



JERRY CAMMARATA IS SUPERPOP

Kids can come up short without adults to help

LIVING IN NYC for kids must be very exciting. All those tall buildings to follow up to the sky, the subways that extend as long as the eyes can see and the excavation sites, one block after another. Construction all over NYC. And, yes, plenty of holes bored through one inch outdoor plywood for people to have the opportunity to view the engineering feats: by people I am more narrowly referring to big people—adults. I have yet to see a hole in a construction site wall for kids. I know my two girls enjoy stopping by a construction site every once in a while to get a first hand view of cranes, dump trucks, steel workers, carpenters and cement workers, all working cooperatively together in order that a building of visual beauty may become a new addition to the skyline of our great city.

The kids, though, are denied their very special need to see for themselves without having some adult pick them up and share his or her viewing hole.

Possibly this very occurrence of forgetting about kids is not just a singular oversight by the construction industry, rather, a product of the insensitivity we have as a society to

place the young person above our own needs and considerations.

The way it was

One of my gripes about growing up was always having to eat in the kitchen while the grown ups ate in the dining room. I knew there wasn't enough room at the dining room table for me and my cousins. Why, I would have settled for the basic at the corner of the table and an unmatched set of dishes just to be involved in the action, and there were those times when the weddings took up the conversation of my parents. You guessed it, part of the conversation was spent telling me I had to sleep over at a friend's house because kids were just not invited: I was suppose to feel good I guess with the explanation, "The wedding is very expensive and its just too costly to have the kids attend." If I may take a moment to confess, I was ready then to grow up, get married, and not only not invite their kids, but them too. As it was, years healed wounds and the tribes of Cammarata and Pucciarelli gathered for a feast on my wedding day with young and old in attendance.

Let me list just a few more quick problems kids have:

1. Opening up a door to a midtown Manhattan Bank.
 2. Stepping up on the bus.
 3. Reaching up to dial a phone.
 4. Drinking water from a fountain.
 5. Reaching a men's urinal.
- In defense of Ma Bell and standard-American, however, kids are finding it a little easier today, thank God.

Seen not heard

The picture has been painted: however, today's families are not really in existence to assist in the integration and socialization of young people. The family has become a unit of life, owned and operated by adults (incidentally, not licensed). In 1974 J.C. Penny Company sponsored a forum on the family. Several distinguished authorities on the family freely discussed where the family is and where it is going. A portion of that discussion follows:

Saul Silverman: "We should not look on family as the bedrock of stability, but of having the capability of being some sort of learning process by taking in new knowledge, and sending out knowledge. Then children become not only the

goals of our socializing influence but part of the adult's own process of growing and learning."

Max Lerner: "The old conception of parenthood was that one socialized the children and one knew the answers. Children have a responsibility to socialize parents, too."

Beatrice Paolucci: "Life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived. It's a kind of exploring together with a sense of uncertainty and unknown. Each individual does have some perceptions."

Give them a force

I believe that as we move into the '80s our families will reflect a true sharing of life among young and old. The family will be a partnership that will require greater organization, shared and meaningful responsibility and openness for change in order to effect improvement and growth. We should expect no less from families if our young people will ever really survive. Certainly one way to show sincerity in this regard is to recognize the opinions and uniqueness of our adolescents and get them more organizationally involved in the political arena. When we are gone, life will belong to them. Instead of giving them just a viewing hole, why not let the youth of today have a voice in the construction of the home they will live in called America.

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