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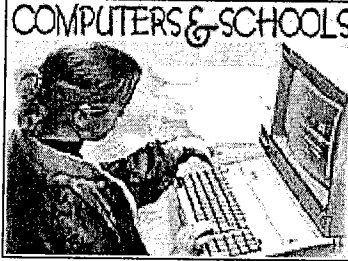
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Equipped For Success

*One School, One Corporation, And 1,300 Computers
An Attempt To Close The Digital Divide
A Chance To Study Just How Much Difference It Can Make*

NEW YORK, March 18, 2001



AP

(CBS) Nancy Brogan doesn't look like a general marshalling her troops. Nor does she look like some kind of evangelist, reports **CBS News Sunday Morning** Correspondent Martha Teichner.

But looks can be deceiving.

"Think of the song *New York, New York*: If we can make it here, we can make it anywhere. No more excuses anymore, the children not going forward, and parents not being involved."

Nancy Brogan is principal of the Ditmas Intermediate School in Brooklyn, addressing volunteers, employees of Chase Manhattan Bank, about to embark on a mission, a dramatic partnership between the bank and a public school.

On a Saturday last fall, like an army on the move, the weekend warriors were mobilized, organized into teams, and armed with a list of addresses. Each drop-off point was the home of a Ditmas student, a 6th, 7th, or 8th grader.

Eleyda Griffith and her three daughters waited all morning for the Chase team assigned to them. They all made their way into the bedroom where the three girls sleep. There were the desk and the boxes, delivered a few days earlier.

Amazing as it may seem, Chase Manhattan Bank has given -- that's right: *given* -- every student at Ditmas School, all 1,300 of them, a new computer. Theirs to keep.

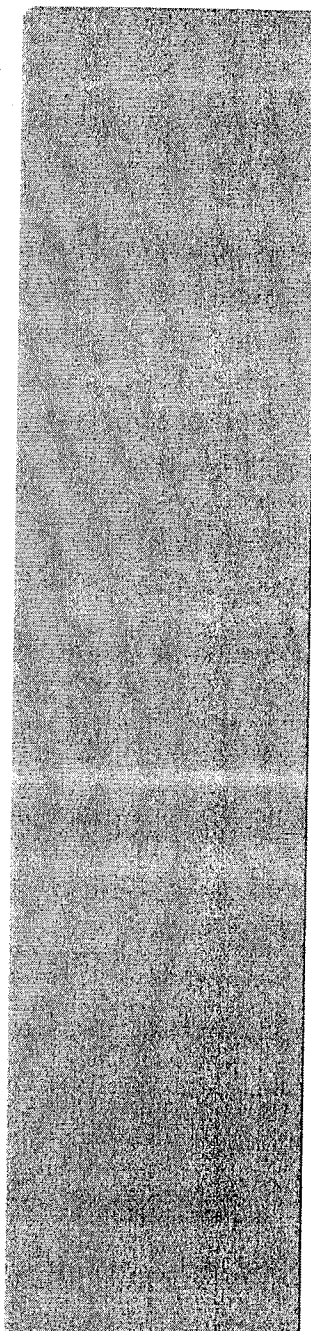
Says Eleyda, **"I got very excited, but at the same time, I'm saying, 'Either you've got to pay or anything,' because you know..."**

Eleyda Griffith is a single mother from Panama, who cleans office buildings. When her 11 year old, Joellee, a 6th grader at Ditmas, came home with the Chase offer, her mother couldn't quite believe it. She had wanted to buy her daughter a computer, but couldn't afford one.

Says Joellee, **"I felt so excited, I felt like hugging somebody. It made me think this school is really important."**

Chase thought so, too. Why? Because of Nancy Brogan.

"I felt so excited, I felt like hugging somebody."
Student Joellee Griffith getting a free computer



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"The decision to drop out of school is made by the 7th grade," says Brogan. **"If we can find a way to have these children experience success, they are not going to make that decision."**

Chase was willing to put up \$4.5 million for this two-year experiment, to see whether giving students computers, closing the digital divide, could make a difference. At Ditmas, out of 1,300 total, more than 1,200 students are from families below the poverty line. And, within the student body, 39 language groups and 48 nations of the world are represented.

Once the computers were installed, Brogan wanted to find out how they were being used, by the students and by their parents.

The whole point of putting the computers in students' homes is to get parents involved. In fact, parents were required to come to school and take a three-hour class before their child's computer was delivered. No class, no computer.

And it wasn't just students who were given computers. All 150 employees of the school got them, too.

What Chase is doing is not unique. Corporate involvement in education has become a fact of life in all 50 states. More than \$8 trillion in private money goes into public schools every year, much of it from corporations.

For people who object, who say that public schools should be free of commercial intrusion, there is this possible consolation: There are no Chase advertisements, no disguised promotions. In fact, there are no strings attached, except one: You've got to stay in school.

Does it trouble Brogan that corporate America is providing millions and millions of dollars in resources to public schools?

"Absolutely not. Quite the contrary," says Brogan.

As the self-proclaimed CEO of her school, Brogan considers it her job to go after as much corporate money as she can get her hands on.

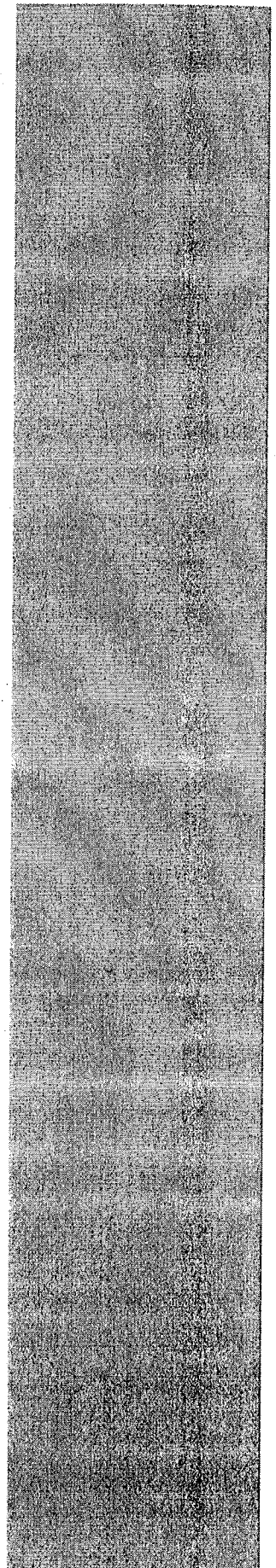
"Our children, we try to afford them every resource that is out there, and that's our responsibility," she adds. To miss **"something that could come our way that could enrich their lives, that would be a tragedy."**

Bill Harrison is a CEO, too -- CEO of J.P. Morgan/Chase. Says he, **"My concern is that there's not enough corporate involvement in the education system. If there's any risk today, it's that corporate America is not engaged enough in the educational challenge."**

When the computer project was announced, nobody was disagreeing. But what about the schools that don't have a Nancy Brogan, who don't have a principal in place who's out there hustling every dollar from every source to make a difference?

"Those schools will be disadvantaged," says Harrison, **"and that's why we think it's very important to help the schools that want to help themselves do a better job."**

Vincent Grippo, the New York City school superintendent in charge of Ditmas, has told the students, **"This is a commitment in you. You've gotta prove to the world that if somebody believes in you, you believe in you too. So look in yourselves, guys. You gotta work extra hard. You gotta make this work. You know why? 'Cause then maybe some other kids in other communities will have other corporations do the same for them."**



So, five months later, how are they doing?

Well, Joellee made the honor roll. Not only that; she and several of her 6th grade classmates put together a video on computer. They won the Social Studies Fair for the entire school district.

"This has to be a success," says Brogan. "We have to be predetermined in this. Every poor child in this country is depending on us to make sure this succeeds, because success breeds success."

Nancy Brogan will tell you the computers have become an incentive to stay at Ditmas. The number of students transferring to other schools is down significantly. So are the disciplinary incidents that get kids kicked out.

"If we can show that this investment is what produces the results that this country has been looking for, we will redirect how education takes place and how it is funded," says Brogan.

Oh, and by the way: Three more corporations have approached the New York City school system, offering to duplicate the Chase experiment.

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