

June 10, 1974

Dear Friend:

Fayette's experiment, a peaceful change which began in July, 1969, is no longer an experiment. Today it is a vibrant reality.

Despite the profound national problems which affect Fayette as much as any other community, we have turned the corner. Four years ago, the Fayette region was one of the nation's poorest. Today it is rapidly approaching the national average for a rural town. Four years ago, hope was a rare commodity among our people. Today the majority of our folk are on the march--they are getting jobs, training, adequate medical care, decent housing, recreation and sensitive social services. For three centuries our black citizens were ignored in determining their own future--today they have an active and vigorous voice in their local government.

In short, as the enclosure illustrates, Fayette is "getting itself together." This newly-wrought unity has given us a sense of purpose, focusing our energies toward the achievement of constructive goals. We are "together" in another very important sense--whites and blacks are learning, at long last, that we cannot afford the luxury of racial bitterness, that by ignoring our differences we have found new energies to better our common condition.

These changes have manifested themselves in a number of ways. Our five-year goal of 500 new jobs in the Fayette region was surpassed last December, a full year ahead of schedule. Unemployment, though still high, is less than half of the 1970 rate of 68 percent. Hundreds of poor citizens have received invaluable vocational and professional training. Our two-county community health program, despite federal cutbacks, now treats more than 9,000 individuals a year, mostly poor. The dental component provides care for about 3,000 persons a year. Fayette's youngsters now have a full range of recreational and other services, including the Fund's day care center. Shortly, we hope to open the region's first senior citizens day care center. Scores of new private homes have been built with low-interest federal loans, now that there are so many permanently-employed breadwinners. And soon we shall be embarking on an eighty-unit low-income housing project which will wipe out most of the disgraceful shacks and hovels that blight the town.

I should stress again that all of these facilities, programs and projects are open to blacks and whites solely on the basis of need. Many of them were made possible by the construction of Fayette's multi-purpose community center, toward which the Fund granted \$135,000 as the town's local share. Since December that facility has been a bee-hive of activity.

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By noting some of the achievements, there is always the danger of painting too rosy a picture. Many of the inequities of the past remain. Centuries of oppression cannot be wiped out in four or five years, even with the best of intentions and unlimited funds. While we like to think we have the former, we certainly do not have access to the latter, especially in light of the prolonged economic difficulties of the past years.

However, we continue to do the best we can, hoping at the same time that our friends across the country will continue to have faith in the works we perform and the example we hope to set. We need your support, as generously as possible. While the burden of Fayette's progress falls largely on our own shoulders, as it should, concerned Americans like yourself have helped to make it all possible. For that we are grateful. I urge you to join with us in spirit and deed by contributing now. It will speed the day when we can do it all ourselves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Evers". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Charles Evers
President