

Children's Miracle Celebration - 2001
Joint Broadcasters Speech

Robin Roberts & Guest Broadcaster

Robin: Just as Jon and Steve stood together to represent the united efforts of hospitals and sponsors, I think it's great that (Guest) and I can stand here together and represent the broadcast community; both the television and radio media.

Guest: I agree! Really great! But Robin, I have a request.

Robin: What's that?

Guest: Well, that moment of silence was a touching thing for Jon and Steve to do, but I think you and I should try and avoid one of our own. Dead-air is a broadcaster's biggest nightmare.

Robin: You've got a point!... But thanks to these great folks, and the synergy we all find in the Children's Miracle Network, we don't have to worry about dead-air from any of our 200 affiliated TV... as well as over 135 radio stations who help us each year. They do a tremendous job of letting the world know what Children's Miracle Network is all about. Let's start right out by giving a hand to our broadcast partners in this great cause!... (BRIEF APPLAUSE)

Guest: These are the people who help us get our story to the public; who help us hold fast to the commitment we made from the very beginning: that every locally generated donation stays right there in the community, benefiting the local children's hospitals.

Robin: They're fantastic! They help us show in words, pictures and so much more, the passion and commitment that is the result of the unity and power we heard Jon and Steve talk about. Because of these generous, courageous broadcasters, people the world over know that Children's Miracle Network is their most effective opportunity to save a life; to make a difference in the quality of kids' lives.

Guest: You know, I got to thinking about where the word "broadcast" comes from.

Robin: Well, isn't it about getting a message out to as broad an audience as possible.

Guest: It is... but even further back, before there was such a thing as the electronic media, farmers sowed their fields by "broad-casting" their seeds.

Robin: Oh, I see where you're going. Each farmer would broadcast his seeds, and if he had correctly prepared the soil, his seeds would fall on fertile ground, then grow and provide nourishment for his family, his livestock and still others who bought his grain at market.

Guest: I think it's a great analogy for what the Children's Miracle Network broadcasters are doing in this day and age. Each word and image sent-out over the airwaves during our annual Celebration is like a seed that can grow and flourish and bear fruit of its own. The folks at Children's Miracle Network are busy year-round, making certain that the minds those words and images reach are like fertile ground; ready to receive the message we're broadcasting.

Robin: It's a major undertaking, isn't it! It takes a lot of energy and cooperation.

Guest: That it does! For instance, in broadcast radio, it's all about the power of your signal. That's what determines how clear your broadcast is and how far away people can hear it. Originally, radio was just a bunch of independent operators putting-out programming for whomever happened to lie within the range of their signal. Then,

somebody got the bright idea that a program could reach a lot more people if a number of the independent operators would band together and share programming with each other. That's how networks got started.

Robin: Eventually, television came along and the networks expanded their reach through this new medium. In a very real way, Children's Miracle Network owes its existence to the broadcast pioneers who recognized that they would have far better results in getting their message to the public through uniting under a common cause. The pioneers of Children's Miracle Network saw the strength in broadcast networking and realized it could be applied to the message they wanted to take to the world: the message that millions upon millions of kids need medical care and treatment, each and every day; and that if broadcasting could unite with children's hospitals and with the kinds of sponsors who had the foresight to realize that compassionate giving and good business are not mutually exclusive, then real, tangible miracles could be accomplished.

Guest: And with the media explosion of the past several decades, new opportunities have presented themselves to make even more miracles happen. As new opportunities for networking present themselves, Children's Miracle Network is there, exploring the means of reaching even more people – in this country and throughout the world – with the message that wherever and whenever a child is in need of medical care and treatment there is an affiliated children's hospital ready and anxious to help.

Robin: I know of one broadcaster – recently retired -- who understands, first-hand, the kind of synergy that we are talking about here today. Until he retired, he had been with one of our affiliates from the very beginning of Children's Miracle Network. He knows, unequivocally, that the time, effort and passion which he put into those formative years has been returned to him many times over. In fact, as life would have it, his youngest son had complications at birth and his local Children's Miracle Network hospital was there to help. All that Children's Miracle Network stands for -- the whole team -- went to work on behalf of his child: the health-care professionals did their job; dollars raised in his own community helped cover the myriad of bills; and, the show went on that year with at least one extra prayer of thanks from a grateful father. I'm pleased to say that his son has grown into a fine young man who is now making his own way in the world.

Guest: And that's just one example of someone in our own organization who has been helped. I know there are many others. Now, think of the millions of other kids we've helped who have grown up into productive adults and started families of their own over the past 19 years, who might not otherwise have even seen adulthood!

Robin: That's right! In a way, we're now seeing the next generation of the Children's Miracle Network. And because we're a solid family whose members have benefitted over the years from the solid values which were established at the very outset, the future looks brighter than ever!

Guest: It's those values that have made us who we are. From the very beginning, we've held to our prime directive; that one-hundred percent of the monies donated locally remain right there in the community where they were raised, benefitting the local children's hospital in that area. What a phenomenal thing to be able to say!... It really speaks volumes about the integrity of Children's Miracle Network. And it's largely because of our broadcast affiliates that we're able continually to live up to that promise.

Robin: Just as we're committed to see that the donations all remain with the local children's hospitals, we're also committed to do everything in our power to strengthen the reputations of our participating stations; to compliment the names and reputations of the broadcasters who have courageously worked to integrate Children's Miracle Network into their program schedules, station promotions and community affairs efforts. We've been doing it for nineteen years!... Almost two decades of consistency, dedication, and integrity in serving children's hospitals and putting kids first in everything we do. That commitment remains steadfast – today, tomorrow and as long as there are children in need of hospital care and medical treatment. Children's Miracle Network will be there for them.

Guest: Why don't we follow Jon and Steve's lead and hear from a couple of our broadcasters to learn what their Children's Miracle Network affiliation has done for their organizations?

Robin: Sounds like a great idea to me... Ladies and gentlemen, representing the television broadcast industry, please join me in welcoming to the stand Karen McKay, and Abner_____ from KCBD News Channel 11 in the Lubbock, Texas market, and as they are coming to the stage, let me mention that Karen and Abner have been hosts of the Children's Miracle Network broadcast since the very beginning. This June they'll conduct their 19th broadcast.

(Remarks from TV Affiliate Representative)

Guest: Thank you. And now, here representing radio broadcasting, are Van __ and Cheryl _____ from KS95 Best Variety Radio in the Minneapolis-St. Paul market.

(Remarks from Radio Affiliate Representative)

Guest: Thanks to both of you. I think each of you out there can see from the messages we've just heard why Children's Miracle Network is so successful and why we hold such great optimism for the future.

Robin: You know, _____, in TV we have a term for all the preparations that take place before the lights and cameras are turned on and the tape machines roll to record a program. It's called "pre-production." One thing I've learned during the course of my career is that the success of any show is directly related to the quality of its pre-production, because it's during that phase that all the plans are mapped-out: the scripts are written, the camera shots are blocked and rehearsed, the myriad of creative and technical considerations are gone-over, again and again to discover what has been overlooked.

Guest: It's pretty much that way in radio, too. The producers try and anticipate all kinds of scenarios that might get in the way of a smooth production. It never hurts to have a "Plan B" in this business.

Robin: Or a "Plan C," for that matter. And it's that way for Children's Miracle Network, too. I'm not just talking about the pre-production that goes into getting ready for our on-air Celebration each year, either. In fact, in many ways, Children's Miracle Network is virtually always in pre-production; because we're always planning and preparing the next way to improve both the medium and the message we deliver to the public.

Guest: And given the speed at which society is moving, it's especially important to keep abreast of all the new advances; not only in broadcast and media technology, but also most certainly in medical technology and campaign-based marketing, as well – all without sacrificing or in any way diminishing the original and over-arching mission of Children's Miracle Network, namely helping children and their families.

Robin: Well, the future has definitely arrived, and we're meeting it head-on; and the reason we're doing so is because of the meticulous effort put forth by our broadcast affiliates, our member hospitals and our sponsors. Each year's Celebration has new and exciting elements that take us beyond what most would have ever dreamed possible.

Guest: We celebrate with you, and with broadcasters such as _____ and _____ and all the others, whose ongoing efforts make Children's Miracle Network one of the most powerful forces on earth, working on behalf of children.

Both: Thank You!