Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York’s 2015 Celebration Breakfast
October 29, 2015, 583 Park Avenue, 7:30am – 9:15am

TRANSCRIPT

(In Order of Appearance)

Master of Ceremonies: Juju Chang
Keynote Speaker: Bryan Stevenson
Vanguard Award: Robert Reffkin
Eleanor Roosevelt Award: Anne E. Delaney
Samuel P. Peabody Award: Ismael Nazario
CCC Executive Director: Jennifer March

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Juju Chang: [Typing on phone] New York is one of only two states in the U.S. that prosecutes -- I'm composing a Tweet right now; this is called live Tweeting -- all 16 and 17 -- you'll hear this fact again -- year-olds -- as adults. And the hashtag is #BePartoftheSolution, with @CCCNewYork.

Okay.

New York is one of only two states in the U.S. that prosecutes all 16 and 17-year-olds as adults. #BePartoftheSolution with @CCCNewYork. I've just Tweeted that, which is what I was asked to do.

Good morning. This is a very atypical breakfast, because we're very no-nonsense. We are booked to capacity. We all show up, which we know is half the solution. And we start on time. So it's very atypical. Once again, I'm honored to be here as your hostess. My name is Juju Chang. I'm one of the co-anchors of ABC News Nightline, the late-night program. But I also pop up every once in a while on Good Morning America, so I get to stay up late and get up early. It's the worst of both worlds. [Laughter]

Each fall, as you know, we come together to support CCC's critical mission to ensure that every child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. Today, we're recognizing social justice leaders who, like CCC, are working to speak out on behalf of children and take action to improve outcomes.
Citizens' Committee for Children understands that every one of us has a part to play in making our city a better place for all young people. To support us in living up to this responsibility, CCC provides us with the facts that motivate our actions. Maintaining a tradition at this CCC breakfast, I'm going to share some of these facts throughout the program, as you just saw me do, in real time, live Tweeting facts.

To make it easy for you, CCC itself is also live Tweeting this event @CCCNewYork, with the hashtag #BePartoftheSolution. So I won't be offended if you have your device in your hand, because I'm sure you're re-Tweeting one of us, right?

You'll also see signs on the table, which have suggested Tweets. They really want this to become a social media conversation. So let's get started.

Just a few minutes ago, I put out that Tweet, and I want people to be aware that New York is only one of two states that treats 16 and 17-year-olds as adults in the justice system. The other state is North Carolina, and they're working to abolish it. And they, in fact, may leave New York the only state remaining that treats youthful offenders as adults.

Let me give you a shocking statistic. Nearly 50,000 16 and 17-year-olds are arrested and face prosecution as adults in New York each year. It won't shock you, however, to learn that the majority of
those arrested for minor crimes, over 70 percent of those youth are Black or Latino.

Research clearly shows that these teenagers are, in fact, children and not adults, that the human brain, namely the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for decision-making and impulse control, that those are not fully developed in youth. In fact, it's not fully developed until you're 25.

The Supreme Court has ruled on death penalty cases on juveniles based on that very fact alone. Because of that, the character and behavior of adolescents -- we all have been around adolescents; we know that they take risks. We know they act irrational. I have a 15-year-old son. He's insane. [Laughter]

But the good news is, they respond well to interventions. They learn to make responsible choices and are likely to stop negative behaviors. Research also suggests that treating children as adults in the criminal justice system can be short-sighted, ineffective, and can actually be harmful to public safety.

In fact, studies have found that teens treated in the adult system have approximately 34 percent more rearrests for felony crimes than those detained in the juvenile system.

Later in the program, CCC's executive director, Jennifer March, will tell us about work to raise the age of criminal responsibility in New York. She believes it's quite clear that these reforms are in the
best interest of New York's children, youth, and the communities, and community safety.

Our keynote speaker this morning -- we're in for a huge treat. His name is Bryan Stevenson. He's been at the forefront of efforts here in New York and across the country -- he told me this morning that he has 200 death penalty cases going. He's working for reform in both the juvenile and the adult criminal justice systems. He's been referred to as a young American Nelson Mandela, a freedom-fighter, if you will.

He's a crusader for justice, and Bryan is a steadfast champion for the poor, the incarcerated, and the condemned through his legal work and with Equal Justice Initiative. It provides legal representation to defendants and prisoners who've been denied fair treatment within the legal system.

In his best-selling novel "Just Mercy," Bryan describes his childhood growing up in a poor and racially segregated town in Delaware, and how he rose to become a lawyer who represents those who've been abandoned by the legal system.

His clients include mentally disabled people whose crimes are directly related to having unmet special needs; people on death row, as I mentioned, 200 of them; and children who have been prosecuted as adults and put in adult prisons, where they often face physical and sexual abuse.
He's recently been named to Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People. And once you hear from him, you'll know why. Bryan Stevenson is one of the most visibly astute legal minds in the country, and it is a great privilege to have him here. Bryan.

[Applause]

**Bryan Stevenson:** Thank you so much, and good morning. I am so thrilled to be here. It's a great, great privilege to be in this room, celebrating the incredible work of this organization.

We really can't understand the challenges of children and talk about the challenges that we face in this state and across this country, unless we put in context the way this country has changed over the last 40 years. America is a very different place today than it was 40 years ago. And the difference is a really tragic one.

In 1972, we had 300,000 people in jails or in prisons. Today, we have 2.3 million. The United States now has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. We have 5 percent of the world's population but 25 percent of the world's imprisoned.

There are six million people on probation or parole. There are 70 million Americans with criminal arrests, which means that when they try to get a loan, or try to get a job, or try to get housing, they are disadvantaged by that arrest history.

The percentage of women going to prison has increased 640 percent. Seventy percent of the women who go to jails and prisons
are single parents with minor children. You're much more likely to end up in jail and prison if you are the child of an incarcerated parent.

The statistic that really bothers me is that the Bureau of Justice now predicts that one in three Black male babies born in this country is expected to go to jail or prison. One in three. That was not true in the 20th century; that was not true in the 19th century. That became true in the 21st century. The statistic for Latino boys is one in six.

This year was the 50th anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery March. The President came. Members of Congress came. Eighty thousand people came to Selma to celebrate the 50th anniversary. Almost none of them knew that in the state of Alabama today, 31 percent of the Black male population has permanently lost the right to vote.

The level of disenfranchisement in this country is at a record high since the passage of the Voting Rights Act. And the challenge is not just these data, not just these problems; it is our collective indifference to this phenomenon. And so I want to talk to you this morning about what I think we need to do to change things.

I am persuaded that we really need to change America. I really believe that. We really need to create more justice. We have to create more hope. We have to create more opportunity.
I spend my time in poor neighborhoods and in poor communities. I sometimes sit down with 12 and 13-year-old kids in low-income housing centers in projects. And when I have honest conversation with these children, what they will tell me is -- many of them -- that they don't expect to be free by the time they're 21. There is an expectation of incarceration.

And they don't say that because of something that they've seen on TV. They don't say that because of something they've heard. They say that because that's what they see happening in their communities. And this absence of hope, I believe, is a crisis. I don't know how we've gotten to a point in this country where we can actually know that the Bureau of Justice predicts that one in three Black kids is going to jail or prison, and we do nothing.

And so I want to talk about four things. And I'm so, so thrilled that many of you have come out on an early morning to be in a space like this. But I want to talk about four things I think we all have to do to change the world.

The first is, I am persuaded that if we want to make a difference for the children of this city, the children of this state, we first have to commit ourselves to getting proximate to the places and the people who are at risk. You cannot change the world from a distance.

If you want to make a difference in the world, you've got to get close to the children and the communities and the places where
there is suffering, where there is inequality, where there is abuse of power.

I am persuaded that we have too many decision-makers and policy-makers trying to change things, trying to improve things from a distance. And when you're standing at a distance, you miss the nuances and details of problems. It's only when you get close that you hear and see those details.

Proximity is important because you'll learn things that you can't learn from a distance. You'll not only learn things, but you'll also learn that you have more power than you think you have.

I'm a product of proximity. I grew up in a community where Black children could not go to the public schools. I started my education in a colored school. In my community, when my dad was a teenager, there were no high schools for Black children. And I remember when I was a little boy, the lawyers coming into our community to make them open up the public schools.

And but for the intervention of these lawyers, but for their choice to get proximate, I wouldn't be standing here this morning. But because they did, I got to go to high school. And then I got to go to college. I had a great time in college. I went to college in Pennsylvania. I was very active in music. I was very active in sports. I was a philosophy major. I actually loved college.
I just thought it was great that you could go someplace, and you go to the dining hall and they feed you, and then you go outside and you play with your friends. And I just decided after my third year in college that I wanted to stay in college the rest of my life. [Laughter]

And I was a philosophy major, so I would sometimes say to my friends, I'd say, "Oh, you know, I'm a philosophy major, so I'm going to go out on the hillside, and I'm going to think some deep thoughts." And I would. I'd go out there, and I'd sit there.

And one day during my senior year, I was out there on the hillside, and somebody came up to me and said, "You're a philosophy major and you're a senior. What are you going to do after you graduate?" And I heard this as a very hostile question. [Laughter] Because I realized that nobody was going to pay me to philosophize when I graduated.

And so, I started to figure out how I could stay in school. And because nobody in my family had graduated from college, I didn't know what I'm sure all of you know; I didn't know that in this country, if you want to do graduate work in history, or English, or political science, you actually have to know something about history, English, or political science to get admitted. [Laughter]

I was intimidated by that, so I kept looking around. And to be honest, that's how I found law school. [Laughter] It was pretty clear
to me that you don't need to know anything to go to law school.

[Laughter and applause]

And so, I signed up for that. And a few months later, I found myself sitting in a classroom at Harvard Law School, and I was so disappointed, because I went to law school because I was interested in doing something about racial inequality. I wanted to do something about poverty. I wanted to do something about injustice. And it didn't sound like anybody was talking about race or poverty or injustice. So I decided to leave.

I finished my first year, and then I went to the School of Government at Harvard, the Kennedy School, and I thought, "That will be a better program for me." And I went over to the School of Government. And two months into my year there, I woke up one morning and I looked in the mirror, and I thought to myself, "Wow. I'm even more miserable here than I was at the law school."

[Laughter]

So I went back to the law school. And in the midst of my law school career, I took a course that required that I get proximate to people on death row. And I found this community of people in this country who were literally dying for legal assistance. Hundreds of them, facing execution.

We have a horrific system. In this country, we have a system of justice that treats you better if you're rich and guilty than if you're poor and innocent. Wealth, not culpability, shapes outcomes. I
couldn't believe how we were actually killing people with no access to lawyers, with no access to fairness.

It's then that I began to practice in this area and started to learn something about children. You know, proximity is important. My clients have gotten younger and younger and younger. And the thing that we have to understand is that there are ways in which these problems have emerged because of some of the things that we've let happen.

You know, 30 years ago, we had people going around this country arguing that some children aren't children. And these criminologists tried to persuade us that there are kids that look like kids, that sometimes sound like kids, that sometimes act like kids, but they're not really kids. And these criminologists argued that these children, mostly Black and Brown kids, they said, are not children; they said they're "super predators". That's the word they made up.

They used that word to demonize a generation of children. And that's when states like New York started lowering the minimum age for trying children as adults. It's when the states started putting kids in adult systems. We now have 15 states with no minimum age for trying a child as an adult.

There are some 3,000 children who've been sentenced to die in prison. Ten thousand children on any given day are in adult jails or prisons, with no sight or sound separation. And proximity to this, I will tell you, will make you want to do different things.
I worked on a case some years ago involving a 14-year-old boy who was living in a household where his mother was repeatedly the target of a lot of domestic violence. She had a boyfriend. And when this man would start drinking, he would get violent. And one day, the man had been drinking, and he came home, and he walked into the kitchen, and he called the boy's mother into the kitchen.

And she walked in there, and the man just walked up to her and he just punched her in the face. She fell down, and she hit her head as she fell down, and she was on the floor, unconscious, bleeding. Her son came running into the kitchen to help his mom recover, and he tried to wake up his mom. He tried to get her to respond, but she was non-responsive. And after 10 minutes, this child thought his mom was dead. She wasn't dead, but he thought she was.

This little boy got up and he walked into the bedroom where the man was sleeping, and he started to go to the phone to call the police or the ambulance. But instead, he walked over to a dresser drawer where he knew this man kept his handgun. He opened the drawer and he pulled out the gun.

This little boy walked over to where the man was sleeping and he pointed the gun at the man's head. The man was snoring. And when the man stopped snoring, this little boy tragically pulled the trigger and shot this man in the head. The man died almost instantly.
This little boy was very small for his age. He was under 5-feet tall. He weighed less than 100 pounds. He'd never been in trouble before. Had no prior juvenile adjudications. He was actually a decent student, and he might have been tried as a juvenile but for the fact that the man that he shot and killed, his mother's boyfriend, that man was a deputy sheriff.

And because he was a deputy sheriff, the prosecutor insisted that this child be tried as an adult. The judge certified him to stand trial as an adult, and they immediately placed him in an adult jail. He had been there three days before his grandmother called me to get involved and asked me if I would get involved. I said I would. I went to the jail. And this little boy walked into the visitation room, and he was so small, and he seemed so terrified.

He sat down. I started asking him questions. But no matter what I asked him, he wouldn't say a word. I finally put my pen down. I said, "Look, I can't help you if you don't talk to me. You got to talk to me." He just kept staring at the wall. I couldn't figure out what to do, so I got up and I walked around the table. I pulled my chair close to him. I said, "Come on, you got to talk to me. I can't help you if you don't talk to me." And the little boy just kept staring at the wall. I couldn't figure out what to do.

So after a few minutes, I just leaned on him. I don't even know why, but I leaned on him. And when I leaned on him, he leaned back. And when he leaned back, I put my arm around him, and I said,
"Come on, you got to talk to me. I can't help you if you don't talk to me." And that's when this little boy started crying hysterically.

And through his tears, he began talking to me not about what happened with the man, not about what happened with his mother; he started talking to me about what had happened at the jail. He told me on the first night, several men had hurt him. He told me on the next night, he had been raped by several people. He told me on the night before I'd gotten there, so many people had hurt him, he couldn't remember how many there had been. I held this little boy while he cried hysterically for almost an hour.

I finally got him calm. I said, "You stay right here. I'm going to get you out of here." And I tried to leave -- I will never forget that child grabbing my arm and saying, "Please, please, please, don't go." I said, "No, it's okay. It's all right. I'm going to be right back. You just stay right here." I left that jail. And the question I had in my mind is: Who is responsible for this? And the answer is: We are.

We are. We have been too silent in this country. We have been indifferent. We have been too distant from the children in our country that are most at need. Whenever a country begins to believe that some of its children aren't really children, we are going to do cruel things. We're going to do abusive things. We're going to do unjust things. I believe all children are children. When we forget that, we are at risk. And so we have to get closer to these children.
You've been taught that if there are parts of the city where there is high crime, or where there are bad schools, or where there's abuse or neglect, we're suffering in inequality, what we've been taught is you stay away from those parts of the community.

I'm here to argue that you should get closer to those parts of our community. You should get closer to the people who are being incarcerated. You should get closer to the people who are coming out of jails and prisons because proximity will teach you how to change the world.

Second thing. I believe that we can't just get proximate; we have to change the narrative behind the problems that have given rise to the way we're dealing with children in New York.

You see, there is a narrative behind mass incarceration. It's not just that we've made bad policy choices. We decided to deal with drug addiction as a crime issue rather than a health issue. We decided to kind of take away power and discretion from professionals in the court system, and we created mandatory sentencing. All of those are parts of the problem. But the real problem is that we've been corrupted by a narrative of fear and anger.

We've allowed our politicians to compete with one another over who can be the toughest on crime. And any time you make policy decisions rooted in fear and anger, you will be abusive. You will create injustice. You will create inequality.
I look around the world. Wherever there is oppression, wherever there is abuse of power, wherever people are being mistreated, there is a narrative of fear and anger behind those policies. And so we have to change the narrative. We have to resist the politics of fear and anger.

I think we have to change the narrative in this country about race. You see, I think all of us are infected with a disease. We are all burdened by our history of racial inequality in this country. Our parents and grandparents could have and should have done something, but they didn't. As a result of that, we are bearing the burden of this narrative of racial difference.

So I think we actually have to commit ourselves to truth and reconciliation. I think we have to talk about things we have not talked about. You see, I think we have to talk about the genocide in America, what we did to indigenous people and the ways in which we actually allowed this narrative to manifest itself.

You see, I think we have to talk about things like slavery. We've never had the conversation in this country that we need to have about slavery and the way it shaped us and created this legacy. I don't think the great evil of American slavery was involuntary servitude and forced labor. For me, the great evil of American slavery was the narrative of racial difference we created to legitimate it. It was the ideology of white supremacy that we made up so we would feel better about owning other human beings.
There was slavery all over the world. Slavery in Africa, slavery in Asia. Those are mostly societies with slavery. Anybody could fall into slavery; it was transitional. In America, we became a slave society. We made slavery a permanent hereditary status essentially tied to race. And to legitimize it, we made up this idea of white supremacy. And we never dealt with it.

The Thirteenth Amendment doesn't deal with the narrative of racial difference. It only deals with involuntary servitude. And it's why I've argued that slavery didn't really end in 1865; it just evolved. It turned into decades of terrorism and violence and lynching. Between 1870 and 1945, we lynched thousands of people. We traumatized people of color, and we reinforced this narrative of racial difference.

Older people of color come up to me sometimes and they say, "Mr. Stevenson, I get so angry when I hear somebody on TV talking about how we're dealing with terrorism for the first time in our nation's history after 9/11." They say, "We grew up with terror. We had to worry about being bombed and lynched every day of our lives."

The demographic geography of this country, this city, this state, was shaped by terror. Most of the Black people that are in New York City, in Buffalo, in Detroit and Cleveland and Chicago and Boston and Los Angeles and Oakland, did not come to these communities as immigrants looking for new economic opportunities. They came
to these communities as refugees and exiles from terror in the South.

Beginning of the 20th century, 90-some percent of the Black population lived in the deep South. They fled during the 20th century from terror, traumatized. If you know anything about refugee communities, you know you have to deal with that trauma. We haven't done that.

Even when we talk about Civil Rights, I get worried, I'll be honest. It's the 50th anniversary of a lot of things, but I hear people talking about the Civil Rights movement, and we're so celebratory. And everybody gets to celebrate. We don't ask any qualifying questions. And it worries me.

I hear people talking about the Civil Rights movement, and it sounds like a three-day carnival. On day one, Rosa Parks didn't give up her seat on a bus. On day two, Dr. King led a march on Washington. And on day three, we just changed all the laws.

And, I mean, if that was our history, we'd be a great country, but that's not our history. Our history is that for decades we have humiliated people of color. For decades we've burdened, and battered, and excluded, and beat. We told Black people, "You're not good enough to vote." We told them, "You're not good enough to go to school with the rest of us."
We have marginalized, and isolated, and not valued the victimization and suffering of communities of color. And because of that, we are struggling. And the children that are most at risk are these kids of color, and we won't get to it until we change the narrative about race.

I think we should have committed ourselves to a process of truth and reconciliation at the end of the Civil Rights movement, but we didn't do it. And so we have to do it now. We actually have to begin to talk about these issues.

We have a project. We want to create spaces in this country where we resurrect the history of our nation. If you go to South Africa, there's a recognition that they couldn't survive apartheid without truth and reconciliation. If you go to Rwanda, there's a recognition that they will not recover from the genocide without truth and reconciliation.

Go to Germany. If you go to Germany, in Berlin, you can't go 100 meters without seeing a stone or a marker that's been placed at the home of a Jewish family that was abducted and taken to the camps. The Germans want you to go to the camps and reflect soberly on the history of the Holocaust.

In this country, we do the opposite. We don't like talking about race. We don't like talking about racial justice. We ignore these disparities. And we have to change that narrative.
Third thing. It's not enough just to get proximate and change the narrative. I believe that we will not raise the age in this state; we will not create better outcomes from children, until we become more hopeful about what we can do.

You see, I believe that hopelessness is the enemy of justice. It is the big burden that most of our children face. We are too hopeless about what we can do to help our children.

I go into courtrooms and I see a hopeless judge, and a hopeless prosecutor, and a hopeless defense attorney, and I know there won't be justice. I go into too many schools where I see hopeless principals and teachers and kids, and I know there won't be the kind of intervention we need. Your hope is necessary. You have to believe things we have not seen in this country, in this city, about what we can do for all of our children.

If you're not hopeful, you're not going to be able to help. You've got to protect your hope. I don't know what makes you hopeless. I know what makes me hopeless, and I've got to protect myself from the things that make me hopeless just like you have to protect yourself from the things that make you hopeless.

And I'll be honest; I'll tell you what makes me hopeless. I live in Alabama. It's the worst state in the country for me to be living in. [Laughter] Because what makes me hopeless is when I hear people trying to romanticize -- they start talking about the "good old days." And I don't like it when people try to play off our history. I don't
like the Confederate flag. I don't like these images of the old South. I don't like the way we have tried to hide from these realities.

And being hopeless will get you into a lot of trouble. We have to believe things we have not seen. Hope is what will get you to stand up when other people are saying, "Sit down." Hope is what will get you to speak when other people are saying, "Be quiet."

I had the great privilege as a young lawyer of knowing Rosa Parks. She was an amazing person. And what she taught me was the importance of hope.

When I was a young lawyer, I moved to Montgomery, and Johnnie Carr, the architect of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, called me up, and she said, "Bryan, I understand you're a young lawyer who just moved to town." I said, "Yes, I am." She said, "Well, I'm Johnnie Carr. I'm the architect of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. I'm the president of the Montgomery Improvement Association."

And she said, "Since you're a young lawyer, I'm going to call you up sometimes, and I'm going to ask you to go some places and speak." And then she said, "Sometimes I'm going to ask you to go some places and listen." And she said, "When I call you up and ask you to do something, you're going to say, 'Yes, ma'am.'" [Laughter] So I said, "Yes, ma'am." And she would call me up and send me places to talk, and sometimes send me places to listen.
Then one day, she called me up, and she said, "Bryan, Ms. Parks is coming to town. Rosa Parks is coming back from Detroit. And we're going to go over to Virginia Durr's house" -- this white woman whose husband, Clifford Durr, represented Dr. King. "We're just going to talk." She said, "Do you want to come over and listen?" I said, "Oh yes, ma'am, I do." And sometimes she would say, "Now, Bryan, what does the word 'listen' mean?" And I'd have to explain to her that I knew I wasn't supposed to talk.

But I went over there and I listened to these women talk. And what was amazing to me, in their 70s and 80s, they weren't talking about what they had done; they were talking about their hopes of what they were going to do. And hopefulness is important. I sat there and listened for two hours. I was so inspired. And after two hours, Ms. Parks turned to me and she says, "Now, Bryan, tell me what you're trying to do. Tell me what the Equal Justice Initiative is. Tell me about your work."

And I looked at Ms. Carr to see if I had permission to speak, and she nodded. [Laughter] And I gave her my rap. I said, "We're trying to do something to end the death penalty. We want to eliminate these abusive conditions of confinement. We're trying to help children prosecuted as adults. We're trying to do something about mental illness in the jails and prisons. We want to talk about race. We want to do something about poverty. We want to do something about abuse and neglect. We want to do something about the way in which we're creating mass incarceration." I gave her my whole rap.
And when I finished, she looked at me, and she said, "Mm, mm, mm." [Laughter] She said, "That's going to make you tired, tired, tired." [Laughter] And that's when Ms. Carr leaned forward and she put her finger in my face, and she said, "That's why you've got to be brave, brave, brave." We have to be courageous to be hopeful. But your hope is essential.

I wish I could stop right here. Proximity, change the narrative, and hope. But I've got one more. I don't think we can create a new world -- we can't create a better future for our children -- just by getting proximate, just by changing narratives, and just by being hopeful. The fourth thing we have to do, is that we have to do uncomfortable things. I hate saying that. Because doing uncomfortable things is hard. Human beings are built to do what's comfortable.

But I'm here to tell you that we have never ended injustice and oppression. We have never created real opportunity. We have never done things that transform society by just doing the things that are comfortable. To change the world, you've got to do uncomfortable things. I've read and studied. I've never seen it happen without someone doing something uncomfortable.

You know, it's hard, because we're all programmed to see comfort. We like comfort. I like comfort. I'm not speaking against comfort. I gave a talk down in Mississippi, and I flew down there, and the people met me at the airport.
They said, "Oh, Mr. Stevenson, we know all about you. We know what kind of person you are. We know what kind of lawyer you are. We know what kind of work you do. We're having our conference at the luxurious DoubleTree Hotel. We decided that you wouldn't want to stay at the luxurious DoubleTree Hotel, so we've asked one of the farmers to put you up at the barn." I said, "What is wrong with you?" I said, "Of course I want to stay at the luxurious DoubleTree Hotel. I like those cookies just like everybody else." [Laughter]

That's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about is that you have to position yourselves in difficult places. You have to say things that people sometimes don't want to hear. You have to fight against things that you don't have to fight about, but they're necessary.

And there's a different metric system for those of us who want to do this. It was taught to me by an older man. I was giving a talk in a church, and an older man came into the back of the church. He was sitting in the back, just staring at me. Had this very stern, almost angry look on his face.

I was distracted by him, because he was looking at me so intensely. And I got through my talk, and people came up to me, and they were very nice. But that man kept sitting in the back, staring at me. And finally, when everybody else left, he got a little boy -- this older Black man in this wheelchair got a little boy to wheel him up
to the front of the church. And he came down the middle aisle of that church with a stern, angry look on his face.

And he got in front of me, and he put his hand up, and he said, "Do you know what you're doing?" And I just stood there. And he asked me again. He said, "Do you know what you're doing?" And I stepped back and I mumbled something. Then he asked me one last time. He said, "Do you know what you're doing?" And then he looked at me and he says, "I'm going to tell you what you're doing."

And this older man looked at me. He says, "You are beating the drum for justice. You keep beating the drum for justice." And I was so moved. I was also really relieved, because I just didn't know -- [Applause]

But then he grabbed me by my jacket, and he pulled me into his wheelchair. He said, "Come here, come here, come here." He says, "I'm going to show you something." And this older man turned his head, and he said, "Do you see this scar I have behind my right ear?" He says, "I got that scar in Green County, Alabama, 1963, trying to register people to vote."

Then he turned his head and he said, "Do you see this cut I have down here at the bottom of my neck?" He said, "I got that cut in Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1964, trying to register people to vote." He turned his head and he said, "Do you see this dark spot on my head?" He said, "That's my bruise. I got my bruise in Birmingham, Alabama, 1965, trying to register people to vote."
And then he looked at me. He said, "I'm going to tell you something, young man." He said, "People look at me. They think I'm some old man sitting in a wheelchair covered with cuts and bruises and scars." He said, "But I'm going to tell you something." He said, "These aren't my cuts. These aren't my bruises. These aren't my scars." He said, "These are my medals of honor."

There is something that happens when we get proximate, when we change narratives, when we stay hopeful, and when we do uncomfortable things, I believe really simple things. I believe that each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done. I think if somebody tells a lie, they're not just a liar. I think if somebody takes something that doesn't belong to them, they're not just a thief. I think even if you kill somebody, you're not just a killer.

And there is no community among us for whom that is true more than our children. I am persuaded that in this city and in this state, the opposite of poverty is not wealth. We talk too much about money in New York. We talk too much about money in America. I am persuaded that in New York City, and in communities all across the state, the opposite of poverty is not wealth. I believe the opposite of poverty is justice. And when we do justice for our children, we change this narrative and we create a new future.

And finally, I believe that when I come to New York -- I teach at NYU; I come up here once a week -- when I come to this city -- I love New York. I love what I see here. It's a beautiful, beautiful
city, a beautiful state. But I cannot judge how we're doing in this city; I can't judge how we're doing in this state by looking at how we treat the rich and the powerful and the privileged.

You judge the character of a community, its commitment to justice, its commitment to the rule of law, not by looking at how it treats the rich and the powerful and the privileged. To judge a community, you have to look at how it treats the poor, the incarcerated, and the condemned. [Applause]

We have great challenges in New York. We do. But we also have a great opportunity to get proximate, to change some narratives, to do some hopeful things; and yes, to do some uncomfortable things. And I think when you do that with wonderful organizations like CCC, we can create a better, more hopeful, healthier future for our children.

I'm excited that so many of you are dedicated to that, that you'd come out early in the morning to hear someone like me. I want to wish you all the very, very best. Thank you. [Applause/Standing ovation]

Juju Chang: Very well done, very well done. Thank you.

Bryan Stevenson: Thank you.

Juju Chang: The fact that you're on your feet says it all. Bryan, thank you so much for banging that drum for justice so loudly. I know that the
idea that "children are children" is something that is reverberating in my head this morning, and will throughout the day.

I actually think of you as a fully self-actualized human being, because in fact, you are paid to philosophize for a living. [Laughter] Which is what you were thinking you might do in college.

I was also asked to Tweet again, so I will do that. I'm encouraging you all to do the same. I'll tell you the factoid that I'm Tweeting now, just so you can join in. You can either re-Tweet my Tweet at @JujuChangABC, or at @CCCNewYork.

Part of the reason why we're here is to talk about sort of the good news and the bad news. The good news is that New York City has made significant progress over the last decades in terms of school outcomes and greater numbers of children benefiting from early education, and high school graduation rates are in fact improving.

Just last week, though, I was in Westchester at a high school doing a story for Nightline, and the principal told me that 98 percent of her students not only graduate from high school but go onto college. Ninety-eight percent. So think about that in contrast to this factoid that I just Tweeted out, which is that 40 percent of Black and Latino high school students just an hour south of that high school do not graduate on time.

In a city where one in every three children live in poverty, and where about 35 percent of adults have competed a college
education, there is a clear need for organizations like CCC to champion policies and programs that help prepare young people all the way from early childhood, all the way through middle school, high school, and set them on a path to careers.

Our next honoree is a perfect example of how every one of us can use our own platform to improve outcomes for children and youth. Through the founding of America Needs You, Robert Reffkin is a leader in the fight for the economic mobility of ambitious, first-generation college students. That means children in families that are the first to go to college in their families.

Demonstrating his absolute commitment to youth education enrichment programs, Robert ran -- get this -- the marathon is this Sunday, right? He ran 50 marathons in all 50 states, and he raised over a million dollars in doing so.

Many students without professional mentors or family legacies face the difficult challenges of selecting, securing, and succeeding in jobs or internship opportunities that lead to those promising career platforms. Through America Needs You, students are matched with mentors who cultivate strengths and coach fellows into successful careers.

Robert's vision for America Needs You is to build a movement of likeminded individuals who believe that one day, there will be no barriers to economic mobility for students with ambition and ability.
We recognize Robert Reffkin with the Vanguard Award for his commitment to helping young people succeed, and for his leadership, encouraging others to take part in that mission, and to do their part to remove barriers to economic mobility.

I see him making his way to the stage. Please welcome Robert Reffkin. [Applause]

Robert Reffkin: First of all, I'm very humbled and thankful to be here today, and shocked that at 7:30 we have two floors completely full. It's really a testament to how many people care about this organization and all the good work they do. And so thank you, Citizens' Committee for Children, for doing everything.

I feel fortunate that I'm able to be here today because of the kinds of work that organizations like this do. My mother was an immigrant from Israel, came here when she was 7 years old. Went to Ramaz, not too far away. Was not allowed to leave her one block because, back then, New York wasn't what it is today, and she was in the Upper West Side, which was a dangerous place. And she grew up in a very restricted household.

Eventually moved to California via Woodstock, like when it was the day of Woodstock. And went to Berkeley, California, where she met my father. My father was African-American, was a jazz musician. And when you are a jazz musician in the '70s, you do
drugs that it's very hard to come back from, which he did not come back from.

When I was born, my mom called my mother's mother and said, "I have a child." And she said, "I have one question. What is he?" And she said, "He is Jewish and African-American." Then she hung up the phone, and they never spoke again. My grandmother sent a letter saying I'm going to become a serial killer and all these kinds of things, and how terrible a decision it was. And I never met either my grandfather or my grandmother.

But I say that because, on one hand, my mother has lived a very entrepreneurial life. Being an immigrant, moving to a different state is being an entrepreneur, and that is hope. And I really appreciated the comments of hope and hopelessness. And what my mother did for me is, she didn't give up. She actually had to leave my father because he was abusive to himself and to others.

And she went to work in the JCC, Jewish Community Center, where she could work, make money, and I could have daycare at the same time. Really smart idea. And through that, ended up going to seven non-profits that all allowed her to be a single mother at the same time as taking care of me.

I have a child now who's here in the back. I don't know how you could be a single mother. I mean, we have two people. I just don't know. I don't know how you can do it. And so, I'm very thankful for everything she did.
Ultimately, I went through a bunch of non-profits. They gave me college support, career development, mentorship, which really mean a great deal. And it helped me go onto Columbia, to McKinsey, and Goldman Sachs, and the White House, and ultimately gave me the pathway to start a technology-driven real estate brokerage called Compass, where we have Maria Manuche at Table 14, who's a member of the family. And I'm very thankful for these types of organizations.

In 2009, I founded America Needs You, which was my way of giving thanks and honoring the organizations that had helped me. It basically took a bunch of young professionals -- I'm sure some of the children in this room have been involved with America Needs You -- and we provide mentorship to students who are the first in their family to go to college and below the poverty line. Below the poverty line is below $19,000 for a family of four. Again, I don't know how that's possible.

First in your family to go to college means you are trying to do something that no one in your family has ever done before. You can't ask anyone for help or guidance. So, we provide two summer internships, college support, career development, and transferring -- because half of our students are in community college -- transferring from community college to a four-year college.

The statistics, in terms of the proximity point -- you know, it was actually very hard for me. Actually, I don't know if I could
emotionally deal with helping and being involved below a certain age group. I don't know if I have that strength. So I'm thankful for all the people in this room who do.

What helped me, as I was finding hopelessness and hope in different points of my life, truthfully are people in this room, the staff, boards, and the supporters of organizations like this. Because I realized when I was in middle school that everyone wants to help. Like yes, it may not help like things are all great all the time, but every interaction is an opportunity. There are so many people that want to be helpful.

And I started asking people on the staff, the board, and people in this room, "Can I talk with you?" And everyone wanted to talk, and everyone was helpful. And it created this view that there's nothing but opportunity. And so I really want to thank people in this room for caring and being here today.

I'm very honored. I don't have much more to say. I just want to thank everyone here, because it really, really matters, just the positive energy, the hope, and the energy that people in this room give, and people notice. So thank you very much for everything. [Applause]

**Juju Chang:** As the mother of three Jewish-Korean kids, I really related to your remarks. Thank you so much. And congratulations. Are you running this Sunday?
Robert Reffkin: I have to take my daughter to school.

Juju Chang: He has to take his daughter to school. He's running out. That is a laudable goal to run out for.

At this point, I want to give you another fact to chew on, at breakfast. Did you know that one in four New York City households are headed by a single mom, or that a single mom in the Bronx makes about half the median household income for all families with children in New York City?

The disparities between men and women exist on multiple levels, we all know. It can be found in rates of poverty, in family homelessness, and in food insecurity. And these disparities only increase for Black and Latino women.

CCC's advocacy is designed to turn those outcomes around by advancing programs and supports for families that bring economic stability, that address hunger, and increase opportunities to obtain stable housing and remain stably employed, because that's the key.

Perhaps these are just some of the reasons that our next honoree has been a long-time supporter of CCC. Throughout her work as a philanthropist and social justice advocate, Anne Delaney has a long history of working towards a similar set of goals.

As chair of the board of the New York Women's Foundation, Anne champions a cross-cultural alliance of women, promoting economic
security and justice for women, families, and communities throughout New York.

Like CCC, the work of the Women's Foundation is focused on using research and data to raise awareness and mobilize New Yorkers to take action. Sound familiar? They also champion practical solutions that address disparities and improve outcomes for children and families.

Under Anne's leadership, the foundation is now one of the top three women funds in the world, and the largest in the United States. As many in this room know personally, Eleanor Roosevelt was one of CCC's founders. And we believe that Anne very much epitomizes Eleanor Roosevelt's strength of character, her willingness to use her means to consciously and intentionally advance a greater good, and her ability to work with others to achieve a lasting vision for making the world a better place for children and families.

That's why we are so thrilled this morning to honor Anne Delaney. Please welcome Anne. [Applause]

Anne Delaney: Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Juju, thank you for your introduction, and thank all of you. That's a really nice way to start the morning. And wow, what wisdom we have in this room. Thank you, Bryan, for that story and your work. We're so lucky to hear that and have you do that work. And Robert, you're just impressive in running all those marathons, so thank you also.
I am very grateful and humble to share the stage with all of you this morning. I know we're going to hear from Ismael Nazario also, and that will be equally inspiring.

I want to begin with a big thank you to CCC's executive director, Jennifer March, and their board and staff -- [Applause] -- for this Eleanor Roosevelt Award. It is an honor to receive an award in her name, after her, and someone so instrumental in leading our world forward in very dark times.

So, I thought it fitting to share this quote by her that exemplifies the spirit in which this organization was founded and does their work. Eleanor said, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." CCC is all about the dreams, the dreams that every child has, and they really do try to make them a reality.

Towards that goal, for over 70 years, CCC has been collecting data and putting it in context for us, so we can be the best advocates. And they did that way before Big Data became the cool buzz word.

When I first started my own philanthropic journey, the organizations in New York City doing this kind of strategic work revealed to me how important the role our non-profits play in our city. I found my way to CCC through an invitation to this exact breakfast, by people who are here in the audience. Katherine Kahan, Lori Black, Mahsa Pelosky.
And I remember when you told me that if I care about the welfare and well-being of women and girls in this city, I have to come and find out about how their lives begin, the challenges that exist when they're children. So I came and I learned a lot of things that still hold true today, that children do not grow up in isolation; they grow up in a home, a school, and a city; and that services within these environments need to be thoughtfully integrated.

So when we have information that 30 percent of the children in New York City live in poverty, and the majority of them live in female-headed households, and in some neighborhoods over 50 percent of children are not in pre-K, that is important. It makes a case for advocating for more childcare and more quality pre-K, with access to lunch and breakfast. [Applause]

Yep. And when the child is older, they need after-school programs and youth services. And the results will be twofold, because they benefit both the child and the mother, and the family. We know that for all mothers, when a child is safe, it allows her the peace of mind to live her life on her own terms, to financially contribute, and to become the person she wants to be for herself and her family.

If you're curious, you could look up on their excellent data website your own neighborhood to see how kids and families around you are doing. And look at other neighborhoods, too. We all understand that the quality of our childhoods affects our whole adult lives. And that is why it is so crucial to get that part right, not just for our own
children, but for all children. And when we are able to do that, we start to make progress.

For one, we now have free universal pre-K, and that has long been a recommendation of CCC. We have some community farms in neighborhoods that were once food deserts. And now they have more access to quality food. There's progress in juvenile justice services, although we know there's a long way to go. And some progress towards more affordable housing.

These are successes that will continue to be in the sights of CCC. And they are also the reasons why I support them. And I've decided to double my donation this year. Please consider doing the same. Any amount doubled makes a difference. [Applause]

And thank you, thank you again, CCC, for this award. It truly is meaningful to me, because in the spirit of Eleanor, I will continue to do my philanthropy, and hopefully with some of her vision but all of her dedication. Thank you. [Applause]

Juju Chang: Well done. Thank you so much, Anne.

Because we started off this morning talking about the challenges in our justice system, we should also note that good news/bad news; there has been in recent years significant decreases in the number of youth who are arrested and the number of youth in juvenile detention, with more youth and their families engaged in services with the communities. All good news.
But there's also the cloud along with this silver lining. It's important progress, of course. But the work doesn't end there. We need to continue to raise awareness about raising the age of criminal responsibility in New York. The youth who are held in adult prisons are far more likely to suffer physical and emotional abuse, that Bryan told us about earlier, within even these juvenile facilities.

The isolation that young people often face in adult facilities is destructive to their mental health and causes irreparable harm. In fact, studies show that youth are 36 times -- not 36 percent -- 36 times more likely to commit suicide in an adult facility than a juvenile facility.

The Samuel P. Peabody Award recipient, Ismael Nazario, is familiar, unfortunately firsthand, with the consequences of youth being tried as adults and in solitary confinement. As a case manager now at the Fortune Society, Ismael helps former inmates from Rikers Island reenter society after release.

Ismael himself was arrested as a teenager and spent 300 days in solitary confinement at Rikers Island, which is bad enough. But that was before he was ever convicted of a crime.

Now, as part of I-CAN, which stands for Individualized Correction Achievement Network, he helps those at high-risk for recidivism, and he's also a notable advocate for prison reform and for raising the age of criminal responsibility in New York.
Last year, Ismael took part in a video produced by the Center for Investigative Reporting in which he narrated his own experience of getting sent to Rikers and spending those 300 days in "the box." I'd like to invite you all to join me in watching the video.

CLICK IMAGE TO WATCH VIDEO

Juju Chang: Since the production of this video, "The Box," there's a little progress report that I'd like to share. In September, Mayor de Blasio announced that 16 and 17-year-olds would no longer be placed in solitary confinement at Rikers. [Applause]

And there is a solid commitment to end solitary confinement for youth under 21 by the end of this year. Now, please keep your applause going for Ismael Nazario. [Applause/Standing ovation]

Ismael Nazario: Well, thank you. [Laughter] And good morning. There's no words at this very moment that could describe how I feel. I mean, I'm going to say thank you to CCC for giving me this opportunity. I'm greatly humbled by this moment. This is a great achievement and
accomplishment for me. I have to thank the Fortune Society, of course. I have to thank everybody that came out to show support.

Now, me receiving this award, I can't take all the credit. I think that would be actually pretty selfish of me, because there's people on a day-to-day that support the cause and actually believe that our children are worth the fight, actually believe that our children are the future, and actually believe that just locking them up and throwing them away to be disposed of, like a piece of trash, isn't what it should be about for these young people.

I'm also going to say that I'm accepting this award on behalf of all the advocates that go to all the rallies, conferences, and really try to make change. This award I'm accepting on behalf of them, and I'm also accepting it on behalf of all of the youth that don't have the opportunity to advocate for themselves. I think I'm going to give them a voice. [Applause]

I just want to take a quick spin back to the animation that was just viewed, and I just want to speak a little bit about that young person that was in that video. So I think for me, that young person actually represents all of the young people that are in the criminal justice system that are faced with the barriers that they're faced with on a day-to-day basis. And he represents all of the young people whose stories have gone untold and have been silenced by the system, and the system that has subtracted away from them opportunity, opportunity to actually live life because of a mistake they made.
Also, I'd like to say that that young person in that video shows that mistakes can be made, but even though you make a mistake, it's possible to make change. He represents that change is possible.

Another thing I'd like to say about that young person is, he's the reason why I do the work that I do today, and why I feel that our children are worth fighting for. And change needs to take place in the criminal justice system as well as Rikers and prisons as a whole.

One more last thing about that young person in that video, is that young person most importantly, ladies and gentlemen, has grown. He's grown. And he's grown to the person that's on this stage today before you, accepting this Peabody Award. And I just want to thank everybody for coming out. Thank you. [Applause/Standing ovation]

Juju Chang: There is, as we know, a lot of compelling research for why advocates say that solitary confinement is a form of torture. Thank you so much, Ismael, for sharing your story with us.

Right now, I want to draw your attention for a moment to the CCC annual report that's sitting at your table. When you go home, you can read more about CCC. But right now, what you can do is take the challenge, take the inspiration from Bryan Stevenson, from Ismael, from everyone else you heard this morning, from Anne and everyone else who's part of the breakfast.

As Bryan told us, hopelessness is the enemy of justice. And the opposite of poverty, he said, is justice. And so, if you can take a
moment to think about a contribution to CCC, it would make all the difference in helping with all the issues that we talked about today, from early childhood education, to opportunities for single moms, to mass incarceration of youth in this country.

If you open up the first page of the report, you'll find an envelope, and it makes it really convenient for you to make a donation this morning. I'd encourage you to do so. Not that you need that much more motivation after this morning.

It's now my pleasure to turn the podium over to CCC's executive director, Jennifer March, to reflect on the inspiration. Jennifer.

[Applause]

Jennifer March: Good morning. Thank you for being here and for the support that you have provided and continue to provide for CCC and the children of New York. A special note of thanks to CCC's board, Advocacy Council, and staff for their help pulling today's event together, and for their work all year long.

And I also want to express my gratitude to our honorees, who not only champion vitally important issues, but who have developed, supported, and are delivering evidence-driven solutions that improve the lives and outcomes of New York's children, youth, and families. In this way, each of our honorees is a partner in CCC's mission to ensure that every child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.
By drawing attention to the profound and interconnected needs of children and families, Anne Delaney has used her philanthropic muscle to fight for economic security, safety, and justice in communities across New York City.

Robert Reffkin has shown how high-achieving, low-income students can secure economic mobility through mentoring and career-oriented internships, and his organization is so successful that it's expanding beyond our city to the national stage.

And I'm also grateful to Ismael Nazario for sharing how he transformed his personal experience into helping incarcerated youth make the successful transition out of the justice system, and for advocating to end the use of solitary confinement, and raise the age of criminal responsibility.

And we're especially privileged to have had Bryan Stevenson as our keynote speaker. Bryan's work has exposed the brutality and bias of a broken criminal justice system as well as the troubling consequences that incarceration has on families and entire communities. His campaign for fairer sentencing guidelines offers a new direction that will benefit the larger society and nation as a whole.

At CCC, we are committed to the vision of justice articulated by our keynote speaker and our honorees. For decades now, CCC has championed treating all children as children. And with our Raise the Age New York coalition partners, we're focused on raising the age
of criminal responsibility in this state. We know that proven alternatives can keep the vast majority of youth out of court and the criminal justice system altogether.

And when incarceration is ordered, we also know that proven approaches address the physical and mental health, educational and employment needs of youth, and keep them out of the toxic and destructive environments of adult jails and prisons, out of solitary confinement, and address the collateral consequences of incarceration.

The statutory reforms that CCC and our Raise the Age New York campaign partners are advancing focus on producing good outcomes for youth, their families, and society as a whole. An enormous amount of time, energy, and resources has gone into our advocacy. And while the state's adopted budget included funding for implementation, sadly, the program bill did not pass, leaving New York State as one of only two states whose justice system continues to treat anyone 16 years and older as an adult.

Yes, we are disappointed though perhaps not surprised, because after all, we know that nothing we do is easy. If it were easy, our work and your contributions wouldn't be so necessary and so vital. That's why we're all here, to do hard and necessary things. In fact, even in areas of significant progress, challenges remain many.

Today, over 200,000 income-eligible infants and toddlers lack access to childcare. Thousands more 3-year-olds lack access to
preschool. Also troubling, in a time when income inequality is part of the local and national conversation, staff in contracted community-based childcare centers across this city have not had a pay increase since January 2005. Ten years without a pay increase.

And for elementary and high school students, after school opportunities are far from universal, and summer camp programming remains insecure, left every year to the eleventh-hour budget negotiations.

In the face of these challenges, however, we know something else. We know how to fight the hard fight, the long fight, and win. Because we've done it before.

Whether we speak of CCC's advocacy that resulted in closing costly juvenile placement facilities, creating statutory funding for alternatives to detention, or moving youth placement facilities close to home, the impact of our persistence goes beyond the youth who now benefit from alternatives to detention, or regular contact with their attorneys, family members, and educational credits that transfer. The community at large also benefits, as juvenile crime, detention, and placement levels, as well as rates of recidivism continue to decline.

Importantly, we also know that CCC's advocacy with our Campaign for Children partners has informed the creation of full-day universal pre-kindergarten, as well as universal after-school for every middle school student. It has also recently prevented 17 after-school
programs from closing, restored funding so 34,000 children could have summer camp, and reduced parent fees for subsidized childcare. [Applause]

Again, the impact of our persistence goes beyond the benefits experienced by children and youth that enroll in these services. As poor and low-income parents also benefit, they can continue to work without having to make an impossible choice, whether to risk leaving their children unattended or quit their job entirely.

As a result of our advocacy, children benefit, families benefit, New York City benefits. And the great driver in CCC's credibility, respect, and impact is Keeping Track: our biannual printed publication, our new Community Risk Ranking, and our evergreen Keeping Track Online database that provide an unequaled statistical portrait of New York City's 1.8 million children.

Our unique, robust data tools are invaluable to lawmakers, service providers, philanthropists-- anyone who wants to understand accurately and in detail the lives of New York City's children, and to create and support programs and services that produce the greatest impact. And CCC makes this information free and available to everyone.

By sharing our data widely, CCC's impact and value -- the value you create -- reaches an ever-expanding constituency interested in making the city a better place for children.
In closing, Bryan Stevenson wrote that the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice. And that the true measure of our commitment to justice, of our character as a society, is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned.

Since 1944, CCC has fought to ensure that every child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. We believe these rights are universal, and we use our advocacy to secure these rights for the poorest, the most excluded, and the most vulnerable among us; to create a more just city in which every child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe.

This is not a mission for the timid. It's a choice of those bold enough, committed enough, and caring enough to create a city worthy of all of our children. Thank you for being with CCC this morning, for all that you have done and will do with CCC in the months and years ahead. [Applause]

Juju Chang: I'm going to leave you with one last factoid, okay? And that is that in order to remain independent, CCC does not take government funding. Period. So it is truly this breakfast and people like you who make all this work possible.

So take the inspiration from Bryan Stevenson. If you want to fight hopelessness and fight for justice, you can do several things. I'm Tweeting, as I'm hoping everyone is too. Take the card with you. Tweet out some of the facts that you found compelling this
morning. Open up that annual report. Pull out this envelope and make a donation. Take this with you. Makes all the difference.

Thank you so much for being here. The last hallmark of this breakfast is we end on time, as well. Have a good one. [Applause]