

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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[ARTICLE]

## Messenger speaks about Manhattan's dilemmas

By Dan Fellman  
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Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger urged about 25 students and faculty members to become aware of the city's pressing social problems last night at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Messinger said New Yorkers should do their best to raise the spirits of homeless people and treat them with respect.

"Their spirits have been crushed, so I urge you to make eye contact with them, talk to them, and make them feel like a person," Messinger said.

"People have defined a person without a home as 'homeless' just as people define Dominicans, Jewish people, or a person with red hair and glasses," she said.

In addition to the homeless problem, Messinger addressed the welfare system, drug and alcohol abuse, housing, jobs, and other social issues which the city faces.

New Yorkers need to acknowledge their responsibility to treat some of these ills, she said. Messinger compared this concept to an



African proverb which states that it takes an entire village to raise a child.

“Too much wrong is happening in New York City with children, by children, and against children, which causes parents to go crazy,” she said. “Parents need help from the village,” she added.

Part of becoming an adult member of this village involves giving to social charities, she said.

“When you sit down to write checks for your phone bill and your ConEd[ison] bill, you should also write a check for charity,” she said.

Contributing to charities should involve sacrificing time, even if it is more difficult than writing a check, she said.

Learning is also a part of giving, Messinger said.

“You can learn a lot about AIDS by delivering food to AIDS patients,” she added.

Messinger said giving time and money helps people to develop values of community, courage, resourcefulness, love, and hope.

“Hope can change this city,” she said.