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Alles in Education

A Profile of:

**American Can Company/Martin Luther
King, Jr. High School Partnership
New York, New York**

by David Gruber

September 1987

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1982, the American Can Company formed a partnership with Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) High School under the auspices of the New York City Join-A-School (JAS) program. Although established under the broad JAS framework, the program is, in virtually all aspects, an American Can initiative. The program content, scope and direction mirror American Can's particular priorities; JAS involvement has been minimal since program initiation.

PROGRAM GOALS

The American Can partnership program was initiated and strongly supported by the corporation's chairman, William Woodside. The program was designed to reflect American Can's stated commitment to social responsibility by providing nontargeted assistance to an inner-city high school. The program is driven by Woodside's belief that corporations must play a role in the community in general and in the schools in particular.

The primary purpose of the American Can partnership is to promote attitudinal change. With its corporate resources, American Can hoped to enrich the school environment, motivate students toward increased involvement in school and related activities and, perhaps, improve student perceptions of themselves and the largely unfamiliar corporate society around them.

An equally important goal is to change the perceptions of American Can personnel regarding the public schools and to increase employee participation in schools and community affairs in general. In its focus on general corporate interaction with a school as a whole, rather than the provision of specific program services to selected participants, this objective significantly differs from those of other partnerships P/PV studied. Virtually all of Martin Luther King, Jr. High School students are minorities and the vast majority are economically disadvantaged. As a consequence, the American Can program is less structured than other programs studied; it funds a flexible mixture of program design with services. Student and staff involvement varies from year to year.

SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS

Since 1982 the New York City Board of Education (BOE) has sought to promote school/business partnerships with as many of its high schools as possible. With the assistance of the New York City Partnership, it has recruited firms and matched them with 50 schools. To demonstrate the BOE's commitment to this project,

Join-A-School (JAS) secured its own identity within the chancellor's office and has a full-time director.

JAS proposed a very broad agenda for its partnerships, including help to promote the chancellor's priorities for the city's high schools. Currently, school system priorities are to reduce the dropout rate and to raise the level of academic achievement. However, JAS has left the working out of both institutional and specific program partnerships to the individual schools and their corporate partners, intervening only when assistance is requested or serious problems are encountered.

Because of the apparent success of the American Can/MLK relationship, JAS points to it as one of the city's best partnerships.

PROGRAM MODEL

The cornerstone of the partnership model is a grant from the American Can Foundation of \$25,000 per year to be used for programs and objectives developed by the school in consultation with American Can staff. To date, this money has been used to fund after-school activities, to provide incentives for student attendance and achievement and to provide supplementary equipment for courses. It is estimated that at least 300 students participate in funded activities each year.

Additional program services include:

- o A security guard training program administered by American Can in conjunction with Burns International Security. A total of 125 students (30 per year) have participated in the program, which is held at MLK after school hours.
- o A nonpaying 8-to-12 week internship program held at American Can twice during the year. A total of 40 students have participated in the program.
- o A World of Work program in which 10 to 15 students per week visit National Benefit Life Insurance, an American Can subsidiary, for a one-day introduction to business. This program has only been conducted on a periodic basis.
- o A renewable \$1,000 scholarship to be awarded to one outstanding MLK graduate each year.

In addition to these continuing activities, American Can funded a number of one-time efforts centering around the 1984 annual shareholders' meeting, which was held at the school. This effort involved 100 students in a variety of activities including:

- o Service as security guards and student hosts;
- o Preparation of a "student annual report" on American Can (15 students); and
- o Observation of the 1983 annual meeting in Minneapolis (eight students).

In response to school requests for assistance, American Can has also provided MLK with equipment, staff time and other resources above and beyond the terms of the annual grant.

Based on its experience at MLK, American Can has expanded two of its in-school program efforts into broader nationwide programs:

- o The American Can Foundation has donated \$90,000 to replicate the security program model in three other cities.
- o American Can has created a network of 35 institutions concerned with memorializing Martin Luther King, Jr. and, through the foundation, has donated \$85,000 to produce an instructional film commemorating his birthday.

STRUCTURE

The partnership is loosely structured. General program decisions and direction are handled through interactions between the program coordinators at American Can (Ken Koprowski) and MLK (Richard Kaplan.) While both coordinators are assisted by committees, in practice the coordinators have been given broad discretion. At American Can, Koprowski, who devotes roughly 15 percent of his time to Join-A-School activities, serves as the overall contact point with MLK, while committee members take responsibility for individual programs. At MLK a committee structure also exists, though it has been active only intermittently of late. Richard Kaplan, in his role of coordinator, exercises broad discretion over the program, with responsibility for most planning and operational decisions. The School District plays little or no role in program operations.

Information for this profile was collected during four visits to Martin Luther King, Jr. High School and two to the American Can Company. Interviews were conducted with William Woodside, Richard Kaplan, Ken Koprowski, Peter Goldberg, other American Can and MLK staff, and a sample of participating students. In addition, information was gathered from observations and a review of documentary materials.

II. HISTORY AND CONTEXT

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HIGH SCHOOL

New York City currently has 111 high schools serving approximately 275,000 students. Although some of the most successful schools and programs in the country flourish within this system, a significant number of its comprehensive high schools are characterized by serious drug and vandalism problems, and a dropout rate that in 1985 indicated that 42 percent of all its high school students would drop out of school before graduation. Citywide, approximately 100,000 students--over 36 percent--are reading two or more grades below grade level.

In the late 1970s and early 80s, MLK--located near Lincoln Center in Manhattan--was regarded as one of the city's more seriously troubled schools. Well over half of its students consistently test as reading more than two years below grade level, with the school's overall dropout rate approaching 60 percent. MLK also has 100 percent minority students in its population, most of them black. In 1984 only 7.3 percent were Hispanic (compared to a 25 percent citywide rate); and 5.9 percent were non-Hispanic English as a Second Language students. In the same year, of those who remained in school, only 77.2 percent qualified for graduation after state testing. MLK's student population increased from 2,127 in 1983 to 2,500 in 1984; and 2,800 in 1985.

By all accounts, MLK was a school with very serious problems and generally considered a "dumping ground" for students unable to get into selective vocational or career programs in Manhattan. Because of vandalism and drug use in the late 1970s, many parents were reluctant to send their children to MLK--the school corridors were unsafe, and school morale was at an all time low. Key staff at MLK view the morale problem, both among staff and students, as the school's major failing at the time. Moreover, they attribute much of this to the fact that MLK had virtually no after-school sport or club program for students and no other incentives for student motivation or performance.

AMERICAN CAN

American Can Company is one of the United States' larger and more successful corporations, with assets of \$3.1 billion and revenues of \$4.2 billion in 1985. In recent years, it has redirected its energies and redeployed assets from its traditional packaging industries to a significantly expanded financial service sector that had revenues of over \$1 billion in 1984. Its third major area of activity is specialty retailing. In 1984, American Can funded the American Can Foundation (ACF) with \$2.7 million to award grants for charitable purposes. Approximately \$470,000 of

the fund is used to address a series of "national themes" including "economic transitions," hunger and nutrition, and public education to which \$171,000 was devoted last year.

American Can's commitment to MLK and other social service and charitable programs stems directly from the influence of the its CEO, William Woodside. Woodside is somewhat unusual among corporate executives in his willingness to devote his time and his corporation's resources to problems outside the normal scope of business affairs. He was the singular impetus toward American Can's involvement with schools in general and MLK in particular. In a recent speech, Woodside noted:

As a business entity, American Can can survive and prosper only in an environment comprised of both a healthy society and a healthy economy. Moreover, the shareholders of American Can--employees, stockholders, customers, business associates--should be involved in local and national issues facing our society.

Woodside has made the public schools a particular priority, becoming a prominent spokesman for public education, specifically in mobilizing corporate support for public schools. It is Woodside's view that individual relationships between corporations and schools can benefit both; that schools gain corporate resources and expertise while corporate executives realize an increased understanding of the problems of school and society. American Can's involvement in the partnership stemmed directly from the implementation of Woodside's philosophy; apart from its chairman there was little or no support within the organization for the link with Martin Luther King, Jr. High School.

ORIGINS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The Join-A-School programs in New York City evolved from the recommendations of Joseph Califano who conducted a study of drug abuse and alcoholism among youth for Governor Hugh Carey of New York in 1981-82. Responding to the suggestion of staff director, Peter Goldberg, Califano persuaded the chancellor of the Board of Education, Frank Macchiarola, to initiate partnerships in New York City. Califano enlisted three corporations--American Can, Equitable Life and Manufacturers Hanover Trust--for the initial partnership.

From a number of innercity high schools proposed by the chancellor, American Can chose MLK--a school regarded by American Can as "...decidedly innercity and...with a good chance for restoration under a dynamic new principal (Edward Hom)." Hom readily accepted the offer of partnership conveyed by Woodside, and, in the spring and summer of 1982, the planning of the program began.

One of Hom's first steps was to appoint one of his science teachers, Richard Kaplan, who had also served as coordinator of student activities since 1980, to coordinate the school's participation in the planning process with American Can. Kaplan formed a faculty committee of eight to 10 staff members who held a series of meetings with the American Can planning group in Greenwich.

The planning group at American Can included some representatives of top management:

- o Executive Vice President, Sal Giudice;
- o Senior Vice President for Company Affairs, Andy Hays;
- o Vice President for Governmental Affairs, Pat Van Kueren;
- o Vice President of American Can's subsidiary in New York City, National Benefit Life Insurance, John Conde;
- o Vice President of the American Can Foundation, Peter Goldberg; and
- o Director of Security, Richard Post.

During the late spring and summer of 1982, at least six one-to-two-day planning sessions were held at American Can headquarters in Greenwich involving both the American Can and the Martin Luther King, Jr. planning committees. Both William Woodside and Edward Hom took part in several of the meetings. There was no further representation or direct involvement of the New York City Board of Education in the partnership at this point.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The initial planning sessions focused on the best use of the \$25,000 grant pledged to school partnership activities. Unlike other programs studied, funding was not committed to a pre-designed program, but rather was intended to be a flexible resource to be used in response to school-designated priorities. Initial priorities emerging from the group planning sessions included raising of morale, increasing school attendance and improving instruction. First-year program expenditures were used for textbook purchases, after-school activities, student attendance incentives, expenses associated with recruitment activities at "feeder schools," and faculty parties and luncheons.

Planning sessions were not repeated after 1982. Instead, spending priorities, structured along the 1982 lines, were developed by the school coordinator, approved by the principal and submitted to the American Can Foundation (ACF) for approval. Funding remained at \$25,000 per year.

As in earlier years, expenditures were for the payment of staff salaries and club expenses for after-school activities, faculty parties and luncheons, student incentive awards and supplementary equipment and materials for courses.

While the initial \$25,000-per-year grant was continued, the partnership project expanded dramatically in 1983 with a decision to hold the 1984 American Can shareholders' meeting at Martin Luther King, Jr. The announcement of this decision stimulated school staff and students and greatly raised the profile and level of enthusiasm attached to the partnership program.

The idea for this event originated with William Woodside, who committed the corporation to the meeting against the advice of much of his executive staff. Initial reaction to the idea, among both corporate and school staff was that security problems, the unfamiliarity of the surroundings and the potential for difficult and embarrassing developments far outweighed any possible benefit. Woodside felt that a strong signal of American Can's commitment to the school was needed to move the institutional relationship into high gear.

In addition, the meeting and attendant preparations resulted in the development of a variety of new partnership activities:

- o Funded trips. In the spring of 1983, American Can flew MLK's partnership coordinator and eight students to its annual shareholders' meeting in Minneapolis. During several days in the city, students attended the shareholders' meeting and visited American Can subsidiaries. Participating students later worked on various aspects of the schools' involvement in the 1984 shareholders' meeting.
- o Security clubs. The need for security at the annual meeting led to a security training course for students. American Can's Security Director, Richard Post, together with MLK staff and the Burns Security Agency (recruited by Post for the task), developed a 70-hour curriculum leading to certification by Burns of high school juniors and seniors as security guards. Students served as security guards at the shareholders' meeting and were later able to obtain part- and full-time employment under Burns' auspices. The security

course is now a regular feature of the program and has been expanded through the National Crime Prevention Council and the American Can Foundation into three other sites.

- o Slide presentation. The corporate communications office at American Can, working with MLK students, created a 15-minute slide presentation on MLK shown at the shareholders' meeting. The resulting video tape proved to be a great success and was later used in presentations to feeder schools to improve recruitment for MLK.
- o Student annual report. In preparation for student participation in the shareholders' meeting, 16 students from several economics courses worked with their teachers and with American Can executives in studying the company's finances and operations. Conceived by the students themselves, this project involved students interviewing senior executives from all major segments of American Can's operations, in order to put together a "student annual report" on American Can. Almost all of American Can's senior executive staff appeared before the students in order to help them in this project, the results of which were published by American Can and MLK in a document entitled "Progress through Partnership." This 13-page brochure, which also describes many of the other programs and services sponsored by American Can at MLK, was distributed to the American Can shareholders at its May 1984 meeting at the school.

The 1984 shareholders' meeting proved to be a tremendous success both for the corporation and for the school. Using school staff as security people, guides and hosts, the program went off without difficulty, as over 300 students attended the shareholders' meeting, many prepared with questions for American Can officers. No behavior problems were apparent, and students proved to be an interested, enthusiastic and well-informed audience. Press coverage, including a story prominently featured in the New York Times, was extensive.

In sum, the shareholders' meeting, symbolic of the unusually strong corporate commitment of American Can to MLK, brought a vitality and momentum to the partnership that was not previously apparent. In retrospect, this vitality may have been more perceived than real, as the meeting raised expectations to a degree difficult to fulfill; at the time, however, the partnership's momentum and its future prospects appeared nearly unlimited to most observers.

In addition to the shareholders' meeting, one other major initiative developed in 1983-84. Acting on the request of MLK staff, American Can established an unpaid student internship program operating one day a week for approximately eight weeks. In this program, nine to 12 students were assigned to various staff members and departments including secretarial, maintenance, public relations and accounting, at American Can's headquarters in Greenwich. To date, this program has served a total of 40 to 50 students. Other partnership activities in 1983-84 included a two-day computer literacy program held in Greenwich for 20 MLK faculty members, and sessions at MLK with various American Can corporate officers, including a senior vice president who provided lectures and tutoring.

The following year, 1984-85, saw some dissipation of the partnership's momentum. The appointment of a new principal led to the departure of the program's coordinator, Richard Kaplan, and some loss of direction in partnership activities. In addition to the ongoing security club and internship activities, new funding was provided for the following initiatives, most of which involved few MLK students:

- o An art contest;
- o A computerized video newspaper;
- o The creation of a "network" of Martin Luther King, Jr. schools (35) around the country; and
- o A trip to Los Angeles for 15 students to help provide security and act as hosts for the 1985 shareholders' meeting.

The 1985-86 year saw yet another principal appointed (the third in the partnership's brief history) and the return of Richard Kaplan as program coordinator. Funded activities were similar to those in earlier years; the grant was largely directed to after-school activities and student parties, awards and incentives. No major new program activities were developed.

III. KEY PROGRAM FEATURES

The American Can partnership program did not originate as a structured program for students, but rather was intended as a flexible and evolving response to school needs. Program activities have developed in a variety of ways with no clear overall direction or focus. While some program activities have apparently become entrenched, others wax and wane on an annual basis, making the definition of partnership activities a difficult one. Nevertheless, in the partnership experience to date, three different kinds of activities can be identified.

The first group of activities include those funded on an annual basis by the \$25,000 grant. These include funding for after-school activities, student incentives, school equipment, etc. These activities vary from year to year and are based on a budget submitted to American Can by the coordinating committee (with the approval of the principal).

A second kind of activity, above and beyond the programs funded by the \$25,000, is one that develops from a specific school need or from American Can's desire to offer a particular service. These project activities are generally designed to provide one-time assistance for a particular activity and, like the first group, vary from year to year. For example, the photography club may request additional equipment or expertise, and the American Can coordinator will attempt to provide the needed money or staff assistance. Similarly, an American Can staffer may become involved in the MLK program and decide to offer tutorial or technical assistance.

Among the programs in this category are the following:

- o A legal affairs program, including observation of courtroom proceedings, tours of law offices, and lectures by law professionals.
- o A four-year college scholarship awarded each year to an outstanding MLK graduate (\$1,000 per year).
- o A video newspaper project involving students in writing, producing and editing student "news copy," which is transmitted via computer to a television monitor in the cafeteria.
- o Photography and audio-visual clubs enabling students with different talents and training to learn photography and audio-visual production skills. Together, these clubs have produced an award-winning multi-media show about the school.

- o A computer literacy program for MLK faculty members conducted at American Can as a base for further computer training.
- o American Can personnel working with students and faculty in producing recruiting materials, student handbooks, magazines and school exhibits.
- o A World of Work program that offers students tours of American Can Company plants and subsidiary offices as well as training in job interviewing and resumé preparation.
- o A financial education program in conjunction with economics classes featuring tours of the New York Stock Exchange, stock-tracking competitions and lectures involving American Can financial officers.

A third kind of project activity involves the internship program and the Security Club.

The Internship Program

The Internship Program was established in the 1983-84 academic year at the request of Martin Luther King, Jr. staff. The program involves 15 students each term in nonpaying work experience. Total participation to date has been 50 students.

Students participating in the program spend one day a week for eight weeks at American Can headquarters. Students work from 9:30 A.M. to 3 P.M. with minivan transportation to and from MLK provided by American Can. Lunch is also provided by American Can.

The program is run by American Can staff under the supervision of an American Can intern coordinator. Students are placed in a variety of departments including Legal Affairs, Treasury, Public Relations and Maintenance. Most work is of a clerical nature, with the student typically responsible for answering phones, typing, drafting and some bookkeeping.

Planning for the internship was the responsibility of American Can's partnership committee with most details handled by the interim coordinator. All intern supervisors are volunteers. Initially, there was some reluctance to participate, with one of the program coordinators noting that getting headquarters staff involved was like "pulling teeth." Resistance and tension stemmed from prevailing unfavorable perception of the MLK student body as "ghetto youth" and a reluctance to be involved in extra work. Since the beginning of the program, however, there has been a growing acceptance and willingness to work with student

interns, as well as the development of strong personal bonds between staff and students.

No doubt some credit for the ready acceptance of the interns can be given to the fairly select group of students participating. Recruitment and selection of students is the responsibility of MLK program coordinator Kaplan. Students are recommended by MLK teachers based on regular school attendance and motivation, and then screened by Kaplan. In 1985 there were 35 applicants for 13 positions in the program. Although grades were not a determining criteria, the emphasis on motivation and the clear desire to present a good image to American Can often resulted in the most academically capable being selected.

It is difficult to attribute any specific outcomes to the program other than an increase in mutual respect, goodwill and involvement among American Can employees and MLK students. However, based on post-program discussions with students, coordinator Kaplan reports:

Most of the kids changed their career orientation to one that would require post-secondary education. They also tended to raise their own career expectations as a result of the program. Their responses have been overwhelmingly positive, as have their American Can mentors' evaluation of their performance.

It should be emphasized again that internships were unpaid and not intended to lead to a full-time position. American Can staff contended that payment would be "a dangerous precedent," and saw the job experience as being in itself a substantial benefit. Other reasons advanced for lack of payment included a reluctance to interfere with student part-time jobs, the relative inaccessibility of American Can to Manhattan and fear of employee resentment due to widespread corporate layoffs in 1982. Full-time employment following an internship program was rejected as inappropriate due to a lack of entry-level positions at corporate headquarters and the need for further education for most positions.

The Security Club

The Security Club grew out of planning and preparation for the 1984 American Can shareholders' meeting, during which students assisted in security efforts. The program, begun in fall 1983, is run on a semester basis and provides training and placement of students in jobs in the security field. Total participation to date is 250 students, with 30-40 enrolled in a typical semester.

The course was created by Richard Post, American Can security director in conjunction with the MLK staff, the Burns Security

Agency and the John Jay School of Criminal Justice. The 70-hour program designed to meet Burns' standards for certification as security guards, is taught twice weekly by personnel of Burns, American Can, John Jay and MLK.

The curriculum is fairly wide-ranging, covering a variety of security-related topics including crime prevention, investigation, business security, emergency service and substance abuse. Regular classroom sessions are supplemented by guest security professionals from companies such as IBM, Bristol-Meyers, Exxon, ITT and Chemical Bank who lecture on a variety of topics. In addition, field trips to corporate headquarters are held to provide on-site observation of corporate security systems.

The first year of program operation was evaluated by an outside research group who detailed a number of operational problems. The program was found to be lacking in sufficient structure, students were inattentive, discipline was lax, and attendance requirements were not being enforced. In one respect, the course was too successful; several students in the first year were so impressed with their prospects of full-time employment in the security field that they quit school before graduation to take a full-time position with Burns.

As a result of these problems, the second year of operation saw some changes. Program requirements were stiffened, particularly with regard to attendance, and students were required to remain in school until graduation in order to receive a certificate of course completion.

Outcomes of the security program have been fairly positive. Of the 250 students who have participated, 125 have completed the program and 50 have been placed in full- or part-time security positions. Virtually all students completing the course have passed Burns' qualifying test, and company officials note the quality and knowledge of program graduates compares favorably with that of other job applicants.

IV. PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND ROLES

As with program features, the allocation of roles and responsibilities has been an evolving process, depending in part on available personnel and the particular program activities extant at any given time. There are many points of contact between American Can and MLK, with no set pattern for requests for assistance.

THE SCHOOL ROLE

The school role in the partnership activities varies according to the three types of activities offered:

1. The \$25,000 grant. The school evaluates competing priorities, prepares a budget, and then allocates and supervises expenditures.
2. Other program requests. This area is more difficult to define. The pattern of the partnership to date has been for individual teachers or after-school activity leaders to request American Can assistance for particular projects above and beyond budgeted requests. In these cases the teacher, working through the MLK coordinator or communicating directly with the American Can coordinator, prepares a request for funding and then, alone or in conjunction with American Can staff, plans and operates the program activity.
3. Ongoing programs. Roles in the internship and security programs are more fully prescribed. For the Internship program the school is responsible only for recruitment and selection of participants. The school plays a somewhat larger role in the Security Club, recruiting and selecting participants, coordinating meeting time and place, and providing day-to-day supervision of students.

THE SCHOOL STRUCTURE

The school program is run by the program coordinator, Richard Kaplan, with a pro forma review role played by the principal. Although there is a "planning committee" of teacher volunteers, this group's involvement to date has been limited. The Board of Education and the Join-A-School committee have played no substantive role to date beyond routine approval, when needed, of school expenditures.

THE BUSINESS ROLE

American Can is responsible for funding all activities, for providing technical assistance, for initiating projects on an as-needed basis (i.e., as with the shareholders' meeting) and for operating the two major ongoing programs, the Internship and Security Projects as well as other one-time or ongoing projects.

In addition to funding the annual \$25,000 grant, American Can has provided funding, staff support and technical assistance for a wide variety of other projects. American Can has also secured the assistance of two of its subsidiaries, Sam Goody Stores and National Benefit Life Insurance, and one of its contractors, Burns Security, for part of the activities funded at MLK. In operating the Internship and Security Programs, American Can is responsible for planning, design, curriculum development, supervision, selection of mentors and lecturers and transportation (for the Internship Program).

THE BUSINESS STRUCTURE

The partnership program is administered by a committee consisting of eight staff members. One of these members, Ken Koprowski, is program manager. Koprowski has overall responsibility for coordinating program activities and serves as a liaison between the school and American Can. Individual requests for funding are directed through Koprowski. Other American Can staff have direct operating responsibility for the Internship and Security Programs.

V. NATURE OF YOUTH SERVED

The kinds of youth served, the means of recruitment and program targeting for partnership programs varied, depending on the particular program activity offered. Since most program activities were launched spur-of-the-moment with no clearly articulated goals, little was done in the way of establishing standards for recruitment, targeting or eligibility. This was particularly true with the after-school activities sponsored by American Can, where attendance was essentially open to all and little formal recruitment was done.

THE SECURITY PROGRAM

Recruitment for the Security Program is accomplished through announcements over school public address system and by the program director and individual teachers informing students of the program. Some students were also recruited by friends already in the program. Recruitment for the after-school program has been hampered by the great expansion in after-school activities resulting from the American Can after-school grant and by the need of many students to hold part-time jobs.

Throughout the tenure of the program and particularly in the first year, little attention was paid to targeting students for recruitment, with emphasis instead simply on getting a sufficient number of students to attend. Lack of targeting has resulted in problems for ESL students brought into the program: according to Burns officials, they are unlikely to be placed on job sites due to language difficulties. According to available information, targeting standards have yet to be established. Youth in the program are roughly representative of the school as a whole, though the percentage of female students participating appears to be lower than in the general school population.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Recruitment for the Internship Program is accomplished primarily through teacher recommendations of likely students. Recruitment efforts are targeted at above average students, those who are, in most respects, the "cream of the crop." Although grades are not considered a primary criterion (a C average is required), program requirements of strong motivation, attendance and a teacher's letter of recommendation combined with the school's desire to send the most presentable students to American Can, result in a target population of the top 25 percent of the student body. Admission to the Internship Program is competitive, with roughly one-third of the applicants accepted. Most internship positions are clerical. As a result, self-selection has largely limited

participation to female students. Virtually all students complete the eight-to-12 week Internship Program.

VI. COSTS

BUSINESS CONTRIBUTION

It is difficult to estimate costs in a program of this kind. While American Can Foundation contributions are readily identifiable, there are myriad other expenditures--in equipment, staff time, transportation, supplies, food, lodging, travel and other costs which are not easily quantifiable by an outside evaluator. (American Can does reportedly have a separate budget line encompassing most of these partnership costs, but this information was not available to research staff.)

1. Cash: Cash contributions by American Can include the following:

In Program - Direct Cost

| | |
|---|------------------|
| o Annual Program Grant (\$25,000 grant for four years) | \$100,000 |
| o Internship Program Costs | 4,000 estimate |
| o Security Program Costs | 4,000 estimate |
| Total | <u>\$108,000</u> |

Related Program for National Projects

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| o Security Program Expansion | \$ 90,000 |
| o Martin Luther King, Jr. Network | 85,000 |
| Total | <u>\$175,000</u> |

2. In-kind: In-kind expenditures are difficult to estimate. Identifiable staff time contributions include:

- o Security Director (10% of time, four years)
- o Security Program Manager (15% of time)
- o Program Manager (5% of time, three years)
- o Internship Coordinator (5-10% of time, one year)
- o Corporation Chairman (1-3% of time, four years).

In addition to these known regular contributions, the partnership has involved at least 100 professional staff over the four-year relationship on a per project basis as well as considerable donation of equipment and other in-kind services.

While the total contribution of American Can is difficult to estimate, one company analyst reports an American Can regular budget line of approximately \$125,000 per year devoted to partnership activities, for a total of roughly \$500,000 excluding

grants of the American Can Foundation. When these are added, the American Can contribution approaches \$700,000.

SCHOOL

The school contribution has been relatively small, comprising a portion of coordinator Kaplan's time and the use of school space for a program office and the Security Club meetings.

This is not surprising given the nature of the partnership design. In keeping with American Can Chairman Woodside's desire to direct corporate resources at helping solve problems of urban schools, the financial commitment required of MLK is low.

VII. OUTCOMES

The nature of the partnership established between American Can and Martin Luther King, Jr. precludes the determination of quantifiable outcomes due to both programmatic objectives and the nature of the services offered. First, because the partnership was initiated largely with the intent of changing perceptions--of improving morale at MLK and increasing the degree of social responsibility at American Can--outcomes must be judged more on the basis of attitudinal change than on measurable gains in specific areas. Second, the concentration on providing a wide variety of services on a short-term basis to a diverse population makes it difficult to impute specific changes solely to the American Can intervention. This is particularly true given the high turnover in student population and the three separate administrations and significant staff changes that have occurred during the American Can tenure.

Although few direct effects on school improvement indicators can be attributed to the American Can/MLK partnership, it is useful to consider school-level changes that have occurred recently. The annual attendance rate at MLK in the 1981-82 school year was 70.14 percent; this improved to 72.8 percent in the 1983-84 academic year. Likewise, school enrollment, which was 1,248 in 1981-82 and 1,127 in 1982-83, showed a dramatic increase to 2,500 in 1983-84; and 2,800 in 1984-85. In fall 1986, student enrollment approached 3,000.

Some of this gain, particularly in years of falling high school enrollment citywide, might well be attributed to both the improved reputation of MLK and to the American Can-supported efforts of the school to attract more students from its feeder schools.

However, another indicator of improvement, the percentage of eligible students who actually graduated from the school showed a decline from 83.5 percent in 1981-82 to 63.4 percent in 1982-83 and 77.2 percent in 1983-84. The reading level of students in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades improved substantially between 1981 and 1984, though the level of 12th-grade students declined.

In terms of measures of attitudinal change in MLK, a more definitive judgment can be made. American Can's involvement, and particularly its sponsorship of after-school activities for over 300 students, resulted in clear benefits to the school. Virtually every staff member interviewed credits American Can involvement with improving morale at MLK. Staff note major improvement in school atmosphere, student and staff attitudes and overall school safety. They attribute much of this success to the after-school activities that had been impossible to mount until American Can provided assistance, and also to the general air of

excitement that planning the shareholders' meeting and its many offshoot initiatives created during the second year of the partnership. As one enthusiastic after-school activity leader said of the partnership, "It has been a dynamic catalyst in moving this school away from the brink of disaster. American Can has made the difference."

Direct benefits of the partnership to individual students varied with their degree of participation in sponsored activities. For those 200 or so students most involved with American Can through the convention planning, internship and security programs, a variety of potential additional benefits were derived, including:

- o The benefit of working with strong, successful role models often absent in student lives;
- o A boost to student self-esteem and self-image resulting from the clear personal commitment and attention of senior corporate executives; and
- o Exposure to the corporate world and consequent widening of student ambition and outlook, including the possibility of higher education.

IMPACT ON AMERICAN CAN

Measured in the terms that they feel are most important to American Can, American Can executive staff feel they have derived considerable benefit from the relationship with MLK. One member involved in the program from the outset stated that in his opinion the firm has gained considerably more benefits than it has rendered to the school. These gains are largely perceived to be the considerable first-hand experience a number of senior corporate executives and other headquarters staff have had in working in MLK or directly with MLK's teachers and students. They believe that the CEO's goal of having staff better understand the problems of public schools and becoming more supportive of efforts to assist public schools in general have been significantly realized.

The CEO, William Woodside, agrees with this assessment. In a recent speech he said:

In my own company, as a result of our Join-A-School program experiences with Martin Luther King, Jr. High School, I can identify people who two years ago never thought twice about the public schools but who now are among their most articulate and effective advocates--both within the company and within their own communities.

Perceptions of senior management about program impact, while clearly descriptive of some employees, may be less accurate in reflecting the company as a whole. Many American Can employees appear to exhibit a marked ambivalence about both the extent and nature of the partnership. While supporting the program in general terms, employees, and in particular new participants, saw little in the linkage that could directly benefit the company. Moreover, there was a widespread perception that Chairman Woodside was devoting too much time to partnership activities to the possible future detriment of the company's financial position.

VIII. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The American Can partnership model is one that is different from others explored in these profiles. Its focus is not on the individual student, but rather on the school as a whole; not in improving quantifiable outcomes--employment, education, attendance records--but rather on changing attitudes in both school and corporation. Judged on the promotion of this kind of attitudinal change, the American Can/MLK partnership is clearly a success. Although Martin Luther King, Jr. has not "turned around" to as great an extent as had been hoped, it is clearly a better place due in large part to American Can's intervention. And while questions can be raised about the depth and likely longevity of American Can's commitment, the company has achieved, to some degree, its goals of increasing staff involvement in the schools and promoting a sense of social responsibility among employees.

The strengths of the American Can program derived primarily from the commitment of the CEO, William Woodside. Woodside is clearly the driving force behind this partnership, donating his personal time and effort and ensuring MLK access to American Can resources, staff and technical assistance. Woodside's decision to hold the shareholders' meeting at MLK despite the opposition of American Can staff, gave life to the partnership program and was evidence of a highly unusual and personal commitment to an effort of this kind. Stemming directly from Woodside's involvement was the generous financial and staff commitment of American Can. As discussed above, total expenditures are at least \$350,000 and quite likely considerably higher if staff time and all additional equipment costs are included.

While the partnership did not engage the majority of American Can employees, well over 100 employees participated in partnership efforts; many demonstrated a strong personal commitment to the cause. MLK also appeared to have good access to American Can equipment and technical resources.

A second strength of the partnership was the commitment of the MLK coordinator, Richard Kaplan. Kaplan exhibited vision and belief in what the private sector could do to help an inner-city school and his competence was undeniably a factor in the partnership's success.

It is ironic that the degree of personal commitment that has made the partnership a success to date is also its greatest operational weakness. While Woodside's support is undoubted, it is considerably less clear that others at American Can fully share this degree of commitment. Staff interviewed at American Can expressed some doubt that the program will continue after the CEO's retirement.

One reason for the lack of commitment at American Can may be the simple absence of relevance to the company of the MLK partnership. Interviews with staff suggest that the lack of a direct link between the students at MLK and the employment and training needs of American Can has limited employee support for the program. A second and more subtle limitation has been MLK's location in New York City, a place that is apparently more remote from the lives of American Can employees than geography alone might suggest. According to one staffer interviewed, MLK's Manhattan address has effectively placed it beyond the pale for American Can staff, many of whom have moved to Connecticut from other parts of the country and seldom, if ever, visit New York City. The false image of Martin Luther King, Jr. as a "ghetto" school has reinforced the perception some employees hold of New York as a dangerous place and is undoubtedly seen, along with the 45 minutes to one hour required for travel, as a barrier to participation. It is somewhat ironic that this is the case, for Martin Luther King, Jr. has one of the best locations of any high school in the city, adjacent to an expensive Upper West Side neighborhood and across the street from Lincoln Center.

Another barrier to an effective MLK partnership is the continued changes in staff and leadership, which could eventually derail the program or at least blunt its effectiveness. Until now, the program's momentum has rested on the continued interest and enthusiasm of key individuals at both American Can and MLK, rather than on an established structure of programs and institutionalized events.

A third concern, ironically, is the tremendous success of the program in 1983-84 during the planning and execution of the shareholders' meeting. The level of excitement engendered by the program, and the many projects it spawned, will be very hard to match. The danger is that without such galvanizing events, everything that follows the shareholders' meeting of 1984 may be viewed as anticlimactic.

Ultimately, a more fundamental weakness may lie in the model itself. Although attitudinal change was evident, indication of more solid outcomes was scant. For all the commitment of resources, expertise and staff, it would be difficult (apart from the Security Program) to point to students who stayed in school or advanced their employment prospects or who otherwise achieved significant tangible benefits as a result of this partnership.

In light of this disadvantaged population's evident needs for jobs, education, counseling and higher education, it may be that the resources of American Can could be better employed if more narrowly focused. Rather than aim for a broad impact on the school community as a whole, MLK might be better served through programs targeting individual needs for tutoring, paid work expe-

rience, college scholarships, etc. Such a redefinition would be well within the scope of American Can's mandate and might well prove to be a more efficient and more effective use of the partnership's available resources.

In a broader perspective, it may well be that a model like the MLK/American Can partnership cannot be sustained. The lack of relevance of the partner school to the corporation works against the continuation of this linkage. Geographical distance, perceptual differences and the absence of clear economic, employment or educational rationales make this partnership entirely dependent on a powerfully placed corporate champion, a factor that creates a tenuous base for future prospects.

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