



Unequal Fortunes: Snapshots from the South Bronx

Arthur Levine, Laura Scheiber

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"Levine and Scheiber tell two tales about poor kids growing up in the Bronx -- one inspires, the other rips your heart out. They also compel us to recognize that educational failure has both individual and societal costs that can be fatal. We can and must do better." --**Joel Klein**, Chancellor, New York City Department of Education

"With all the emotive range of a literary novel, Arthur Levine and Laura Scheiber have written a persuasive call to action for all educators. We must be mentors and provide all students the chance to explore all the world has to offer, as best we can." --**James P. Comer, M.D.**, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry, Yale Child Study Center, Associate Dean, Yale School of Medicine

"We need more leaders like Arthur Levine who are willing to reach across community divides to build authentic relationships with the next generation of Americans. In *Unequal Fortunes*, Levine and Scheiber show what it means to learn and care about the lives of young Latinos and the payoffs for our children, their communities, and this country." --**Sarita E. Brown**, president, *Excelencia* in Education

"Compelling, incisive, and poignant. This is an intimate reflection of life's changing realities -- for individuals, neighborhoods, communities, and education. In this narrative manifesto for action, Levine and Scheiber inspire us upward to a dream for all!" -- **Sharon Lynn Kagan**, Virginia and Leonard Marx Professor of Early Childhood and Family Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University

In this powerful book, Arthur Levine (president of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation) and coauthor Laura Scheiber revisit the South Bronx, where Levine grew up in the 1960s, and compare his experiences with those of a group of teenagers coming of age in the same neighborhood nearly 40 years later. Shaken by the violent death of Leo Disla, one of the young men in his group, Levine and Scheiber explore what happened to Leo and how society failed him. In this compelling account, we meet Leo's family and friends and learn about his hopes and fears. We witness the devastating effects of poverty and racism: low-wage, dead-end jobs; inadequate housing; high crime rates; appalling schools; violence; drugs; a broken legal system; prison; and underage funerals. The authors not only tell Arthur's and Leo's stories, but struggle to explain why their lives were so starkly different. They focus on the new social realities that have shaped Levine's old neighborhood, and they conclude with the lessons that must be learned if we are to help today's disenfranchised children and restore to them the American Dream of a "better, richer, and happier life."

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