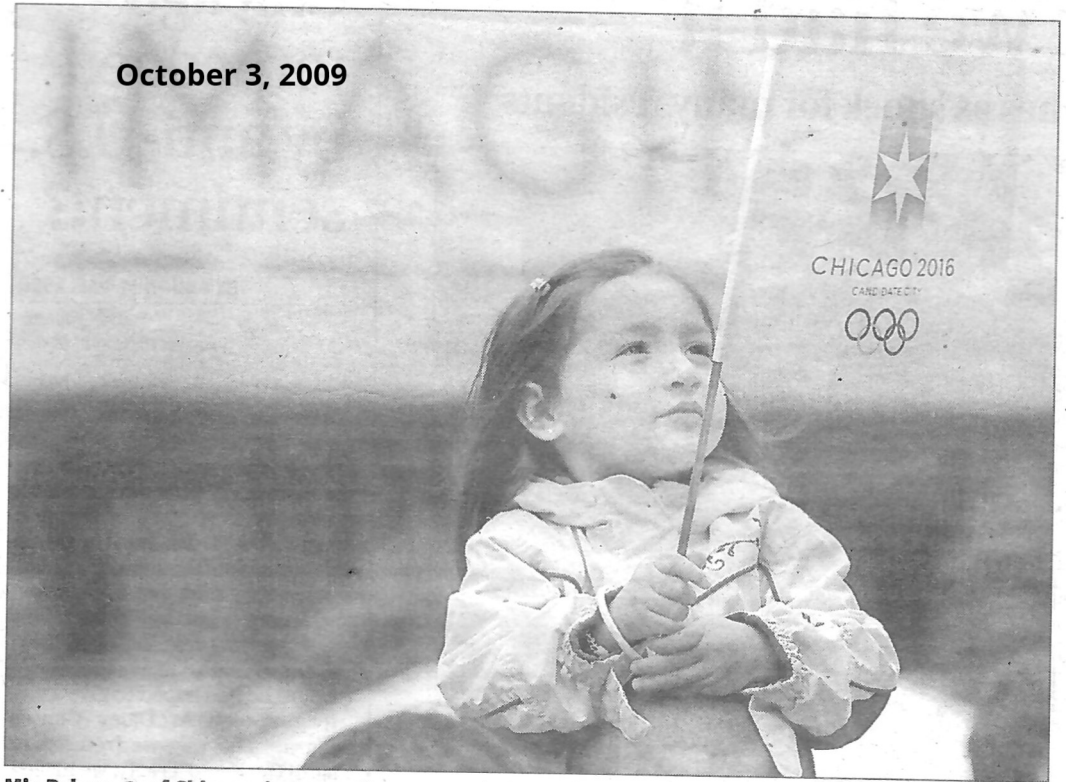


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Mia Pelayo, 3, of Chicago, just one of our great city's precious resources. | RICHARD A. CHAPMAN~SUN-TIMES

A GREATER LOSS

With Games bid over, city must get a grip on wayward youth



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Need we mourn that Chicago has lost its bid to host the Olympics? Yes, but not for too long. We are still Chicago, and that is a mighty consolation.

Watching the Beijing Olympics on TV, I hoped that my city would win the opportunity to show off to the world like that. I know that for too many people, Chicago is known for gangsters and "Machine politics." There is some truth in every cliché, but as I move around this glorious city, it strikes me every day how beautiful, flower-filled, towering and happy a place it is.

Yes, we have our share of heartbreak. The death of Derrion Albert inspires a cry of *shame!* that every student in Chicago cannot be certain of returning home safely. His beating

is the Chicago image that has gone around the world, and not beauty shots of our skyline and lakefront.

We have lost the Olympics bid. Perhaps this is our opportunity to win Derrion Albert's bid. He was an honor student, not a gang member, not a dropout. He was murdered by a crowd of thugs. More generally, he was murdered by a system that is failing our neighborhoods, our schools and our children.

We were prepared to raise millions to prepare the city for the Olympics. Without missing a beat, we should devote our energy to preparing the city for a new generation of Derrion Alberts.

This will not require new "infrastructure" and all the delay and bureaucracy and waste that often implies. It will require investment in a resource we have in abundant supply: human beings.

We need to enforce safety, order and civility in our streets and schools, and act quickly. We need more crossing guards armed with cell phones. We need more police, who are heartbroken by the things they see and

need help. We need more teachers and smaller classrooms.

We need separate schools for congenital troublemakers. I agree with the teachers union that such students should be transferred quickly, not after months of delay. I trust school administrators and staffs to be fair in choosing students deserving a transfer. The second chance academies must be well-staffed, high-security and no-nonsense. They should be real schools, not holding pens.

In neighborhoods plagued by gangs or feuding cliques of teenagers, we need to enlist adults to monitor the sidewalks outside their windows and call immediately when they see trouble.

Where will we find the money to make the city safe for other Derrion Alberts? We will make it our top priority. It must be done. Mayor Daley can do it.

By 2016, when the Olympic torch burns elsewhere, let our torch for Derrion Albert also burn. It will be brighter, and cast its light longer, and it will also, as the Olympics were said to, provide benefits for all Chicagoans.

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