

*Remarks for the
Project CORD Announcement
November 13, 2002*

This has been a great morning. I just came from a program where we officially proclaimed November 24 as the “Children’s Day of Hope” in Mississippi for kids waiting for adoption.

Every day should be a day of hope for Mississippi’s children – and we’re here today to talk about making that happen.

In October 2001, we were awarded a \$9 million state incentive grant for the Governor's Mississippi Alliance for Prevention.

In cooperation with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, we are focusing on a comprehensive strategy to educate our children about substance abuse – and the effect it can have on their future.

In mid-September, I announced substance abuse grants for groups in 19 communities across the state.

One of the recipients was the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence of Central Mississippi – and I want to thank Hugh Barkley, Carolyn Howard and their staff for the great work they are doing in securing a better life for our kids.

I appreciate the role the schools are playing in Project CORD and the wise manner in which they are utilizing this opportunity to teach. Mr. Jones, Ms. Bruser, Mr. Myers, thank you for your dedication.

Through Project CORD, the children of Canton are going to learn about substance abuse, about the impact it can have on their lives, about the importance of making the right choice, about the hope that lies ahead for them.

Every adult here today remembers what it was like to be a child, and to dream about what we would do in life. As adults, we still have dreams about what we would like to accomplish, and what we want our own children to accomplish in their lives.

I want these children here at Nichols Middle School – and every child across our state – to dream as big as they can and see those dreams come true. I want them to know they are full of promise and potential, that they are a living message to a time that we won't see.

To fulfill those dreams, they must realize the importance of the responsibility they carry for their own lives, to make the right decisions and know the right paths to take in life.

Project CORD is going to help them with those decisions. By focusing on the impact drugs can have on a young life – an impact that leads not toward success but toward failure – this initiative will turn lives around and help grow our state.

I know each of you here today is committed to making the most of your potential, and that's just what our state needs. Each of you has a special talent and a special gift to share with Mississippi.

You understand the tremendous importance of making the right decisions, and there are going to be some tough ones for you to make – not just as teenagers, but as adults as well.

The decision not to drink; the decision not to smoke; the decision to make the right choices in life will help you reach the promise in each of you.

Mississippi needs you, and that's why we're working hard for you – to provide the best education possible, to attract the best jobs, to assure the best health care, to make sure you are safe.

We need you to help Mississippi reach her true potential. Use your skill, talent, energy and drive to make a difference in your community.

The great American poet e.e. cummings once wrote, “it takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.” That’s what we hope for from each of you – have courage, and become who you really are.

Stay strong in your convictions, hold fast to your dreams, and work hard. That’s how great things happen.

God bless you and good luck!