

NATIONAL



Howard University confers honorary degree on President Nelson Mandela -- Wayman F. Smith III (left), chairman of the Board of Trustees at Howard University, confers an honorary doctorate of humane letters degree on South African President Nelson Mandela during Mandela's first visit to the United States since his historic election last spring. While in the U.S., Mandela urged business and political leaders to invest in the economic development of South Africa, which has been ravaged by the apartheid system.



Answering questions from journalists recently about the \$15-million investment by black Americans to build a Pepsi-Cola bottling plant in Johannesburg, South Africa are Earl G. Graves, Publisher, Black Enterprise magazine and Chairman of Pepsi-Cola of Washington, D.C., L.P., third from right, and Ian Wilson, developer of the new company, Egoli Beverages L.P., third from left. With them during the New York City announcement are, from left: Calvin Grigsby, CEO, Grigsby, Brandford & Co. and Fiscal Funding Co., Inc.; Danny Glover, the actor; Dr. William R. Harvey, President, Hampton University and the Reverend W. Franklyn Richardson, Pastor, Grace Baptist Church. At far right is Khela Mthembu, Chairman and CEO of Pepsi's South African bottling plant, New Age Beverages. Mthembu is a former South African political prisoner who spent three years at Robben Island prison.

Expert Offers Toy Buying Tips

One of the biggest mistakes parents make when shopping for toys is paying too much attention to the toy itself. According to parenting expert Dr. Istar Schwager, more thought should be given to the child, rather than the actual toy, when shopping for holiday gifts this coming season. Dr. Schwager believes that keeping the child's individual interests and abilities top-of-mind when making the selection enables parents to choose toys that will sustain a child's interest over time and also help stimulate the learning of fundamental concepts.

"Picking the right toy should be a challenge -- and parents need to give considerable thought to this highly individualized process," says Dr. Schwager, an educational psychologist and regular columnist and advisor to Sesame Street Magazine.

"It helps for parents to think about everything from a child's personality to his or her hobbies," she adds.

Based on her extensive experience in the role toys play in the intellectual and social development of children, Dr. Schwager suggests parents can succeed in selecting the most suitable toys by following some simple tips:

Always keep your child's interests and developmental level in mind. Think about how the toy corresponds with your child's favorite activities. Ask yourself if your child already has the coordination, attention span and cooperative skills to enjoy a particular toy.

Find toys that support your child's creativity and spark your child's imagination. Puppets, blocks, dolls and other "open-ended" toys can hold a child's attention for years.

As a child's skills develop and interests change, these toys can "grow" with the child.

Choose toys that cultivate important social, intellectual and physical skills. For instance, board games foster social development; construction toys support intellectual growth; and art and sports equipment provide children with opportunities to practice their physical abilities.

Pick toys that other members of the family will enjoy playing with together. After all, they may be asked to join the fun.

If your child has expressed interest in a toy advertised on television or in a catalog, go to the store and ask for a demonstration of the toy to determine if it's appropriate for the child's age and ability level.

Also consult with other parents on their experiences.

Excess Computers Headed For City Schools



Schools get excess U.S. computers -- More than 1,000 excess computers from the Health Care Financing Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, are being donated to Baltimore City elementary schools. In the first presentation at Liberty Elementary School, HHS Deputy Secretary Walter D. Broadnax, sits at some of the computers with fifth graders Faith Matthews, 10, and Ja'va Kane, 9. Standing (left to right) are: Congressman Kweisi Mfume; HCFA Administrator Bruce C. Vladeck; Linda Chinnia, principal of Liberty Elementary; Walter G. Amprey, superintendent, Baltimore City Public Schools; and Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore. Photo by Chris Smith

The federal Health Care Financing Administration will give Baltimore inner-city elementary schools hundreds of excess personal computers that have been replaced by newer models, the agency's administrator announced today.

"These computers can offer valuable help to inner city schools, which are often short of funds for computer labs and where most students lack access to home computers," said HCFA Administrator Bruce C. Vladeck.

He was joined by Deputy HHS Secretary Walter D. Broadnax in presenting the first of the computers to Liberty Elementary School in Baltimore.

"The donation of the excess computers is an extension of our adopt-a-school program, in which HCFA employees volunteer time to tutor and mentor students in elementary schools," Vladeck said.

Broadnax commended HCFA for "initiating this important community service activity. This demonstrates our belief that government agencies should provide an example of good citizenship in the communities where they are located." HCFA has 2,700 employees in its Baltimore headquarters complex.

Vladeck said, "The computers to be donated are sound equipment

that I would hate to see wasted. We have upgraded the administration's computer capability and no longer need the equipment, but it will be a valuable asset in preparing youngsters for good careers."

He also said, "We have a vested interest in the education of Baltimore students; many of them will be in HCFA's future workforce."

The Federal Property Act allows for donation of the equipment if no longer needed by the government. Since this equipment was manufactured by IBM, the company has offered to assist HCFA and the schools in the installation of the computers.

Women's Colleges Win Nod

Lang Downing is one of a growing number of young women who are choosing to attend women's colleges. A junior concentrating in public relations and marketing communications at Simmons College in Boston, Downing says going to a women's college has given her opportunities she would never have had otherwise.

"At a woman's college, we are taught how to succeed, how to dream, and how to make our dreams come true," she says. "We become the leaders and the role models that every young woman dreams of being."

When looking at colleges, Downing says she wanted to find a school where she could explore new things and be accepted for herself. "I wanted to attend a college where I would not only be heard, but listened to. A place where my opinion, regardless of what it was, would be valued and supported by my peers and professors," she says. "Simmons is that kind of place."

At first, Downing says she took it for granted that she would be like her friends and attend a coed college. However, she changed her mind after meeting with a Simmons admission counselor at a college fair. "The counselor knew my name and that I liked sailing and volleyball," she says. "I wasn't just a number."

Seven days later, Downing mailed her early decision application to Simmons, without ever visiting Boston or seeing the College's campus. "I trusted my instincts and got on a plane," Downing says. "I just knew it was the right decision."

Parents' Corner Coping With The "Home Alone" Dilemma

Never before has the need for supervised care for school-age children been so strong. Today, experts estimate that at least five million school-age children are at home alone every day, for some period of time. In fact, half of these children are left unsupervised during summer days, or before and after school. And this trend is expected to continue: within the next few years, 75% of all parents of school-age children will be in the work force.

Experts agree that for the millions of American families faced with the dilemma, leaving school-age children at home alone can be very stressful. According to Dr. Marcy Guddemi, an expert in child development and vice president of education for KinderCare Learning Centers, "many parents are often very concerned about how well their children can cope, both with routine activities and potentially unsafe situations. And while many children enjoy caring for themselves and happily accept the added responsibilities, others don't adapt so easily and often feel lonely or scared."

KID'S CHOICE provides children ages 6 to 12 years-old with a wide-range of developmentally-appropriate, supervised activities offered in a 7,000 sq. ft. facility that includes full indoor and outdoor recreation areas and computerized learning facilities. Under the directions of trained teachers, kids participate in arts and crafts, drama and dance classes and organized sports. Breakfast and a healthy snack are served; KID'S CHOICE also provides transportation to and from local schools.

KinderCare plans to open several hundred centers within the next few years. Although cost varies by location, it averages \$65 during the school-year and \$85 per week for full-time summer care.

However, for working parents with older latch-key children who will remain at home, Dr. Guddemi suggests the following tips to help them foster independence and build their self-esteem:

Discuss the importance of responsibility with your child; set rules for behavior and activities and inform him/her about basic safety information, including the "911" emergency telephone procedures. Young children who understand why they are home alone, and what they may and may not do, will be more at ease and confident in managing themselves.

Be sure your child has several appropriate activities to keep him/her occupied after homework is complete. Take time with them to prioritize these activities--and assign a chore for each day (i.e.: "after you walk the dog, please set the table and practice the piano"). Children should be discouraged from watching too much television!



KID'S CHOICE centers, recently launched by KinderCare, nationwide, provide year-round supervised activities before- and after-school for children 6 to 12 years of age.

Many communities offer affordable programs that are designed to meet the special needs of school-age children by opening new KID'S CHOICE centers, launched in com-