

Mixing fun and brains

Toys take an educational turn

By Diane Gale
staff writer

Educational toys are more than just fun and games, according to Reva Rosen and Harriet Hartman.

Rosen, a Farmington Hills resident, and Hartman recently expanded their company, Education Unlimited, to offer home parties as a presentation platform for their materials.

They piloted their idea of showing parents "beneficial" toys in a social gathering last year during the Christmas season, which is a boom time for toy retailers.

"As a result of our experience, we felt some parents needed guidance in selecting toys for their children," said Hartman, who is a teacher in the Redford Union School District. She's chalked up more than 20 years of experience teaching preschool, secondary education and learning disability classes.

When they brainstormed the idea they thought they came up with a unique business venture, but soon found out they had competition.

"The fact that there is competition only confirmed the idea that there is a need for this," Hartman said.

"Women are going into different

fields than they used to, and they didn't take developmental education courses (in college), so they want direction on what types of toys to buy their children," said Rosen, 39, who taught for three years in the Birmingham School District and now works as an administrator for Speech & Language Rehabilitation Services, Inc. in Southfield.

THEY PURCHASE their line of toys from small specialty companies that emphasize educational concepts. The criteria they use in selecting the toys are durability and whether it is stimulating and interesting to the child through varying stages of his or her mental growth.

Hartman, 46, cited, as an example, Mighty Mind, an educational game. "Mighty Mind focuses on developmental thinking skills and will be of interest to the child a year or two from now," she said.

The pair held an open house Wednesday to show off their line, which ranges in price from \$4 to \$30, and would appeal to children from infancy to 12 years old.

As the women, accompanied by their children, filed out of Rosen's home, they found they were as amused with the games as the youngsters.

"My boys are 4 and 2, and they're not too interested with the toys advertised on TV," said Nancy Harlan of Southfield. "These toys are made well, they're durable, they keep their interest, and they can be used two years from now."

Chris Hennessey of Redford bought \$100 worth of toys at a house party last Christmas for her children, friends and relatives.

"A lot of toys that they have here are used in preschools, so I wanted to come back and see what they had," she said.

Joyce Tomlinson, a Westland resident and Harrison High School science teacher, said the toys offered by Education Unlimited show "cause and effect," which she said is an important concept in toys.

"The toy should actively engage the child if it's going to be a learning tool," Hartman said.

THE TOY HOME parties, which usually are held in the evening, are patterned after Tupperware and make-up selling techniques. They're attended mainly by women, Hartman said.

A consultant goes out to a home, where a hostess has invited between 10 and 15 parents to attend, and gives a 45-minute explanation of the toys and

their functions. The consultant also offers advice to parents on the types of selections they should make for their child's individual needs.

"Some parents need more direction," Hartman said. "Others know what they want and are happy with the quality."

Orders are taken and paid the evening of the party. The incentive for the hostess is a 10-percent discount on her order, which is based on the total number of purchases her guests make.

The consultant sends the order to Education Unlimited and after the order is filled returns the toys to the hostess who distributes it to the guests. The process takes about two weeks.

"Guests at the parties have a variety of ages represented in their children, and most realize the importance of working with preschool children," Hartman said.

The entrepreneurs, who also offer tutoring services and child evaluations through their company, said they don't believe large toy retailers are competition.

"We're offering services in helping parents buy educational toys for their children, and our line is completely different from theirs," Hartman said.



Harriet Hartman



Examining a toy magnifying device which will open new worlds to him is 3-year-old Brooks Tomlinson.



Looking over some of the wares are Reva Rosen, right, and Andy Roman who is holding her daughter Caryn, 10 months.

"Women are going into different fields than they used to. . . they want direction on what type of toys to buy their children."

— Reva Rosen

INSIDE ANGLES

THE LAST SESSION of enrichment courses for area youth on OCC's Orchard Ridge Campus begins the week of Monday, Aug. 1, and continues through the month. There are a few spots left in the space adventure, creative writing and stagecraft classes for those from kindergarten through the 11th grade. Spanish and French classes have openings for the 5-13 set, only Sylvia Burton takes inquiries and registrations at 471-7595.

HAVE YOU EVER had the urge to dunk your favorite athlete, coach or administrator? This summer you may have that chance at the Farmington Founders' Day Festival as the Farmington Booster Club is sponsoring this booth in the Downtown Center Thursday through Saturday, July 28-30. Be there for some great fun and help support the student athletes of Farmington High School.

ANN MEIER of Farmington, recent College of Optometry graduate from Ferris State College, received the Bausch & Lomb Contact Lens Achievement Award during the college's annual award dinner. The award of a \$500 cash stipend was made in recognition of Meier's exceptionally meritorious contact lens performance. The presentation was made by Jack W. Bennett, dean of Ferris' College of Optometry.

R.J. SMITH of Farmington Hills will join as many as 1,500 other veterans of the famed World War II Destroyer Squadron 23 — better known as the "Little Beavers" — as they honor their commander, then Capt., now Admiral, Arleigh A. "Buck" Burke, U.S. Navy retired, in ceremonies Friday and Saturday, Oct. 28-29, in Washington, D.C. Other veterans of the squadron are asked to contact Smith for additional information at 853-1683.

ROBERT W. FEZZEY of Farmington Hills has been elected to the board of trustees of the American Heart Association of Michigan. He is the former assistant vice president of Michigan Bell Telephone Co. (retired) and has been a Heart volunteer for several years and has served as a member of the association's finance committee and administration council and as chairman of the fund-raising committee. Fezzy will serve a three-year term on the board ending June 30, 1986.

CENTER TIRE INC., under the guidance of Bruce Habermehl, is pleased to announce the opening of the fifth Center Store in Dearborn. To celebrate the opening, each of the five stores had a drawing, giving away a new TV. Mary Jo Tisham was the winner from the Farmington store.

MANY PEOPLE possess home-canned products that, because of improper preservation, can cause many problems for the potential consumer. If you suspect your canned goods are faulty or just have a general question, you may want to contact the Food Preservation/Food Safety Hot Line at the Cooperative Extension Service of Oakland County. The hot line, which is staffed by experts, is intended to help county residents who have questions concerning preservation and safety of food. Anyone with a question should phone the hot line at 858-0904 between 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

BACKPACKING AND CAMPING is a great way to enjoy the outdoors but does require preparation to make it safe and enjoyable. A "Wilderness and Back Country Camping" program, sponsored by the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, will take place 7:30-9 p.m. Friday at Independence Oaks County Park. The program is hosted by Linda Marsh, an experienced backpacker and climber who has camped and hiked in most of North America. Outdoor dress is required by program participants. Pre-registration is required. Participants should meet at the Independence Oaks Twin Chimneys Shelter. Cost of the program is the park entry fee of \$2.50 per vehicle for Oakland County residents, and \$4 for non-residents. To register and for more information, call 858-0877.

LAURENCE ROER, son of Dorothy and Harry Roer of Farmington Hills and a 1979 North Farmington High School graduate, has been named to the prestigious '83 Club at Michigan State University. The club is comprised of the top seniors nominated by MSU faculty and staff members and various student organizations. New members were selected on the basis of academic achievement, extracurricular activities, community involvement, responsibility and leadership. He was awarded a plaque by MSU President Cecil Mackay at a recent Senior Class Council banquet. Laurence is a biochemistry major.

PONTIAC BUSINESS INSTITUTE-FARMINGTON is coordinating a blood drive from noon to 8 p.m. Monday, Aug. 15, at 24801 Grand River. The American Red Cross, Southeastern Michigan Region, is sponsoring the blood drive. Appointments may be made ahead of time by calling 476-3145, but walk-ins also are welcome. There is a great need for blood this summer. Pontiac Business Institute-Farmington wants to show its support to the community and give its students the opportunity to help others at the same time.

hudson's white sale

hurry! sale ends sunday



Select new sheets, cases, comforters, pillows to give your bedroom an individual air. Splash color in your bath with bright new towels, rugs, shower curtains and accessories. Dress up your table with stunning new tablecloths, place mats and napkins. Give your windows a fresh outlook with pretty curtains. Hudson's White Sale offers a lot of quick changes, all especially inviting values right now. Come see today!

Shown, Evening Lilacs by Bill Blass for Springmaid. Flat/lifted sheet, twin, reg. \$18, sale \$13.99. Twin bedspread, reg. \$90, sale \$69.99. Other sizes and accessories at similar savings.

hudson's