

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 11, 1998, as National Children's Day. I urge the American people to express their love and appreciation for children on this day and on every day throughout the year. I invite Federal officials, local governments, communities, and particularly all American families to join together in observing this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities that honor our Nation's children. I also urge all Americans to reflect upon the importance of children to our families, the importance of strong families to our children, and the importance of each to America.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7140 of October 15, 1998

White Cane Safety Day, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The white cane is both a simple tool and a powerful symbol. For people who are blind or visually impaired, it can be the key to greater mobility, giving them information about their surroundings and allowing them to travel safely whether crossing the street or crossing the country. For those who are sighted, the white cane shows that blind or visually impaired people have the ability, the desire, and the right to participate in every aspect of our national life. It is also a reminder that, whether as pedestrians or drivers, we should respond with care and courtesy to people using a white cane. And for all of us, the white cane symbolizes the independence every citizen needs and deserves if he or she is to contribute fully to society.

Our annual observance of White Cane Safety Day gives us the opportunity not only to celebrate the accomplishments of those who use the white cane, but also to renew our commitment to removing those barriers, both physical and attitudinal, that prevent people with disabilities from reaching their full potential. Since passage of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Telecommunications Act, we have made great progress in our efforts to ensure that all people with disabilities enjoy equal access to employment opportunities, education, public accommodations, housing, transportation, telecommunications, emerging technologies, and other aspects of our society.

We still have a long way to go, however, before we achieve the full inclusion, empowerment, and independence of all Americans with disabilities. The public and private sectors must work in partnership to raise awareness of the rights protected by the ADA and other laws, as well as the responsibilities and obligations these laws mandate. It is crucial that we pursue

a comprehensive strategy to enable people with all types of disabilities to obtain and sustain competitive employment in our Nation's thriving economy. Men and women with disabilities have much to offer, and their energy, creativity, and hard work can greatly strengthen our Nation and our economy. As we observe White Cane Safety Day and acknowledge the importance of the white cane as an instrument of personal freedom, let us reaffirm our determination to ensure equal opportunity for every American, including people who are blind or visually impaired.

To honor the many achievements of blind and visually impaired citizens and to recognize the white cane's significance in advancing independence, the Congress, by joint resolution approved October 6, 1964, has designated October 15 of each year as "White Cane Safety Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1998, as White Cane Safety Day. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, and business leaders to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7141 of October 16, 1998

National Character Counts Week, 1998

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

As Americans, we are a people full of hope, confident in our capacity to make life better for ourselves and others. We look forward to the promise of the future, and we have high goals for the 21st century: to remain the world's leading force for peace, freedom, prosperity, and security; to keep the American Dream alive for everyone willing to work for it; to come together across lines of race, religion, and other individual differences to become one America. But everything we hope to accomplish depends, as it always has, on the hearts and minds of the American people.

One of the greatest building blocks of character is citizen service. We must do more as individuals and as a society to encourage all Americans—especially our young people—to share their time, skills, enthusiasm, and energy with their communities. Whether we teach children to read, mentor young people, work at a food bank or homeless shelter, or care for people living with AIDS, citizen service calls forth the best from each of us. It builds a sense of community, compassion, acceptance of others, and a willingness to do the right thing—all hallmarks of character.

We can take great pride today in the numbers of energetic, idealistic Americans who are participating in service activities across our country and around the world. Almost 90,000 young men and women have served their