

Child Labor

Modern Memo

Date: June 20, 2005
To: edstaff@nye.com
From: Ms. Jane Newsworthy, Editor
Subject: Acquisition of photographs

As I search the Web, I discover troubling photographs and documents which clearly illustrate that there are many children throughout the world who continue to be exploited in work settings. The photographs remind me of the work of the social reformer Lewis Hine at the beginning of the last century.

Despite reform efforts and legislation in our county, children here still work in sweatshops and on farms. In third world countries, the issue is even more severe. The number of Web sites devoted to this issue reflects a growing awareness. Some of the sites are maintained by concerned young people themselves. I am suggesting a special section of our newspaper focusing on the issue of child labor today and I expect each of our staff members to use his or her individual talents to present the situation to the public.

My suggestions for the section:

Editorial staff: prepare a response to the photographs. We will need an editorial to cover the various complicated viewpoints relating to this issue.

Photodocumentary: prepare a two-page spread using photographs you find on the Web. (Be careful to cite your sources!) In lengthy captions clearly describe what you see as well as any additional evidence you pull from your research to describe the particular work setting.

Historians: Child labor is not a new issue. Our readers will need to understand the background of this issue. Mr. Hine described the conditions of working children in our country in the past century. The section would be enhanced with the addition of a timeline which traces the issue of child labor through the ages, with a particular focus on the reform efforts and legislation of the 20th century. Be sure to include the economic or social conditions which made it necessary for children to work. Add images to make your work more compelling.

News writers: Some of you will be going out in the field to interview parents, employers, legislators, and the children themselves. (We have an unlimited travel budget!)

Poem or short story: I suspect some of our readers will be moved by your creative treatment of the issue. Express your own feelings about the issue.

This may be one of the most important and powerful projects our newspaper has undertaken. Please take your roles seriously. You are responsible for bringing an important current issue to the eyes of our readers and our legislators.

Good luck. Remember to confer with me regularly so we can discuss your progress.

The Chief