



Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression

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Impoverished young Americans had no greater champion during the Depression than Eleanor Roosevelt. As First Lady, Mrs. Roosevelt used her newspaper columns and radio broadcasts to crusade for expanded federal aid to poor children and teens. She was the most visible spokesperson for the National Youth Administration, the New Deal's central agency for aiding needy youths, and she was adamant in insisting that federal aid to young people be administered without discrimination so that it reached blacks as well as whites, girls as well as boys.

This activism made Mrs. Roosevelt a beloved figure among poor teens and children, who between 1933 and 1941 wrote her thousands of letters describing their problems and requesting her help. *Dear Mrs. Roosevelt* presents nearly 200 of these extraordinary documents to open a window into the lives of the Depression's youngest victims. In their own words, the letter writers confide what it was like to be needy and young during the worst economic crisis in American history.

Revealing both the strengths and the limitations of New Deal liberalism, this book depicts an administration concerned and caring enough to elicit such moving appeals for help yet unable to respond in the very personal ways the letter writers hoped.

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