those environments.

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON: You have to understand, I think, that his view of religion, and religion in his life, was different than what you might think it would be. It was not dogmatic. It was not hierarchical. It was not simply ritual, although the ritual was very important to him. He was truly a person who believed that our obligation is to do God's work on earth. And he really did try to do it. Maria made a remark about whether her dad was a good politician. Well, he was an excellent politician if you're practicing the politics of virtue.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: I just gave you an opportunity to define the Office of Economic Opportunity. So I'm going to take the line.

EDGAR MAY: Various people from a religious field. And we had defrocked priests, ministers who were no longer ministers, nuns who left the Order. That someone suggested one day that it's really not OEO, the Office of Economic Opportunity. It's the Office of Ecumenical Outcasts. But the point that Bill just made, because it relates directly again to the documentary, the very first grants that we announced after the Office of Economic Opportunity was established, Sarge announced them. They were to the Devil's Lake Sioux. Well, how can you resist? Making a grant to the Devil's Lake Sioux. But these were direct grants.

A second grant was to the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Detroit. A very unusual federal funding effort. And the third grant, for the first time in the history of this country, federal

dollars went to the Planned Parenthood association. That's the essence of optimism and hope translated into courage for the first time. And the person who made the grant that day, the previous year was named the Catholic Layman of the Year of our country.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Who was Sarge Shriver.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: First of all, I'd like to comment that the film was really quite excellent. But the film paints a man continually on the go. I was wondering how his family made out?

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Maybe we should bring Maria up here to answer that.

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON: Maria obviously is the best person to answer that. But having been close to the family now since 1951, I can say, in my own experience, that it would be hard to find five children who have grown up more in the spirits of their mother and father. And each one of them. Maria's career is well known. Bobby Shriver is a terrific entrepreneur, as you know, for good causes. Timmy runs the Special Olympics. Timmy, I have to admit, Maria, has always been my favorite child from the day he was born. Timmy has a certain spiritual quality about him that really is unique, in addition to his amazing executive abilities. Mark, I don't know as well, but Mark also is committed to public service. Anthony, the youngest, I know least, but he runs Best Buddies. I mean, where can you find a family in the United States that better exemplifies the politics of virtue? Nowhere.

SCOTT STOSSEL: I would add too that one of the important elements of Shriver's personality and the way that he ran things was that there was always a sense of fun, and also chaos, that was interwoven with the policy and the political work that he did. And both of these guys lived through it. But family and work would sort of blend together.

And there are these great descriptions of whether it was during the Peace Corps or during the War on Poverty, they'd be out at their house at Timberlawn. And Maria has talked about how you'd have Lyndon Johnson and foreign leaders and cabinet secretaries and members of the Peace Corps staff. They'd be wrapped around a table doing policy meetings. And meanwhile, there'd be retarded, mentally handicapped kids running around in the swimming pools, and then you'd have professional athletes out on the tennis court. And it was just this constant chaos.

And from this ferment, not only were great ideas hatched and great policies formulated and programs started, but there was a great sense of fun. And I think that that kind of chaos and ferment was in partial a vote of the programs that he ran in a very professional way. And also of the family life that the Shrivvers experienced.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: I think there was a great spontaneity about him. And I hope some of that came across in the film. And there was a spontaneity that was based in some real knowledge and good judgment. But part of that spontaneity was how he got a hold of both of you guys over here. Bill Josephson, I failed to mention this at the beginning, he's one of the co-authors of the concept paper that formed the Peace Corps. And then became the Peace Corps' General Counselman. Helped usher it through passage. But how did he get a hold of you and the concept paper, and what's the story behind that?

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON: The Peace Corps, you know, at its peak, only five years after we created it, had 15,000 volunteers. I think Senator Obama has called for a Peace Corps, if he's elected president, of 16,000 volunteers. Now, this is a measure. This is a measure. And it struck me watching the film, and thinking back over my own career, which obviously would've been, I think, quite different, but for what happened to President Kennedy and what happened to Robert Kennedy.

I can't help but tell this audience that it seems to me that we have drifted very far for many years from the principles and the policies that President Kennedy, Sargent Shriver,

the Kennedy-Shriver family stood for. And one can only hope and pray that somehow or other we will find our way back to those values and programs.

[applause]

And while I respect very much the notion that we should double the size of the Peace Corps, as you may remember from the film, President Kennedy and Sargent Shriver, and Warren Wiggins and myself, always thought there was ample room in the world for a Peace Corps of 100,000 volunteers.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: And it's at 7,700 right now. So once Nixon came in office, it started to cut back. So if it were to go for 16,000, it would be troubled right now.

...(inaudible)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do you think he would've been able to carry out his vision if he hadn't married a Kennedy?

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Scott has some illuminations about that in his book.

SCOTT STOSSEL: Yeah, well there's probably no more fraught question you could ask than that, with regards to Sargent Shriver. But I think the answer is complicated. But the simple one is yes. I mean, obviously you wouldn't have had a Peace Corps, because this was something that was hatched on the Kennedy campaign trail. He wouldn't have been involved in starting the many, many programs associated with the War on Poverty. So in terms of the concrete programs that he actually started, would those have been started? Hard to say. But he was on a political trajectory in Illinois that would've enabled him to do great works in his own right there.

And the spirit and the passion and the enthusiasm and the intellect that he brought to this stuff, there's no question he's one of these sort of historical figures that, as it happened, he intersected with a time, in the early 60s, and a series of presidents and Kennedy and

Johnson that allowed him to achieve great things. But I think he's one of these individuals who would've achieved something of the same sort, however it happened, had his political trajectory been different. But good for Peace Corps and OEO. And for obviously Maria and all of her siblings that it did play out the way that it did.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: When I look at what he did in Chicago, he was running the Merchandise Mart. And he could've stayed as running the Merchandise Mart, and he could've been a business leader in the city of Chicago. But he hadn't got the Catholic Interracial Counsel in Chicago, and then he headed it up nationally. He ended up on the School Board in Chicago and became its president. And he was involved in so many other affairs that elevated him to positions of power. I really think that absolutely on his own merit, he could've been President of the United States.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. I wonder what Sargent Shriver would say in regards to the healthcare situation in this country. I'm a type-one diabetic since 1965. Perfect eyes and kidney. My degree is worth approximately \$19,500 gross a year. So I'm in the safest state in the United States, being in Massachusetts. But Romney's plan is costing me an entire paycheck just to pay the premium and co-pays. What would Sargent Shriver, do you believe, say, as I would like to start something for other people in my situation. Some kind of private funding to help people who are not disabled, don't qualify for disability, who work full-time, who are priced-out of the employer-based market. I would love to see if any of you have any thoughts on creative solutions to this crisis, and what his spirit might say.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Well, Sargent Shriver launched work-study during the War on Poverty. And it's just a quarter of a line in the movie. But there was so much more to that, and it allowed so many young people to go to college as a result.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have the college degree. I'm just priced out of the employer-based healthcare market. Absolutely, completely priced out of the market. It is not an option. So I just wonder if you have any ideas.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: I think that's a question best put to the politicians who are running today. But he cared about people. And he was about the greater good of the country. And I think he would've based whatever policy decisions he would've had the power to base upon the greater good of humanity.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi. I couldn't help but be very moved by Sargent Shriver's message of hope and optimism. It seems as though the Democratic Party right now is a bit divided between hope and practicality. Optimism and realism. And I'm wondering if you can say that Sargent Shriver's career was perhaps a lesson in what you can gain and accomplish through hope and optimism, or perhaps how you can be limited by too much of it? In your opinion.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: I named the movie *American Idealist*. And there were people who objected to that title. People very close to Sarge. Saying, "Well, he wasn't an idealist. He was a very hard-nosed politician. He was a very pragmatic politician." And then some people suggested I name the film *The Pragmatic Idealist*. And I thought, well, it kind of takes the wind out of the term "idealist."

I think that any change that takes place in any society, any vision, it will move beyond what we accept as our limits and the boundaries that we live within. But those are idealistic. That's idealism. And so the change happens because of idealistic people. I think in Sargent Shriver, we had someone who was pragmatic idealist. There was no doubt about that. But you have to have a décor. That idealism. And that's what I think he had.

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON: I think the distinction is not one that we pay a lot of attention to. One of the characteristics of Sarge was that he was intensely practical. One of the previous questioners commented on how hard he worked, for example. He worked extremely hard. I am not exactly a lazy person, and I have a lot of stamina. But going through Scott's book today, I was reminded of something that I'd completely forgotten. And that is a letter that I wrote to Max Kampelman at the time that Sarge was being considered by Hubert Humphrey for Vice President to respond to the charge that Sarge was a boy scout. Was simple minded. Was not a person of any gravitas.

And in this letter, which I don't remember writing at all, Scott, I have to admit, I make the point that not only was Sarge incredibly hard working, not only did he have extraordinary judgment, but he had a method, which was very important. He would somehow try to simplify these complex problems that we had to solve. Get them down to one or two, or perhaps even three, of their simplest elements. And then it was much easier for him to make the decision. Much easier for us to understand it. So this distinction between idealism and practicality. I don't think it works. I think we need to look for somebody who has that capacity. Bobby had the same capacity, as a matter of fact.

EDGAR MAY: The optimism and hope was simply the pathway to accomplishment. It was not simply a Sunday sermon. It was not a powerful, rhetorical flight. Our first discussion about Head Start, the experts said they might have 50,000 people in Head Start. And Sarge said, that's all right, but come back two weeks from now, and tell me how we're going to half a million people in Head Start.

If we sent a Peace Corps volunteer to a country in Africa, and he was a water expert, the question was, how many people now have water? How many wells have been dug? When a healthcare worker was sent to the Navajo reservation, how many Indian children no longer have the diseases that we found when we got there? When we sent volunteers and community action people into the ghettos, the test was not optimism, the test was not

hope. The test was what has changed? How many better teachers are in those schools? How many health inspectors no longer ignore the slumlord violations?

So the wonderful theme of his work was the introduction to measurable results. That's the test that occurred then, and it's a test we're capable of meeting now.

SCOTT STOSSEL: I'm as hard bitten a cynic as there is, and I'm skeptical of pie in the sky government programs. The example that Edgar cited about Head Start. There were so many times, in doing my research, where Shriver would be confronted with something. Whether it was getting the Peace Corps started in this astonishingly short period of time, or starting this huge, billion-dollar program with the War on Poverty in a really short period of time. And smart people would say, "This is impossible." And the role of the dreamer, I guess, would be to say, "No we can do all these sorts of things," and then you actually fail to do them.

In every case, almost, Shriver would say, "We can do this;" people would say, "This is impossible," and then he would do it. Primary case and point being all these smart experts from Harvard, and education experts saying, "There's no way you can get 50,000, let alone half a million kids into Head Start in the first summer in a two month tent." And he did it. So the proof is kind of in the footing.

EDGAR MAY: The single worst thing you could tell Sarge Shriver involved four very simple English language words: "It can't be done." If you told him that, there would be a pause. There would be a double lowering of his voice. And he would send you out of the room and tell you to come back and find one reason why it can be done, and find five more people to help you do it. You really had to be creative to tell him that something won't work.

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON: It's very important. It doesn't come out as well in the film, perhaps, Bruce, as it should. But Sarge had an amazing knack for being interested in

virtually everybody. And identifying the talent that he needed. And in making extraordinary use of it. Now I'm a little bit self-serving. I was his hero. Perhaps I'm still his hero. When Warren Wiggins and I wrote "The Towering Task," which was absolutely contrary to all the expert opinion about how we should do the Peace Corps, completely contrary to what Max Milligan said, to what Wolf Roscow said, and so forth and so on. And we were just State Department bureaucrats.

But there is something about the ideas we expressed, and something he saw in us, that he was able, as President Kennedy memorably put it, to take a lemon and make lemonade. And this feeling for talent, such a character Sarge is.

SCOTT STOSSEL: It reminds me... When he started the War on Poverty, this notion of being open to all points of view. It was striking. The historical view of the War on Poverty that it was a big left-wing program. In fact, he assembled, in the living room of his house, he brought in left-wing anarchists, activists, policy people. He also brought in Republican mayors and policy people. He also brought in business people. And now there's, within the current election, sort of a hunger represented by Obama for transcending party lines. But let's go to the next question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Sorry, I don't want you to put off your discussion. Sue Douglas. I just wanted to thank you for the inspirational film. Today, my husband and I brought our daughters, who are eight and ten. And I got more out of that film than I expected, and especially for them, the message of optimism and the power of a single action. If Sargent Shriver were here today, what would he advise the younger generation, seeing as our times resonate with so many of the same challenges?

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Well, I made the film in part in a hope that what he said four decades ago, that this story, could inspire this generation of young people the way that he inspired a generation of young people four decades ago. So I think he would say engage

in service. He would say engage in social change. He would say get involved in the world, and be your brother's keeper. That's what he would say.

What we're trying to say with the film is that we want to reach out, with this film, to colleges and universities across the country. And we've set up a whole outreach campaign to do that, through Facing History and Ourselves, which is an outstanding organization that has drawn up a curriculum about it. And it will go to 23,000 high school teachers across the country. Kind of this compact, service learning, clearing house. There's a range of ways in which the film is being sent out to education and public service organizations around the country.

And if there are people in this audience that want to help and participate in that, then please stay afterwards and talk to me briefly, because we still need help in making that happen. We want to put this in every classroom in America. And we're on a good start on how to do that, and we definitely need your help, whether it's getting to a particular classroom or a particular university, high school, or being able to help underwrite getting it to a group of schools. We really need that help. So we want to carry on. That's the point.

My background is in community organizing, similar to what was being done, if you didn't notice, in the film. People take different approaches on things, but certainly the theme that I recognized in Shriver's life is to challenge people to make the world a better place. And so we hope the film does that. So please come up and talk to us afterwards. Also, anybody can e-mail me at: bruce@chicagovideo.org.

EDGAR MAY: I think if Sarge were on the stage with us, first of all he would tell us to hurry up. But he would say the same thing that he said 40 years ago. And he would do the very same thing that the opening sentence that the Director of this wonderful Library asked you. Would those who participated in the Peace Corps and the War on Poverty and Head Start and Special Olympics please stand up? And that wonderful, large group of

Americans, who are a few years younger, most of us actually were a few years younger, stood up.

I think Sarge also would ask how many of you, how many of you are ready to give of yourself to address the temporary problems of our country and our globe? And I would bet a significant number of you would stand up. That's what Sargent Shriver believed 40 years ago. That's what he taught us to believe. And while history has passed, that creativity, that enthusiasm, that optimism is as alive today as it was then.

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON: Yes, but there is an important element that I think is absent, and has been absent for some time. I would guess that your presence here is a sufficient answer to the question, are people willing to contribute? Are people willing to volunteer? Are people willing to serve? And I'm sure that many of us do, in our small, individual ways.

What President Kennedy and President Johnson provided... Let's put the Vietnam War to one side. Although we must remember now, we are again unfortunately in the midst of another extremely debilitating war. What they provided was the political leadership that not only endorsed those efforts, but created opportunities and avenues for us to express ourselves, not just individually but collectively. In the Peace Corps. In VISTA. That's what's needed today. And that's why Maria made the film, and that's what Bruce tried to achieve and I think did achieve, in making the film. To show the kind of leadership that is necessary for us, as a volunteer nation, to accomplish these goals.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Just another word on that. We took the inspiration of the petition that the University of Michigan students brought to Kennedy that inspired Kennedy to announce the formation of the Peace Corps. Make the campaign pledge. And we went to a group of students from 15 different schools, pulled them together.

And there's a petition out there now that says, "If you expand it," that means AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, and all the public service programs, "we will come and we will serve." And they're up at several thousand signatures right now. They just started. Perhaps that'll turn to 50 or 100 thousand signatures they can deliver to the presidential candidates. So I think we're almost there. I think we're kind of ready. I think there's a real hunger for it. So I'll be like Sargent Shriver and be the optimist.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I served as a VISTA volunteer for four years in Newark, New Jersey. I'm from here. I'm from Roxbury. And I would normally get so irate over the fact that people say nothing came out of that era. That nothing happened as a result of that era. That the War on Poverty, the civil rights movement, the anti-war movement, and of course, from my parents age group, through the, I'm a baby boomer, age group, into the generation-x period, or whatever you want to call them. My children, who insist that nothing happened. There was no change.

And I thought about it as I was watching the film, which, by the way, was just phenomenal. It is a phenomenal tribute to this gentleman and the contribution he made to our world. That all of the thousands of people, and probably more, VISTA volunteers, Peace Corps volunteers, that I have run across all around the world, that they became change agents in their careers. No matter what career they went into. Business, accounting, politics, entrepreneurs, teachers, social workers, whatever. That they became change agents as a result of their experience in Peace Corps, VISTA, et cetera.

It was so interesting, about ten years ago, a friend called me from Newark and said, "You have to come. One of your former Head Start students is about to be sworn in to the Superior Court of the State of New Jersey." And when she told me who the child was-- I taught four year olds in a Head Start daycare center in Newark-- and when she told me who the child was, this was a child born of two teenage parents, both, by the time I had him as a four year old, one was in jail and one was dead, so were being raised by a variety of family members, et cetera, et cetera. And I had him for one year as a four year

old. And 1997, he's being sworn in as a Superior Court Justice for the State of New Jersey.

Don't ever say that this did not change people's lives. Change communities. Change so much in our society. The whole way we look at things is as a result of the change agents that came out of this era. And I wanted to thank all of you for being here. I learned so much more about Sargent Shriver, who has been one of my heroes for a very long time. But I learned so much more today, and I'm very glad I came and I'm very glad you were here. And I hope that future films, documentaries, books, are written about the change agents that are out here as a result of this era. Thank you.

[applause]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, my name's Ellen. That was so beautiful. And I totally agree. And I want to say, I remember seeing Sargent Shriver at our local temple in the 60s. And I can still remember how exciting and fantastic he was. And I'm wondering, this is personal, I'm wondering how he's feeling, because I have great admiration for him and for his wife and his daughter. I wish she were here so I could say that. It's so wonderful to have parents that you love and who are so wonderful. So I'm wondering how he is.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: Bill, that's your question. How is he feeling?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Not so great huh?

WILLIAM JOSEPHSON: I try to go see him every time I'm in Washington. And it's episodic. When I saw him in the spring, it was not possible to have a consecutive conversation. When I saw him in the summer, it was just like old times. We talked without stop for an hour and a half. Could've gone on talking. He was in great shape. In early December, again, it was really very difficult to spend any amount of time with him.

He looks great, in good shape. But focus and continuity are obviously issues that are very difficult for him.

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: I'm not an authority on this, because I don't hardly know him, but I've talked to him a couple times. And the last time I talked to him was about a year ago. And we were going through Scott's book. And we had it open, and we were looking at the pictures in the book. And we were starting to remember back. Remember when you were over here in the Peace Corps, and this country over here, and when you did that. And we're having this conversation back and forth. And after a few minutes, he turns up at me, he looks up at me, and he says, "Hey, how come you know more about my life than I do?" And from what everybody has told me, that basic core, that basic light is still present as he struggles with Alzheimer's. You were going to say something, Edgar?

EDGAR MAY: I think there is, in this dreadful disease, blank periods that are inexplicable. But there are also periods where chapters come back. And I've had, in the last few years, several conversations where the chapter came back. It was only yesterday, whether it was about his embracing a 200 pound fish monger on the docks of Marseille or it was a Head Start classroom, or it was a slum in some part of America.

I really don't know how to capsule that in a summary. It's capsuled in this wonderful contribution that Bruce has made, not simply for the sake of Sarge, where there could be evermore contributions, but the sake of the history of our country at a very turbulent period. And the story of a man that exhibits the kind of quality that at least those of us who were connected with him for so many years have certainly made us what you pointed out: far, far more effective human beings. And most importantly, far more effective than we ever thought we could be.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, actually this is more of a thank you but I'm really proud to be one of Sargent Shriver's kids in many different senses. I was a child in Head Start, and my father was a VISTA volunteer, and that's how he got to college. The first one in his

family. I grew up to become a Peace Corps volunteer. I returned to work on the Navajo Nation, and I think that there's living proof.

There's hundreds of thousands out there who have been touched in many different ways by the programs that he put together with all of his team. And who not only are deeply grateful, but are continuing to teach. And I see the same sort of optimism and idealism in my graduate students at the School of Education at Harvard. And so I wanted to say it does make a difference, and I think that all the generations that are coming up have those same kind of desires and fights. So I wish you luck with the documentary, and thank you so much for having that message out there.

[applause]

BRUCE ORENSTEIN: I think that's the perfect way to end the conversation today. Again, thank you for coming. If you want to help or connect in any way with this project, and it definitely still needs help, contact me, again, at bruce@chicagovideo.org. Thanks so much. Good day.

[applause]

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