

448 High Street
Dalton, Mass.
April 20, 1965

Mrs. Odessa Williams
1010 Bragg Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Mrs. Williams:

Enclosed herewith a partial list of scholarships that are available. Here in Massachusetts, they go begging for lack of applicants but this is in part due at least a years residency requirements.

If you will look at either this month's or last month's **EBONY** you will discover some further scholarship sources. I have crossed off those scholarships peculiar to Massachusetts.

Now that we have had the fortune of meeting, I would appreciate your referring any or all applicants to me.

Mostly we are looking for girls or boys OF GOOD CHARACTER about to enter Junior High School or 11th grade. We stress good character because we have never had any behaviour problems. (Two girls showed up pregnant and of course we had to send them back)

We prefer students from rural areas because almost all foster-homes are people who live in rural areas or suburbia. (town-ships of 500-5,000 people) 99% of the foster-families are White and are willing to assume practically all expenses connected with a teen-agers education.

I might add that we prefer excellent students (But POOR) I investigate these families personally and one thing that irks me is to find that we have been supplied with an applicant whose family is in the financial position to afford a good education. This is one of the great evils of Negro scholarship recipients. Time and time again as I visit the colleges and preparatory schools I will learn of students who parents are professionals that have been awarded scholarships.

Finally I stress that they must be excellent students because there is a tremendous differential between Northern and Southern Educational standards. AND I MEAN T R E M E N D O U S!!!!!! So besides being an A & B student, the student must possess tremendous drive and initiative for without this he is licked from the beginning! We give them plenty of tutoring!

We prefer to bring these students in June as soon as school is out and to secure jobs for them. All we insist is that they save their money. Having them under our surveillance during the summer gives us an opportunity for further testing and evaluating. These jobs are mostly domestic jobs and working in camps. They are under close supervision but they have lots of fun. We have many youngsters from Tuskegee and Morgan State. They usually earn \$30-\$40 a week. 16 & 17 year old girls we prefer to put with families in lesser-paying jobs, where they can be under closer scrutiny. Quite often families cannot afford to scrape enough to send their youngsters north, and quite often we have sent the fare only to claim they didn't receive it, or they had to use it for some emergency, etc..... So now we ask those who are coming to find some sponsoring agency, a church, a club, a group and then on the very 1ST DAY of arrival, we send the fare back to the sponsors and permit the student to repay us over a period of time.

There are no employment fees, no registration fees, no nothing....this is

is just a venture in COOPERATION AND LOVE of a few hundred families who feel that this is a positive contribution they can make to the race effort.

I want to say this, We have an agreement that each family who takes a student, will treat him/her as one of their very own! In other words while a boy may be expected to cut a lawn or shovel snow off a walk; a girl would have to help with dishes, and dusting-----the same as other children might have to do in a family. This is to dispel fears that the students are being brought up here to be work drudges to families. In a few of the wealthier homes they even have white servants to wait on them....smiles.

Now you get an idea. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, MRS. WILLIAMS!!!!!! The Jr. College will have to know by May 8th. They are holding 5 vacancies for us but cannot beyond that date. I suggest that if Othrae wants to apply that she write me immediately for registration forms.

Yours for more Freedom,


Lawrence A. Caesar

2018 Grand River Ave.

Detroit, Michigan 48226
20 May 1965

Mrs. Idessa Williams
MIA

Dear Mrs. Williams:

It is taking a little longer than I thought to organize a clothing drive and such, so instead of waiting for a truckload later I will be sending the 50 pounds I already have one day next week. Wayne University thinks my manuscript will become a major work about Michigan and they are trying to get a preproduction order from various organizations in the neighborhood of 100,000 copies. If they do, it will mean a big deal. If they fail, then I will remain busted. But there is nothing I can do now for at least three months. Therefore I am trying to get some organization to send me down,...I need a minimum of \$50 a week to take care of my obligations or I would be down by now. When I was at Ford Motor Co. I was on the staff of John Bugas, Vice Pres. of Labor Relations, so I may get an assignment by a labor union per this brief note: I have spoken to the Laundry Workers & Dry Cleaners, International Union, and things are happening. This is information that should not get in the wrong hands. Two organizers from the Laundry Union and two organizers from the Teamsters Union are coming from the Southwest Region to help. Mr. Hoffa is supporting the drive. The work will start in about 10 days. The officials in the main office in Detroit are real enthused. I have a meeting with the key people including the man who will be in direct charge, and will give them a good briefing on conditions in Montgomery. So you can certainly tell those good people at Empire-Rouse that I haven't forgotten them for a minute, since I have been back in Detroit. As a result of your comments, Mrs. Williams, about Snow White workers being off the job to get \$1.25, a call is going to Chicago while I am writing this letter to arrange for some fast help to those workers. Your name and that of Rev. Douglas were given by me so that the strength of the International Union can go to support the workers. Something should be happening this weekend for sure !!! And the Michigan Chronicle, the local negro paper is sitting on top of the story. The Detroit News is the big paper in Detroit and the editor has selected Mr. Tony Ripley to represent him, and Tony will be among the national editors accepting Gov. Wallace's invitation to visit the State of Alabama. The purpose, according to Wallace is to show the "true" conditions, that they are not as bad as some people make them out. I have a date with Mr. Ripley for tomorrow morning to brief him, and he may throw some curves into Gov. Wallace's plans. The JAW-CIO is also going to help the Editors get the TRUE picture of conditions in Alabama.

With great affection,

Bill Lomako

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WOODWARD 1-3635

4 May 1965

Mrs. Idessa Williams
Montgomery Improvement Association
716 Dorsey Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Idessa:

It was a real pleasure to work with you in the cause of human dignity. Every American who does not help to provide each of us with our due, much less with our rights, has in my humble opinion, hurt America and is keeping our country from reaching its true potential as a great and good country. But we try and try and MUST OVERCOME in this valiant and righteous cause.

Just for the record, you may think it was one-sided that we from the North came and gave of ourselves to you. How mistaken that notion is! We came away as I did, I'm sure, full of respect and humility...and we are the richer for what we gained from you and the others who have worked so hard. There's Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton, for example, who took not a single step backward when they learned that we feared the police harassment one night. And many other people who by their example gave us strenght.

Those of us who can are still working beside you and hope to come back as time permits. In the meantime, let me mention some of the things happening here to keep help and love flowing:

1. I spoke to Rev. James Sheehan of the Archbishop's Committee on Human Rights about the courageous precedent-breaking step taken by Sister Catherine at St. Margaret's Hospital. Suitable recognition will come to her from within the Church, I was assured.
2. My wife has gathered a few toys, some clothes and some hardware (like doorhandles which I saw were needed by some homes. Some of these things were promised to specific individuals, so when I send the parcels, I will send them to you; for example To Mrs. M. E. Toliver, C/O Mrs. I. Williams. I want you to see that the packages get to the proper people, since they are donated in the name of the MIA. Other package will just have your name on them. In that case, you can distribute them as you see fit to needy people in the name of the MIA, so that people will get to see how good it is to have the MIA helping them.
3. We are meeting tomorrow morning with the UAW top executives and I expect that maybe hundreds of people will help to send things to you, but I will write more about that in another letter. Also, I'm still working on the water cooler and other things for you.

God bless our growing country,
and my respect and love for you,

Alexander Z Lomako

951 Mt. Prospect Rd.
Des Plaines, Illinois
May 3, 1965

Dear Mr. Williams,

I heard third hand that there was an excellent turn out of voter registrants last week. How many were you able to register? I realize that we cannot stop until all those eligible are registered. It is good to know a good beginning has been made. We can hope that those who have been indifferent for one reason or another will take a second look. This is bound to happen.

What are MIA plans now?
Are you still getting people

- 2 -

from the north to help out.
I realize it takes a lot of
patience to get them. One
thing you should remember
though. The help is mutual.
You are doing us a great
service by inviting us to
participate in a cause
greater than our own self-
interest and greater than
what most of us have been
involved in or expected to
be involved in.

The worst piece of racism
is flooding the north with
misrepresentations of what
the Movement is. This is
to be expected. I am glad
I had a short first hand
experience in it.
Thank you again for the

opportunity of participating in
the cause. Also, thank you for
the opportunity of meeting so
many people, young and
old, who have such deep
conviction. Society needs
more of you.

I am writing this at work
and it is about time to
start. God be w. the you all.

Sincerely,

Cory

Cayetano Santiago

Miller Avenue
Chaffee, New York

December 18, 1966.

Dear Idessa,

I hope this finds you and your family well and content. Thanks also for sending on my case to my tape recorder and the money that was with it.

Since returning from Mississippi, I have not been active in the movement. When I got back my business affairs were in somewhat of a mess and I was really pooped out. I guess I am getting too old for Marches. I went about half the distance, 125 miles on foot. Also, I became involved and still am in a controversey with our County Adoption board which has taken all of my available extra energy. I also found on the last trip that I could not continue to finance my own trips and maintenance as contrary to what some of the work~~ers~~ers thought, I am a man of modest means. So at the moment, I might be described as financially and emotionally broke. However, I hope in the future to make a come-back in both directions. I want to apologise for not recognizing you immediately in Jackson. I think the reason was that by then , I was probably a little punchy.

I hope that the movement is making better progress in Montgomery than it seems to be doing in most cities. Perhaps in 1967, I can do something in the nearest big town or city of Buffalo which like all places needs a great deal of work done in the field of race relations. Since Mississippi,, I have come to the conclusion that the picture is pretty grim. Unless the whites give a lot more a lot sooner I see serious trouble ahead for this country. It is pretty damn discouraging.

I shall never forget the hospitality that you showed me in your home and should you and your husband ever come to New York state I hope you will give me a chance to reciprocate by staying with us for a visit. Enclosed is a small Christmas gift which cannot compensate for your hospitality in Montgomery. I hope that you and your husband enjoy the holiday season to the extent possible.

Very truly yours, *Mac Ford*

Psychology Department
Pontiac State Hospital
Pontiac 11, Michigan
October 30, 1966

Mrs. Idessa Williams
Montgomery Improvement Association
716 Dorsey Street
Montgomery, Alabama

Dear Mrs. Williams:

In case you don't recall me I am the volunteer who came in August 1965 (to help with voter registration) with Joanna Shuttle and the history teacher from Mich. State University...I was just reading the Southern Courier and saw an M.I.A. ad. - it brought back so many memories. I wanted to write to tell you that I constantly watch the news closely for news about the current racial situation in Montgomery. My experiences in Montgomery last summer were among the most meaningful of my life. Whatever small bit I did for Alabama and M.I.A., Alabama did ten times as much for me. As a result of my experiences there, I felt it necessary to become more active with the many problems here in the North. So, I helped in a voter registration drive, I have tutored with the Poverty Program, and I am active on an American Civil Liberties Union committee regarding civil rights of children. I returned to the South this summer to do volunteer work with the Selma office of Medical Committee for Human Rights. I had tried to call you several times at the MIA office (to find out what is currently happening in your work) but either the line was busy or no answer, etc.

There is another reason that I write: I am currently applying for graduate school and the detailed application forms request that I list all prior volunteer positions. Thus, I included my experience with M.I.A. and listed your name under "supervisor." The application forms stated that a few of those listed may be contacted as additional references so I am writing also to inform you of this remote possibility. I doubt very much, however, that a school will contact you - because actually they're too busy contacting the necessary references I listed.

My thoughts and prayers are often with the many people, such as you, whom I have met in the South - someday we shall overcome !!

PEACE !

Betty Budd
Betty Budd
Staff Psychologist



Sunday, Dec. 4, 1966
716 Wenonah Avenue
Oak Park, Ill. 60302

Dear Friends, *Idessa*,

A freezing rain is falling outside tonite, but the fire is warm inside. We have just lit our second advent candle, and are thinking of friends. Last year's greeting to you fell victim to two immediate crises: the arrival of a baby from Cook County Hospital and a move to the new home we purchased in December.

These last two years have given witness to the joyous and the tragic, the grandeur and the pathos of our changing world. We especially recall

Nancy, Robin, Rebecca: Last winter Philip, then five, astounded an out-of-town caller asking "How's the baby?" by replying, "Do you mean the one they just took away or the one we're gonna get next week?" For a year and a half we have been foster parents for Cook County's Family Court. First came Nancy, a frail 7 month old baby, whose entire life had been spent in Cook County hospital's ward for abandoned babies. Nancy was like a miracle. During her first few days she was totally unresponsive, staring hour after hour at her moving fingers. (We since learned that this is common in neglected babies.) Gradually, however, her dark eyes began to acknowledge a familiar smile, and a sparkling, bright little butterfly emerged from her cocoon. When Nancy eventually went to a permanent foster home, she was replaced by Robin. Our children could coax a weak smile from this golden haired cherub, but nothing could help the tragically scarred body and battered mind suffered by the beatings of a sick sick father. Robin, since placed in an institution for brain damaged children, has a place in our hearts that grieves and haunts us still.

Then, one day Don came home to find peeking out of the cradle at him two sharp black eyes, flanked by a thicket of straight black hair and rosy dimpled cheeks. Don said, "I don't know where this one came from but we're going to have to keep her." Rebecca, an American Indian baby, then 14 days old, is with us still, and we are in the final stages of adopting her. She is naturally adored by all the Beisswengers, although at one point several months ago Drew expressed concern about what she would look like when she got older and "turned red."

Joyce's energies these days - in addition to tracking down lost boots and mittens are directed to the need for more foster homes for Cook County hard-to-place children, and to the just as great need for placement agencies to relax some of the rigid religious and racial requirements they demand of prospective parents.

Don's Ministry: During the last two years the Business/Industrial Ministry, working in Cicero and the western suburbs, has developed

various occupational seminars, task groups, and industrial contacts. Six congregations (Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian) are now sharing in this work. Amid the ambiguities of the economic world, with its organizational requirements, technological changes, and ethical dilemmas, the laymen and ministers in this ministry seek to forge new instruments of communication between persons and groups, to speak about the greatness of man and yet against many of his systems, and to assist men in seeing the nature of faithfulness to the God in whom they put some measure of trust.

The younger generation: Peter, in sixth grade, works on his chess game with one hand, his trombone in the other. Drew, in fourth grade, is the proud protector of two hamsters, lover of football, and fiddler of a violin. Eight year old Tom, with two big white teeth filling up the empty space, is our collector of all things, visible and invisible. Philip, relishing his first grade status, is on an artistic binge, scotch-taping his creations to wood doors and panels throughout the house. Suzanne, a typical little four-year-old with her dollies and buggy, amazes us at times with her ability to give orders to her four brothers - with results. Her main joy, however, is "Brecky", who at fourteen months, is beginning to toddle around in, under, on top of everything in sight. Some of you who recall Linda, our first foster daughter, may be interested to know that she is a sophomore student of English and speech at the University of Iowa, a charming and lovely young lady. We are looking forward to her visit during Christmas vacation.

Cicero, civil rights, etc., etc.: It is risky to start on this subject, for one can hardly stop with a few lines. Cicero seems to embrace so much of the tragic, the demonic, and the pathetic in man. Drawn to the crowded meetings of Cicero's "White Citizens Council" are the Chicago area's most avid segregationists, whose sole mission in life appears to be to keep Negroes confined to their asphalt ghettos. Singled out for their scathing attacks at the present time are the churches in this community, - and clergymen, in particular, who dare to mention something about justice and brotherhood. Our home has enjoyed the protection of police on several occasions during the last two years following threatening phone calls. But Cicero has no monopoly on prejudice, for the racial barriers remain high throughout white suburbia. We recall this simple verse:

"No room in the inn" - the cry through the years;
Some always left waiting; some always in tears.
Lord of the manger, Lord of all men,
Give us the vision to open the inn.

And so, into the midst of our turbulent world, comes again the "Lord of the manger," - to humble our pride - renew our hope - and reassure us that as players on this stage of life - we are not alone.

May peace and joy be yours,

Joyce & Don
Joyce and Don Beisswenger

In between making breakfast and setting sweaters back I imagine you are still hard at it - The restoration project we are finding is as strong here as anyplace - why that must be is a mystery.

HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL OF HIGHLAND PARK

13130 WOODWARD AVENUE
HIGHLAND PARK 3, MICHIGAN

January 5, 1966

Dear Mrs. Williams,

Happy New Year to you - hope that this one will be a fruitful one in all your endeavors.

On December 9, 1965 I mailed you a letter containing a check for \$263.47 which represents the balance the Highland Park Human Relations Council had for the Montgomery students. Part of it is for Mildred's tuition at Alabama State this coming semester, part for clothes for Leon upon his return to school and the balance to be used any way you see fit. I have not heard from you, and when today I received the Human Relations monthly bank statement showing that the check has not been cashed as yet, I wonder if the letter containing the check went astray. Knowing that you are always very busy and that Christmas adds to everyone's daily overcrowded schedule, I never gave a thought to not hearing from you, but the

bank statement makes me wonder if you received the check.

Please let me know whether you did or did not receive it. If you did not, I'll stop payment on it and send you another immediately in time for next semester; if you did, I can relax.

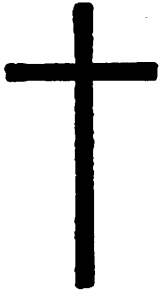
Give my regards to the young folks. I owe some of them letters and will be writing them soon.

Best wishes,

Harvey C. Jackson

2491 Calvert

Detroit Mich 48206



WATERMAN METHODIST CHURCH

210 WEST GARFIELD WATERMAN, ILLINOIS 60556

PHONES: Area Code 815
Office 264-3991
Parsonage 264-3608

March 8, 1967

Dear Idessa,

I appreciate your note and card on the election. Be sure and let me know how it comes out. Our hope for the South and North yet with people like your self in Politics - We certainly will be thinking and praying for you and the people of Montgomery. I'm going to save the Card, after you get to be first Negro congressman from Alabama, I'll be able to pull out the card and say, "I knew Idessa way back when she was in the Montgomery Improvement Assoc."

Best wishes from all of us. Enclosed is a
small contribution toward your
campaign expenses. Keep up the
good work.

Sincerely

G. Ke Khan

Mrs. Ruth Shriman
503 West Briar Place
Chicago, Illinois 60657

March 5, 1967

Dear Idessa,

I cant tell you how pleased
I was to receive notice of your
running for office. I sincerely
hope you win and if you do I know
you will work hard for your people.
Please let me know the outcome.

I cant tell you what that week
in Montgomery meant to me. I think
of it often and wish I could go
back and see all the people who were
so gracious and hospitable. My very
best regards to them all. Lots of love,
Sincerely, Ruth Shriman



Mrs. Idessa Williams
1010 Bragg St.
Montgomery, Ala.

1344 W. Carmen Ave
Chicago, Illinois 60640
March 1, 1967

Dear Mrs. Williams:

Your card and note certainly gave me a big thrill even though I did so little in the voter registration drive. Who can ever forget you? Your courage, dedication and great love for people is a lesson for all of us. May you win but even if you lose I hope you will enthusiastically continue the great fight for rights of all people.

Always



Nelson Kitsuse

Nelson Kitsuse
1344 W. Carmen
Chicago, Ill. 60640

LESSA WILLIAMS
1010 Bragg St.

Montgomery, Alabama



263 Jefferson Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11216
April 7, 1968

Dear Wessie:

Our hearts are very heavy here in New York, some of us did not sleep at all Thursday Night. I imagine friends of Rev. King did the same all over the world. Rev. King told us of his end, in this life, but being human beings, we did not understand. He said he had been to the mountain top, and his eyes had seen the glory of the Coming of the Lord. He was not afraid of no man, he had carried out God's work to the best of his ability, and he was free. He was so full, I believe if he had not left the rostrum, he would have burst into tears. The Lord could have let that bullet go astray, but it was time for Rev. King to answer to the roll call. Now we know we have to pray more than ever, and work harder. We have some good people here, and we don't want Rev. King's teaching, and death, to be for nothing. God is for us, and if we'll trust, and have more faith in him, no one can stop us. They can only do to us, what they did to Rev. King. Our bodies will go back to mother earth, and our souls to God. Hope you, and family are well, and enjoying the best life have to offer. Why don't you write me about your work some times. I don't get the home town paper. Take care. Love

Bill Dickerson
204 Cannon Blvd
Washington D.C.

1010 Bragg Street
Montgomery, Alabama
August 15, 1969

Mr. James Farmer
Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare
Washington, D.C. 330 Independence Ave. SW 2021

Dear Sir:

I am writing you because I am confident that the problem I am confronted with you can help me. I do not know if you recall, since you travel greatly, that you stopped with me on the occasion when the Freedom Riders were beaten at the Station in Montgomery in 1961.

I have been active in civil rights since the beginning of the movement. At this time I feel that I am a victim of economic reprisal. I have applied to Community Action for several jobs.

I was hired in project Find which terminated in four months. I was of the impression that those persons who worked in this project would be given first preference when other jobs opened up. I am also on the substitute list as a teachers Aide, to date I have been called only twice in the months of June. It seems odd to me that there are other persons who are holding two federal jobs within this city.

If you recall I was a beautician, with a fair business, but due to Urban Renewal and Interstate Highways 65 and 85, and the Trade School, my business has decreased. I feel that because of my views on Civil Rights I have not been hired. The only income I have is my husband's Social Security Check which is \$103.00 per month. I am willing to work for a living if a job is made available. I was interviewed for a job by a panel at Community Action and was told by one of the members that the others felt that if I were hired I would tear up the program.

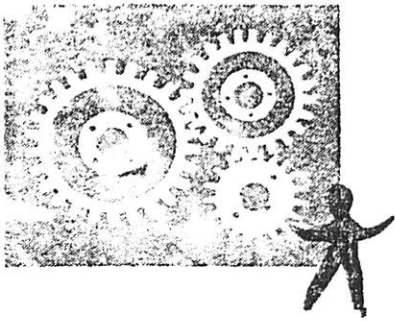
I have talked to Charles Sheldon and other Directors of the various phases of the program but I have not gotten any response. I have talked to two representatives, Attorney Edward Margo and Roy Jones from the Atlanta office. One I asked for an interview. the other I did not, but a representative came to my house and asked if I had any complaint. I did not express this to them and I am sure they got their information from Montgomery Community Action. Attorney Edward Margo mentioned to me that I was number eleven on the alternate list and that very seldom they hired from that list.

Edwain Margo

Any help you can give me in securing employment will be greatly appreciated. Will you please send me the guidelines used for hiring personnel in the program.

Yours truly.

Mrs. Idessa Williams



THE BUSINESS/INDUSTRIAL MINISTRY

Serving Chicago and the Western Suburbs

6804 Windsor Avenue, Suite 301, Berwyn, Illinois 60402
(312) 788-7010



The Officers and Board Members of the Business/
Industrial Ministry "Serving Chicago and the
Western Suburbs" are pleased to announce the
election of

JON D. KESSLER

as Executive Director. Mr. Kessler will assume
his duties on July 1, 1969.

Jon D. Kessler is an ordained clergyman in the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. He brings to the Business/Industrial Ministry a long term interest in and commitment to the Church's involvement in economic institutions and issues. For the past several years he has served as pastor of a congregation at the periphery of the Chicago Metropolitan Area and has involved himself rather substantially in the work of both business and industry in the city. In addition he has allied himself with some persons of influence and has worked directly with them in specifically effecting the humanization process in their places of employment.

In his letter of acceptance Mr. Kessler stated, "I am confident that you share with me the vision of the possibilities for industrial mission in general and the Business/Industrial Ministry in particular. I know that most of you have a much clearer vision of those possibilities than I. I look forward to working with you under the Spirit to bring this vision into clearer focus and then into reality."

Mr. Kessler will reside in the community of LaGrange Highlands with his wife Judith and their children Joseph, age 6 and Maria, age 2.

We at the Business/Industrial Ministry look forward to the leadership that will be provided by Jon Kessler in his new position as Executive Director.

In a later communication you will be informed as to the date of a reception for Jon which will be held simultaneously with an Open House in our new offices at 6804 Windsor Avenue, Suite 301, Berwyn, Illinois.