

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

January 25, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about programs that connect American children with children abroad. In the interview segment, ER discusses defense housing shortages and residential segregation with Charles Abrams.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Charles Abrams

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Now we come to that part of the program, Mother, where you answer the questions sent in by your listeners, uh and this one is from Rose Genzer in Brooklyn, and she asks uh, "What links have already been established among the children of different countries, and how can we combat differences of tradition, ideologies, and religions? What small spark can every parent or teacher inject into each child's mind that will produce the warmth of harmony among the young shoots?"

[ER:] Well, I think links um probably that uh children have established that are the warmest are established through the Junior Red Cross. They have started any number of programs in which they send old school supplies or little things uh to children overseas, and they get the names and the addresses and they write. Now there is also a uh letter writing campaign started in many schools where they correspond with a definite school in a country eh somewhere in the world. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And uh through that correspondence they ask how the children live, what are the habits and customs. And [ER coughs] the children learn an enormous amount, and I know quite a number of um cases um where even um shut-ins - I mean children who are um for some reasons being taught at home, have got an enormous amount out of having what they call a "pen pal" in some country abroad who is afflicted in the same way. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And uh I think there are many avenues today for making the approach -- some schools have adopted a school in some other country which was bombed or [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] had a hard time getting rehabilitated, and have sent their old books and have got clothes and shoes and blankets, all sorts of things, and got the whole community eventually interested. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And some communities, as you know, have adopted other communities, and that includes what the children need, so they get their children started on certain things. Oh, I think there are lots of ways of getting children. (2:25)

[ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, then there are -then there are the uh exchange programs of students, which are slightl -

[ER:] They're the exchange programs of students, and uh, of course—

[Elliott Roosevelt:] What are those organizations, just for the information of our listeners, some of their--
[ER:] Well now, you know the *Herald Tribune* started bringing over a certain number of children.

[Elliott Roosevelt: That's the *New York Herald Tribune*.] And sending a certain number over there, the *New York Herald Tribune*, and as you know, the um well I can't -- I think it's the uh international education um under --[Elliott Roosevelt coughs] I can't remember now whether it's the Carnegie or Rockefeller Foundation, I think it's the Carnegie Foundation. [Elliott Roosevelt: Uh- huh.] And um they really bring over groups of different ages and um they [Elliott Roosevelt: And there's international houses.] and they arran -- oh, international house though is for students who are here to live in who attend

Columbia. But um they arrange for students to live in families here, which I think is about the best thing, for several months at a time. And I think that—

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, what is that organization -- that's the one that's sponsored by the Carnegie Institute?

[Elliott Roosevelt and ER overlap]

[ER:] I think that's the one that's sponsored by the Carnegie. And uh, [Elliott Roosevelt: Uh-huh. Is that the one --] and also the Friends Service Committee sponsors quite a lot. The American Friends Service -- [Elliott Roosevelt:] I remember you had a letter from a lady out in Ohio in which she described the Scandinavian uh boy? And uh--(3:49)

[ER:] Oh yes, the boy who came to work on the farm. Well, that was a special farm project where-which was sponsored by the farmer-farm union. [Elliott Roosevelt: Farm union in Ohio.] And they brought over um farm boys from other countries who worked on farms here and then went back, and vice versa, our boys went over there.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And I understand these boys went from our farms and lived in the homes --

[Elliott Roosevelt and ER overlap]

[ER:] And lived in the homes of those boys. But um, that's um -- but the um international exchange of students is done on every level. It's not only students now. They bring over artists and they bring -- there's quite an effort being made to exchange teachers. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And uh under the Fulbright Fellowships uh we have quite a number under the State Department. And um [ER coughs] then I think also that school of international living which um takes young people in summer. It's one my granddaughter went out with last summer -- one of my granddaughters. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And um I thought that was particularly excellent because they lived in homes for a month. Then they went on a bicycle trip and saw um a great deal of France, tho-those who were in France, who chose France [Elliott Roosevelt: Yeah.] as the place they wanted to be. And then they had two weeks in Paris before they came home, and all through it they held meetings and seminars to exchange their points of view, and they gained an enormous knowledge of the country because they were living in a family and they either said nothing or they talked French! [ER laughs] [Elliott Roosevelt: Uh-huh.] Wherever they went, of course, they did that same thing. [Elliott Roosevelt: Well now--] I thought that was a very good plan.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Uh has it ever been suggested under the Point Four program of the federal government that the federal government uh really appropriate quite a large amount of money to increase and uh bring about more of an exchange, even if our government footed the whole bill? Wouldn't that be a-a tremendous uh educational value for the development under Point Four?

[ER:] Well, I don't know that it's been uh particularly um gone into under Point Four, but I think under the Fulbright Bill it's constantly um uh being carried on. And as you know, they've-they've brought over a number of Japanese and um German uh people in different areas. For instance, I saw only yesterday um one of the delegates, and I think there are six or seven of them, who was brought over from Germany to stu-to study civil liberties in our country. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And this particular boy, I was very much interested in because he um had lived in Berlin. And he told me a great deal about what they were doing um [ER coughs] in Germany, not only to increase an understanding of what civil liberties was at home, but also to study um and win over people in the East German zone. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And um I-I thought it was a very -- of course, I think it must be a little confusing to them because uh they come over here to study our democratic way of doing things, and then they run into certain things that

they don't think are democratic at all! [Elliott Roosevelt : Yes.] I wish he could have accompanied Mr. Elmore McKee because -- and seen some of those projects, because he said that he had seen certain things that bothered him a great deal and that he didn't feel that he really understood [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes, uh-huh.] the United States.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I-I feel that there uh -- that we could bring out a much bigger uh appropriation for just that kind of work, and that it could be done at the federal government level and uh made available--

[ER:] Well, I think the unions could do a good deal in exchange of workers.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yeah. Well, uh then uh what do you think about uh the combatting of uh the differences of traditions and ideologies and religions which uh this question brings out, uh because there are so many people in this country who uh -- well, for instance uh, in the South there's quite a strong feeling against uh colored races. Uh how could we uh do work by bringing uh maybe people from Africa and people from Asia who are dark skinned and having them uh lecture in the schools on what is being done in those countries to bring uh them up to uh [ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap] a high living standards.

[ER:] It'd be a little odd to have some of them lecture in the South, because you'd subject them to things which they would not consider were democratic and not consider were really good American practice. I think --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Even if we briefed them beforehand that this-that this uh non-democratic uh principle that existed, that the reason that they're being brought here was to combat that?

[ER:] Well, you might. I don't know. And I don't know how much good it would have -- how much good effect it would have. I think that's something one would have to think over very carefully and plan very carefully. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] Because um--and I don't think it's only in the South we'd need it; I think we'd need it in the North. Because there is plenty of discrimination [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] and plenty of difficulty for people, and no matter what part of this country you go to if you don't -- if you're not white. [Elliott Roosevelt : Yeah.] And um so that -- the creeds I think we could get accustomed to more easily because they're really isn't great prejudice against um any particular creed. There is less understanding about uh different religions and that could be developed. But--

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I've got one last question before we have to bring this phase of the program to an end, which I think -- uh what can you say about the small spark which every parent could uh produce in their children uh to give them greater understanding, and to give them uh specifically a-a greater desire to cooperate with children and grown-ups as they grow up in other countries?

[ER:] Well, I think first of all, the parent has to really want to do it themselves. And then I think if the children see it in their homes. If they are accustomed to meeting people of all kinds and having open minds about what they hear, and not uh not -- just not living in a prejudiced atmosphere. [Elliott Roosevelt : Mhm.] Um I think that has more effect probably than anything else. I don't think you can tell children. I just think they have to-to be in the atmosphere and live it.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yeah. Well, I guess now we'll have to pass on to another part of the program, and I'm sorry that we have to bring this to a close right now, but then we'll get on to our guest of the day in just a few minutes.

(Break 11:13-11:28)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother, now we come to uh introduce our guest of today, who is a very interesting gentleman whom I believe our audience will be most uh interested in hearing his ideas. His name is Mr. Charles Abrams. Uh with the stepped up defense program and the curtailment of essential building materials, the problem of defense housing again becomes paramount. So with us today is a gentleman who has made intensive study of this serious problem and will give us his ideas for a solution. Mother, Mr. Abrams.

[ER:] How do you do Mr. Abrams? I'm so glad you're here, because I've always been very interested in this problem.

[Charles Abrams:] I'm very glad to be here, Mrs. Roosevelt.

[ER:] And now we can begin and ask you questions, and the first one I want to ask is: What is the relationship between housing and our current defense program?

[Charles Abrams:] Well, in the two previous wars, Mrs. Roosevelt, we learned that no real production program could be gotten underway unless uh housing was simultaneously planned and built for the workers. In the First World War, for example, it was found that workers wouldn't migrate to the production centers unless they had housing, and the same thing uh was found in the Second World War. At that time, labor turnover due to the housing shortage was as much as five-hundred percent in a single year. It was simply found that uh skilled workers wouldn't leave their homes for industrial areas if they had to pay half their wages uh to landlords, and absenteeism and desertion of jobs became so critical that housing had to be given a top priority, and that was uh true in both wars.

[ER:] Well, that I can easily understand because uh they won't be separated from their families er forever, and if they see they've got to work they must do this. But I wonder if now the housing shortage is as serious as it was in 1917 and in 1940.

[Charles Abrams:] Well, I-I would say it's considerably worse. In 1917 uh the shortage wasn't as serious as in 1940, and today it's much worse than it was in 1940.

[ER:] That astonishes me, why?

[Charles Abrams:] Well, the fact is that we had a large backlog uh of unbuilt houses uh during the--that ac-started accumulating during the Depression, and we have failed to catch up with it despite the fact that last year we built a-a million four thousand homes. Now it's true that uh some vacancies have appeared in the high rental brackets, and you must remember, Mrs. Roosevelt, that virtually all of the housing has been for the higher income families, not for the low income workers or even for the middle income workers. And the inflation and building costs has uh-uh made matters worse in the last few years. (14:15)

[ER:] Well now, that is very astonishing to me because as I drive on Long Island and various other places, it looks to me -- the thing that worries me is that um we're building um so much that is just the same, but I would have felt that it was in the middle income brackets, and I thought that this middle income group was therefore being provided for by the FHA rental housing.

[Charles Abrams:] Well, if you actually inquire um as to the rents that are charged in some of the FHA housing, you'll find that it runs up to a hundred and a-a hundred fifty dollars a month in this region. And in the United States as a whole, a middle income family uh-uh can afford to pay about sixty-nine dollars per month for an apartment and only twenty-five percent of FHA rental houses are available at that figure. Now the interesting thing, Mrs. Roosevelt, is this: Uh last Friday I went uh through some houses up in uh-uh the Harlem section, which were inhabited by Puerto Rican families, and I was astonished to find that in -- that those people pay rents that are higher than some of the families pay on Park Avenue on a per room

basis. [ER: Do they really?][Elliott Roosevelt: No.] They do. I-I found this: I questioned some of the tenants there and found that for two rooms they were paying sixty dollars per room per month. And as a res-- [ER: What!] Sixty dollars per room per month! [ER: Where is this?] This is in the-in the Harlem area. One-- [ER: Good heavens! And they're horrible rooms probably.] Absolutely, and what they have to do in order to pay that rental is to crowd eight or nine people into two rooms. [ER: That is simply dreadful.] And the interesting thing about it is that there were only two bathrooms uh for some thirty or forty people in that one house that I examined.

[ER:] Well, of course, I've always known that conditions in Harlem were terrible and the prices were very high, but I didn't realize they were as high as that. [Charles Abrams: Well, I was astonished also.] I've always known that it-it meant crowding into um a great many people into a small space, but I felt that that was largely a question of segregation, and uh and I suppose that is at the base of it, isn't it. They can't move to other -to other areas.

[Charles Abrams:] It's segregation. It's also the fact that in the uh newer buildings they won't accept people where they crowd the apartments. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.]

[ER:] Mhm. So they can't pay the-the rent, I suppose.

[Charles Abrams:] That's right.

[ER:] Oh, it's horrible really. Well now, will it be necessary, in your opinion, to designate defense areas where housing should be built and limit the building of houses in other areas? Because, of course, if we do that, we're going to mean--it's going to mean even more crowding in these other areas.

[Charles Abrams:] Yes, I think we have to set up uh areas where priorities will be given, not only for uh-- in materials, uh but in all other respects uh where every effort will be made to rush housing in those areas and to uh delay it in other areas that are not as uh critical. (17:01)

[ER:] Well --

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Is there a commentary uh on the planning as far as the uh Federal Housing Authority is concerned, in that uh-uh they have built such a small percentage of their housing for the middle income brackets?

[Charles Abrams:] Yes, uh the fact is that if you do this job through private enterprise, you're going to build only for the top income group and for the upper fringes of the middle income group so that you definitely must have also a publicly sponsored and publically subsidized program for the lower income-income and middle income worker.

[ER:] Even the middle income [Charles Abrams: Oh yes.] can't be done profitably by private enterprise?

[Charles Abrams:] No uh, it -- hardly, except for the upper fringes. Uh and that was the finding of the Senate committee uh that looked into the cooperative housing bill. [ER: Mhm.] Uh that you had to get some subsidi-some subsidization of some sort, either in tax exemption or in very low interest rates to make it possible for uh authorities to build for the middle income group.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, is it uh true that the -- uh I've heard it stated a number of times, Mr. Abrams, that uh in public housing that the cost per room of a building uh has always been much higher than the cost per room when it was done under FHA or through private uh building uh operations.

[Charles Abrams:] Well, I've heard it said too, but actually when you make a comparison it's very difficult to compare some of the rooms built uh in public housing, which are built for a forty-five year life, with some of the [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] speculative housing under the economy house program. Uh –

[Elliott Roosevelt:] You mean it's a much better material construction?

[Charles Abrams:] Yes, one is of steel construction, in most cases, and one is of uh flimsier construction. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And in addition to that, the room sizes are different. But u- uh the um United States Housing Act of 1949 definitely provides that public housing may not be of better standard than private housing. And uh-uh I believe that it compares very favorably in cost.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] Well, that's interesting. Well now, what I wonder is whether any um credit restrictions will add to the difficulties?

[Charles Abrams:] Well yes, because under uh Regulation Ten, which uh restricts uh the amount of uh money that uh you have to put up when you buy a home, uh a man no longer can go in with uh 10 percent down payment, that is 10 percent of the cost, all over the country. Now uh, that is holding back uh not only the buying of homes, but it's also holding back builders from constructing those homes. Now, in non-critical areas, those regulations make sense. But in critical areas you definitely have to relax the credit uh restrictions so as to make it possible for people to buy homes. (20:30)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] Well, do you think in critical areas um where they don't always move as a permanent stay, um you must make it possible for them to buy or make it more possible for them to rent?

[Charles Abrams:] I think you have to make it possible for them to do both and not to put an over emphasis upon buying. Because in the last war, we found that where the emphasis was mainly on buying and there was no rental housing, many of these workers were forced into paying enormous sums for homes they had no intention of keeping and they left those homes as soon as the war was over.

[ER:] Well, that's what I was thinking of. That if you set it up only for buying um people were really put in an almost impossible position, because if they couldn't get houses to rent they were almost forced to buy, and then they couldn't sell afterwards for the price they had paid.

[Charles Abrams:] That's correct. You have to have both and those people should be allowed to buy only who are residents.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother, I'd like to interrupt here for just a minute because I believe that Ben Grauer has a word to add to the program, and then we'll come back to this very interesting discussion. (Break 21:42-21:50)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now, Mother, will you again take up the discussion with Mr. Charles Abrams, who is a-a very able exponent of defense housing and all of the problems represented in defense housing. [ER:] Well, one of the things that I'm particularly anxious to know is what kind of housing standard should we set up in defense housing?

[Charles Abrams:] Well, the standards should be pretty much the same as for ordinary housing. Um our standards today are low enough as it is. Eh they're below those set by the American Public Health Association, and you save very little in critical materials or time by cutting uh space standards. Now, another thing that you've got to remember, I think, is that these houses are going to be occupied after the emergency is over, and we shouldn't build houses that are ripe for the wrecking crew uh five years after they're completed because we're going to be with them a long time.

[ER and Elliott Roosevelt overlap]

[ER:] Yes, that I um --[ER laughs] that I have seen in every war. I've seen things built which they said would be torn down by the end of the war, and they never are town down. I remember in Washington—

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I -- most of the public buildings in Washington were built under that basis.
[Elliott Roosevelt and Charles Abrams laugh].

[ER:] Well, not all the public buildings, but I remember acres of hou-of uh housing that was to be lived in only during the war, and promptly I found it being lived in long afterwards. Now uh I'd like to ask you another question, would you favor using the local housing authorities to build housing?

[Charles Abrams:] Yes, I think you-you have to because these local housing authorities after all represent the cities and the citizens within those communities. And uh in the last war, when we found we weren't using these local housing authorities, and the federal government uh went ahead with housing in communities, uh there was considerable objection by the cities and by the citizens. In one case, for example, there was a secession by the city from the community. In other cases, the localities refused to supply uh schools and utilities uh such as water. Well, why should the eh cities eh cooperate if they're going to be stuck with these houses after the emergency is over and they don't have any say through their local housing authorities as to what kind of housing it will be or where it will be placed? Another thing is that these local housing authorities build without profit, and, therefore, they can reach the lower income groups for whom the uh private entrepreneur, who is building at a profit, cannot produce. And the only way we can produce subsidized housing is through these local housing authorities.

[ER:] Well that's--I've-I've always thought that that was so. But eh as we go on with this discussion, I feel there's less and less place for private enterprise, and I just wondered in this program if there is a place and what you think it is for private enterprise?

[Charles Abrams:] Well, when you talk about private enterprise, you're talking about two things, Mrs. Roosevelt, I th-I believe. First you're talking about private enterprise building for the uh worker who can afford to buy a home, who can afford to rent a home that is eh not subsidized by the federal government. [Elliott Roosevelt coughs] That's the top income group and perhaps, uh if wages go up, uh the um some part of the middle income group. But then again, as far as private enterprise is concerned, even housing that's built by the local housing authorities is built through private enterprise, in the sense that private contractors are building them, and private subcontractors are building them, so that this whole program in a sense is uh under uh private enterprise. Although some of it may be sponsored by local housing authorities.

[ER:] I see, so it um -- there is a place in every case for the private builder. In other words, he can find work to do.

[Charles Abrams:] Not only that, uh he's either a speculator in one sense or he's a contractor in another, but it's all done through private enterprise.

[ER:] Mhm, I see. Um –

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, there's not very much uh speculation in building under FHA uh today with the standards that they have set up. The local contractor who builds under FHA doesn't stand to lose very much.

[Charles Abrams:] No, he doesn't stand to lose very much because he doesn't have very much in the job. [Elliott Roosevelt: No.] He bails out with at least uh twenty percent above the uh mortgage loan [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] if he's a good builder. In other cases, fifteen percent. No, that, in a sense, is public housing, although it bears the stamp of private enterprise. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] But it's the government eh underwriting the risk, and uh there-there is no gamble by the private entrepreneur to any large extent in uh FHA housing.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Do you feel that uh there would be an advantage uh to uh a local housing authority securing uh special tax uh dispensations for uh housing that is carried on that meets public housing authority standards?

[Charles Abrams:] Yes, where it's for a lower income group then –

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yeah, where it's specifically build for low income uh-uh tenants.

[Charles Abrams:] Yes, you need uh local subsidies and you also need federal subsidies to get the rents down to what the uh low income worker can afford.

[ER:] Well now, the Housing act of 1949 provided money for housing-ing for the lowest income group and for redevelopment of slum areas. Uh isn't that so? Or as I understand it that was supposed to be one of the things they did.

[Charles Abrams:] That is so, and I think that the president uh should see to it that the emphasis in that act has shifted so that most of the developments will now take place on vacant land as much as possible, because since you want to increase the quantity of housing now uh you should modify the present emphasis on slum clearance. In other words, uh that act was uh predicated on the theory that you build one house for every one that's torn down. I think you should postpone slum clearance and place an increased emphasis upon vacant land development so as to increase the total housing supply available.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm.

[ER:] And then if possible, I suppose, improve what are now known as slum areas instead of tearing them down.

[Charles Abrams:] Well ultimately, if you increase the housing supply then you can tear down slums. But I think it's a mistake. It's been a mistake from the start to tear down the houses in which people live. The first thing to do is to increase the supply, and then when vacancies appear tear down the slums. That's what they do in England [ER: Yes.] and that's what we should be doing here.

[ER:] Well, uh I agree with you, because I saw some of the worst slums I have ever seen in an area [coughing] where they did that in San Antonio, Texas, a long while ago. And they -- uh where they tore down houses and the people had no place to go! And so they built up little shacks that were worse than what they'd been living in because there was nothing new done. [Charles Abrams: Of course.] So um I -- but I think there is a little different thing that we are facing um in defense areas, and uh I wonder if there it isn't uh a good thing to build temporary housing. What do you think?

[Charles Abrams:] No, definitely not. As -- I think you will agree with me, Mrs. Roosevelt, that there is no such thing as a temporary house. Eh --

[ER:] Somebody's going to live in it someday. (29:25)

[Charles Abrams:] Somebody's going to live in it, and the temporary house is a little better than the slums, and so the citizens always say, "Let's not tear down the temporary house. We'll keep it a little longer." And before you know it, the temporary house just uh keeps on. Now, another thing is that uh I made a checkup on the cost of temporary housing and find that some of it ran three times as much as permanent housing built at the same time by the New York City Housing Authority. [ER: Good gracious.] You see, you don't save very much on temporary housing. [ER: No, I--] The architects don't know uh-uh just what is a temporary house; it's an experimental thing. The contractors don't know how much it costs, there are a lot of delays, and by the time you get through it exceeds the cost of good standard, permanent housing.

[ER:] Well, I'd like to ask you a question that always bothers me, because I found that in the last war that um the people who suffered the most were always people in the minority groups like the Negro workers, like the um Mexican workers, or whatever it might be. And what-what can you do about that problem?

[Charles Abrams:] Well, I agree that the situation for these minorities is much worse than for others, for example, overcrowding for non-whites is four times as high as for whites. And the proportion of substandard housing occupied by them is six times as high. Uh these groups uh have been ignored completely, and you must build housing for them as well as for others.

[ER:] Well, would you simply say uh that uh where there is employment, um and it is eh employment of various races, that there should be no bar in the housing any more than there is in the employment?

[Charles Abrams:] No, uh I-I agree. We barred discrimination in employment uh by setting up an FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Committee], and certainly we should bar discrimination in housing. And when I use the word discrimination I mean segregation as well. Uh I think that uh we should do this from uh the standpoint of our own morale, as well as to fulfill our pledge in the UN Charter, uh with which you've had a lot to do as far as the Bill of Rights is concerned.

[Charles Abrams and ER overlap]

[ER:] Well, the Supreme Court seems to be upholding this non-segregation, doesn't it, in various of its --

[Charles Abrams:] It is, eh yes. It has uh reclaimed the principle that uh to be separate is not to be -- is-is to be equal. And uh it is laying down the rule -- has laid down the rule, that no public agency and no agency benefiting from public aid and power may discriminate and may segregate.

[ER:] I was very much interested, because recently I had a very large builder, Mr. William Levitt, um who owns Levittown, on my program. And he told me that he had no desire to segregate at all, but that he had found that um if you -- that the feeling among people was such that if you allowed any Negroes to come into a new project it became either wholly Negro or it stayed wholly white, but it never could mix. Now my recollection was that in some of the public programs we had successfully mixed, and I just wondered if I was right or if he was right.

[Charles Abrams:] No, you're right, uh Mrs. Roosevelt. The fact is that in every project in New York City and other projects in other cities, like Los Angeles and Chicago, uh these um tenants have been mixed regardless of color and regardless of race and that has been going for fifteen years; it's no longer an

experiment. Uh the fact is that uh-uh the development--since the development of rapid transit, uh rather, before that development, minorities had to live in the same neighborhoods and did live in the same neighborhoods. And their mere presence disturbed neither the social status or the dignity of any of the uh- of any of the other tenants. Uh now we have no object to a Negro housekeeper living in our house, why should we ob-object to her living in the neighborhood? Eh we find that in these projects, which you mentioned, uh the children play with each other, they engage in the same community activities, and no discrimination or segregation is practiced. And now we've carried that over, not only from -- to the public housing projects in many cities but also to private housing projects, and we find that it succeeds there as well.

[ER:] Well, some people think, of course, that um minority groups do not, as a rule, keep up their houses uh as well. I have not found that to be true, but I wondered what you'd found.

[Charles Abrams:] That is not true, as a matter of fact, the housing authorities, where prizes were given for keeping up the houses, they found the uh-uh the uh best projects were those uh that were occupied by the minorities.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I'm very sorry to interrupt, Mr. Abrams, at this point because I think that you and Mother have found a subject of kindred interest [Elliott Roosevelt laughs] in the question of segregation, but uh I do think we have to go on to the rest of our program at this point.

[ER:] Well, I want to thank you so much, Mr. Abrams. It was awfully good of you to come and be with us today.

[Charles Abrams:] Thank you very much.

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