

# Party lines: *people, places and politics*

## Angelou joins salute to children

**H**ow are America's children doing? The mere question upsets professor and poet **Maya Angelou**, who on Wednesday night snapped, "Don't ask me that!" before suggesting that her questioner should read the newspaper to find the answer.

Miss Angelou, however, had no problem talking about the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), at whose annual national benefit she served as mistress of ceremonies.

The organization, she said in her deep, mellifluous voice, "provides an advocacy of bright, fierce and caring people for the children, all children, the poor, the abused, the abandoned."

Not to mention the ones who "Beat the Odds," which was the evening's theme. Five Washington area teen-agers were honored for overcoming daunting obstacles to become model students.

Among them was **Yohannes Demoz**, who, at age 8, lost his



Photos by Jim Brantley/The Washington Times

Above: Children's Defense Fund founder **Marian Wright Edelman** (center) gets a hug from **Ingrid Saunders Jones** as **Peter Wolff** watches. Right: **Dorothy Height** (left) shares an animated moment with poet **Maya Angelou**.

sight in a bombing accident in his native Ethiopia. The Woodrow Wilson High School student said he will not let his loss of vision stop him from going on to college to study law because, "No one will take you seriously without an education. No one should limit themselves."

Housing and Urban Development Secretary **Henry Cisneros**, who presented one of the awards, said children will be positively affected by the new welfare rules if a "surge of self-sufficiency and self-reliance" results.

"Children can be affected positively if we put into place the

alternatives," offered CDF founder **Marian Wright Edelman**, who wore a heart-shaped "I Stand for Children" pin.

"They're going to be affected very negatively if we just cut money and punitively throw people off welfare without putting health care and jobs and training

in place."

Also on hand at the National Building Museum dinner were Rep. **Connie Morella**, Health and Human Services Secretary **Donna Shalala**, astronaut **Kathryn Sullivan** and Olympic Silver Medalist **Jair Lynch**.

— **Mensah Dean**

