

Jeffrey H. Cohen
Director of Corporate Development



SYLVAN LEARNING SYSTEMS, INC.

1000 Lancaster Street ■ Baltimore, Maryland 21202 ■ 410-843-8000

July 21, 1997

Jennifer Klein
Office of the First Lady
West Wing
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Klein:

As you might know, I recently left the Clinton Administration to become the Director of Corporate Development for Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. Prior to joining Sylvan, I was at the Labor Department for two years and then briefly at the White House, in the Counsel's Office, working on the transition to the second term. As Chief of Staff for Congressional Affairs at the Labor Department, I was deeply involved in developing and implementing the Administration's lifelong learning objectives. At Sylvan, I am still involved in developing and implementing those same lifelong learning objectives, only from a slightly different perspective.

Hopefully, you are familiar with Sylvan. If not, here is a quick overview. Sylvan is best known for its network of more than 650 Sylvan Learning Centers across North America that provide supplemental education services to students of all skill levels. While most people might associate Sylvan with tutoring or remediation services, Sylvan has quietly extended its education core competencies to include diagnostic and prescriptive assessment, enrichment services, professional and academic testing, and distance learning.

Sylvan's Contract Educational Services Division provides supplemental educational support to public and non-public schools. Through contracts with school districts, Sylvan provides intensive instruction to address the needs of a particular school's most academically and economically disadvantaged students. Students are assigned to the Sylvan program by their principals and teachers. They attend Sylvan instruction before, during and after the school day for two or three one-hour sessions per week. In addition to directly serving the needs of students, Sylvan provides additional support to the schools in which it serves, including in-service programs, workshops and consultative services for faculty and principals.

Sylvan is also dedicated to becoming an industry leader in providing adult professional education services. Through our Sylvan-at-Work programs and the PACE Group, Sylvan provides a wide range of programs for adults, including basic skills enhancement and customized job training programs that focus on math, reading and communication skills. In November 1996, Sylvan formed the Caliber Learning Network, Inc., a joint initiative with MCI Telecommunications Corporation. Caliber will be a worldwide distribution network of professional education centers equipped with satellite-based video conferencing and computer network capabilities. Approximately 50 Caliber sites, located in or near all major U.S. cities, are scheduled to open this fall.

In keeping with our mission to be the world's leading provider of educational services to families, schools and industry, we recently launched MINDSURF, an innovative after-school program developed jointly by Sylvan and National Geographic Society. MINDSURF is designed to provide a unique learning experience that supplements and enriches classroom learning by allowing students to participate in hands-on experiments and exploration activities. Designed for students from kindergarten through eighth grade, MINDSURF employs state-of-the-art technology including personal computers, multimedia, television programming, photography and video production in a curriculum developed in consultations with National Geographic Society's nationwide network of classroom teachers. Most of all, MINDSURF offers a safe, secure and stimulating environment for students during those critical after-school hours.

In light of the President and First Lady's emphasis on education and the upcoming conference on childcare and after school care, I thought it might be mutually beneficial for us to meet and discuss the challenges that we faced in developing MINDSURF, as well as the challenges we are currently facing as MINDSURF evolves. For example, now that MINDSURF is up and running on a fee for service basis, one immediate question we would like to address is how to deliver this product to schools that serve students who are unable to pay for such a program. We are confident that MINDSURF will become the premier after school program in the nation, and we would like to make it available to every school, student, and family interested in participating.

I will call you to see if we can arrange a time meet. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey H. Cohen', written over the printed name.

Jeffrey H. Cohen

Director of Corporate Development

JHC:mh

National Geographic Society



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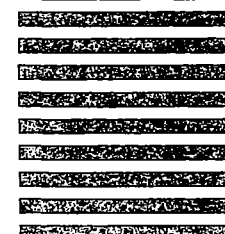
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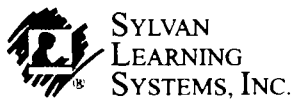
SYLVAN LEARNING SYSTEMS

ATTN: MINDSURF AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM
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ENROLL TODAY AND
SURF YOUR MIND

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DISCOVER

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INVENT



SYLVAN
LEARNING
SYSTEMS, INC.



DISCOVER... EXPLORE... INVENT!

MINDSURF. THE AFTER-SCHOOL ALTERNATIVE.

Your child's school, Sylvan Learning Systems, and the National Geographic Society have created the most innovative after-school program ever: **MINDSURF**.



Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade will have the unprecedented opportunity to enhance their educational skills through exciting and fascinating materials offered by these two nationally renowned educational organizations.

This program is available in your child's school and offers an

educational opportunity that every child should experience.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS WITH MINDSURF.

Join **MINDSURF** and your child will explore, discover, and learn about a variety of subjects through computers, audio-visual equipment, and captivating educational materials. It's a daily adventure.

MINDSURF is offered within the safe, secure environment of your child's school. The program is available up to 5 days per week, from the end of the school day to 6 p.m.

A PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR FUN.

Children are encouraged to be creative, independent, imaginative, and most of all, to have fun! **MINDSURF** offers students an integrated combination of homework support, a healthy snack, and physical activities. Explorations drawing from the subjects of art, geography,

literature, history, science, writing, listening, and speaking help your child discover the tools to excel in many subject areas.

THE MINDSURF DIFFERENCE

Our team of trained, dedicated teachers and aides facilitate the **MINDSURF** program, guiding students every day through their activities. At least 1 certified teacher leads each team with a Campus Director who oversees the daily operations of programs in the local schools. A registrar is just a phone call away to enroll your child, to answer questions, and to ensure ongoing communication.

LEARN TO MINDSURF AFTER SCHOOL. IN YOUR SCHOOL.

MINDSURF ensures that children learn in comfortable and secure surroundings that are convenient for parents at an affordable price.

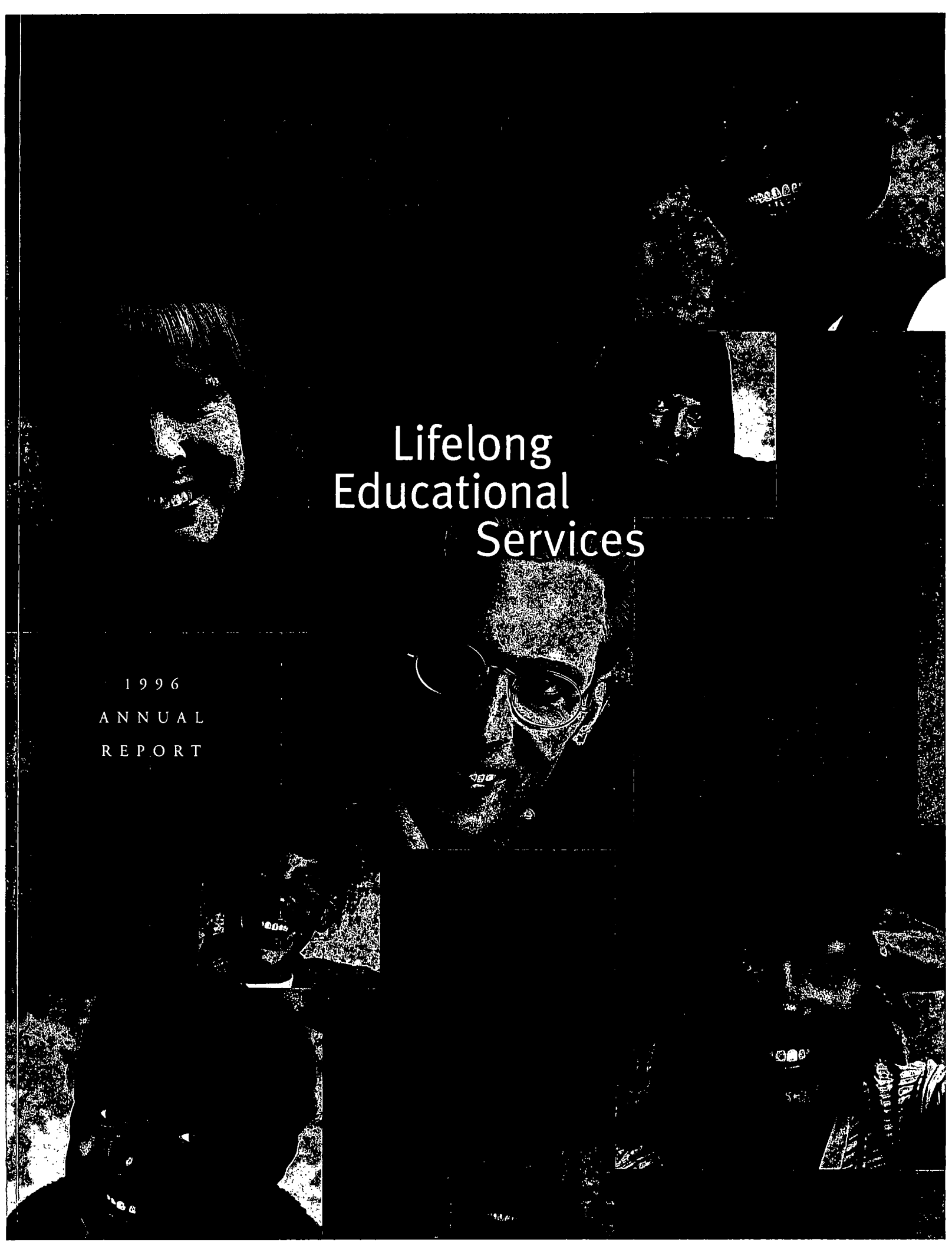


To make sure your child receives quality supervision and personal attention, class sizes are kept at a daily average of 28 students and a student to teacher ratio of 10 to 1.

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Lifelong Educational Services

1996
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REPORT

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Kids, adults plug into computer learning centers

BY LEN STRAZEWSKI

Computers and kids continue to be a powerful combination for franchise companies that specialize in computer-assisted learning.

Computer learning for children and adults is a small but growing portion of a \$600 billion education market. The industry segment has grown from about \$680 million in 1984 to about \$3.2 billion in 1995.

"Computer literacy has become a critical factor of economic survival heading into a high-tech future," notes Bill Bavin, equity analyst at Ferris, Baker and Watts Inc., a Baltimore-based investment banking firm.

"The computer learning industry segment is certainly growing at a double digit annual rate, and some specialty companies may be growing at a rate that is in the high double digits."

Computer learning-related franchisors are starting to develop their own niche markets, he notes. Fueled by new relationships with school systems, computer-learning franchisors — such as Los Angeles-based Futurekids and ComputerTots of Great Falls, Va.—neither of which are among the Top 200 — reported strong growth in 1995.

While Futurekids and ComputerTots specialize in children and school service contracts, Omaha, Neb.-based Inacom Corp., not a Top 200 member, and MicroAge Computer Centers, No. 159, of Tempe, Ariz., specialize in adult education and corporate training contracts.

Sylvan Learning Systems Inc., No. 7, of Columbia, Md., which has more than 600 learning centers providing computer-assisted education enhancement programs, has served both markets, with aggressive development of public and private school contracts, and diversified services for adults.

Child-centered computer-learning franchises charge \$40 to \$75 per month for computer training or subject tutoring the that supplements elementary or higher education. Most franchisors deliver services in retail learning centers, but off-site locations in schools or in franchisees' homes are becoming more popular.

Futurekids, with 550 learning center franchises worldwide, expanded into off-site services with more than 50 new contracts to provide computer training and other services to public and private schools in 20 states.

TOP 2	
CHILDREN, ADULT ED./COMPUTERS	
NAME	RANK
1. Sylvan Learning Center	7
2. MicroAge Computer Centers	159

Futurekids CEO Peter Markovitz says the expansion into services for school systems should boost revenues and profitability for franchisees.

"As a result of the increase in volume, we expect to see average location revenue take a quantum leap. Established franchisees with revenues of \$150,000 could see a jump to \$500,000 or \$1 million as they become established within their school district," he says.

ComputerTots, which offers children's computer education through 186 franchisees, also benefited from contracts with public and private schools, according to founders Karen Marshall and Mary Rogers.

"Cash-strapped school systems don't

always have the resources to provide computer facilities and training, which their students need for future success," says Ms. Rogers, ComputerTots CEO. "Privatization of computer education gets computers and technology training into the schools. In most cases, franchisees provide the computers for training classes and leave them on-site for practice."

The on-site school programs also support home-based project classes by increasing community awareness of ComputerTots services, she says.

Sylvan Learning Systems, which has more than 600 learning centers providing computer-assisted educational enhancement programs, has been aggressive in developing public and private school contracts, particularly in the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore areas, through its Sylvan Support Services.

In diversifying its services for adults, the company acquired Drake Prometrics, a computer-based testing firm last year, and the company is integrating the testing centers into its network of learning centers. The integration should more than double franchise locations and generate a powerful new revenue stream, industry analysts say.

"Sylvan is creating the brand name in an unbranded yet enormous industry," said Montgomery Securities analysts Michael T. Moe and R. Keith Gay in a special report on Sylvan.

Earlier this year, Sylvan Prometrics, the new division resulting from the acquisition, signed a 10-year contract with the National Assn. of Security Dealers, Inc. (NASD) to conduct certification of more than 500,000 securities brokers.

Sylvan also signed an agreement with the College Board and the Educational Testing Service to conduct SAT I tests for junior high students. The new test is a pilot for the eventual computerization of the SAT college placement exams.

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2nd ANNUAL TOTP 2000 FRANCHISES



2nd annual Top 200 honors cream of crop

BY ELLEN SHUBART

Good unit growth, good-to-excellent franchisee evaluations, strong advertising and positioning in industries that portend growth combined to bring some new names to the summit of *Franchise Times'* Top 200 list this year.

Franchise Times' Top 200 is an annual listing of the best franchise investment opportunities for potential buyers. Using 10 criteria ranging from age of the franchise to financial strength, *Franchise Times* judges evaluated franchise opportunities in a wide range of industries to come up with the second annual Top 200.

As was true last year, the list includes diverse franchises from different industries and of varied sizes (although a minimum of 100 units was needed to be considered).

While powerhouse McDonald's maintained its No. 1 ranking, only four of the Top 10 this year came from the food/restaurant category, which overwhelmed the list last year.

Newcomers to the Top 10 brought with them strong financial reports, robust unit growth and pro-franchisee benefits such as earnings claims and franchisee advisory councils. The newcomers include:

- Interim Services, No. 2, straddling two strong growth categories: healthcare and business services, with specializations in temporary office help and healthcare personnel;
- Holiday Inns, No. 4, under new management, with new commitment for brand positioning in the growing hotel/motel/travel category;
- Medicine Shoppe, No. 5, a franchisor of pharmacies, and General Nutrition Centers, No. 6, both strong in the new and growing health/personal care category;
- Sylvan Learning Center, No. 7, continuing to grow in a developing category, computers, using group contracts to supplement its core service of individual training;
- Coverall Cleaning, No. 10, indicating the popularity and growth of commercial cleaning and home-based franchises.

Food/restaurant operations — No. 3 Dunkin' Donuts, No. 8 Wendy's and No. 9 Pizza Hut — rounded out the Top 10.

Only McDonald's, Wendy's and Pizza Hut were in the Top 10 last year. Forty-three new franchises are on the list this year, many here for the first time because they reached the 100 unit mark in 1995 and could be considered.

Obviously, that means approximately 20% of the list is gone, because those fran-

TOP★10 FRANCHISES

RANK / NAME
1. McDonald's
2. Interim Services
3. Dunkin' Donuts
4. Holiday Inns
5. Medicine Shoppe
6. General Nutrition Centers (GNC)
7. Sylvan Learning Center
8. Wendy's
9. Pizza Hut
10. Coverall Cleaning

chises slipped below 100 units, had financial or growth declines severe enough that the new franchises overtook them, or circumstances required that we remove them from the list, such as termination of franchise sales.

Judging from the information *Franchise Times* discovered by examining Uniform Franchise Offering Circulars (UFOCs, required disclosure documents), 1995-1996 may not have been franchising's best year.

Many traditionally strong franchisors had poor financial numbers in fiscal year (FY) 95, with some slipping into the red. Many franchisors, too, reported growth that was less than spectacular: many showed declines; others grew less than 10%. While in some

cases, declines can be taken as severe difficulties, with most it was a reflection of regrouping, merger or acquisition.

And, many franchisors enjoyed strong financial as well as unit growth in fiscal 1995, reflected in their moves upward on the list.

A sizable majority of the franchisors analyzed for the survey have franchisees who graded them as good or excellent in terms of training and support.

It was rare to find a franchisee who thought training manuals were difficult to understand or who couldn't get help instantaneously either from a franchisor's hot line, personal troubleshooter or computer connection.

In fact, the franchisee evaluation ratings closely mirrored the 1996 *Franchise Times* survey of franchisees taken earlier this year that showed franchisee satisfaction ratings at 73%.

And, there was no relationship between the grades on training or support and whether the franchisee was earning what he or she expected to earn from the franchise.

If there was one area that franchisees are complaining about, it is advertising. They resent sums spent on campaigns they deem not effective. And, they are seeking strength in making the franchise trademark or brand name better known.

Because of the diversity of the factors considered in this ranking, readers and potential investors will find new and different names as well as the well-known. After the initial cut-off of 100 units, it includes franchisors that are "small," with only a few units above that initiation number to the behemoths of the franchising arena, whose unit numbers rank in the thousands.

Franchise buyers should begin with this Top 200 list as they begin their investigations before purchasing a franchise. But we strongly advise them to make sure there is complete and thorough follow-up.

Franchisors on this list—whether at the bottom or the top—are the "cream of the crop," among the best in the country today. For investors, the list is the mine where they may discover the elusive golden nugget.

BY JULIE BENNETT

Franchisee training is going hands-on and high-tech. According to more than 1,500 random franchisee surveys conducted for the *Franchise Times* 1996 Top 200 list, no area of franchising has changed so dramatically in the past decades as training and support.

As one Radio Shack franchisee puts it: "When I opened my first store 28 years ago, the franchisor sent me a stack of manuals and books and told me I was on my own."

Today, top franchisors provide weeks of introductory classes at their own "universities," arrange hands-on training in existing locations, then send support personnel to guide a new franchisee through his or her first few weeks in business.

Ongoing support and training include annual conventions, regional meetings and high-tech offerings such as daily electronic messages, videos, interactive CD-ROMs and live satellite TV broadcasts.

"The franchisor is my safety net," says Buddy Rouso, 50, of Montgomery, Ala., a former finance company executive who bought a Miracle Ear franchise four years ago. "The only way you can ever feel comfortable fitting and dispensing hearing aids is by getting in there and doing it. Miracle Ear's extensive training is worth more than the \$20,000 I've spent on diagnostic equipment."

But Miracle Ear, a division of Bausch & Lomb, begins that training by teaching new franchisees not about ears, but about running a business. Explains Training Manager Bob Pfeiffer: "We attract people from all walks of life. When we bring them to our headquarters (in Golden Valley, Minn.) for their first two weeks of training, we don't want them to be too concerned about looking into people's ears. First, we train them on all facets of managing a business, from financial planning to ordering product and developing a staff."

Just as there are no hearing aids at Miracle Ear's Basic School, there are no burger grills or milkshake machines at Sonic University in Oklahoma City.

Franchisees' training: hands-on, high-tech

Not just a manual anymore: meetings, videos, hot lines, CD-ROMs, personal support



Doug Becker, new president and co-CEO for Sylvan Learning Systems of Columbia, Md., is surrounded by some of the franchise's younger students.

Doyle Paden, director of education and development for the fast-growing drive-in franchisor, says the week-long Management One program for new franchisees focuses on team building, leadership training and customer service.

Les Blackburn, 30, part owner of a Sonic restaurant in Raymore, Mo., says the training helped him handle the emotional upheavals and work habits of his 42 young employees.

"I've had kids tell me their grandmother had died — for the 13th time!" he says.

Newcomers learn to hand-bread onion rings, mix cherry limeades and spread chili and cheese on hot dogs from the masters — selected franchisees who agree to run 30-day training programs in their own restaurants. Sonic even offers a hands-on approach to opening a new restaurant, by assigning new franchisees to mentors, established drive-in owners who are opening up new locations.

Sonic backs up training, from flipping burgers to handling flip-pant teens, with training guides and videos; it plans to add interactive CD-ROM training next year.

Franchisees of Sylvan Learning Center are kept up-to-date on new teaching methods via the Sylvan University Network, a two-hour live satellite TV program which the Columbia, Md., franchisor broadcasts every other month.

"Franchisees all over the

country are invited to call in with questions," says Carole Nicholes, vice president of training and development.

Sylvan 101, the tutoring and testing franchise company's seven-day introductory course at Sylvan University, includes key business and marketing information. Newcomers then apprentice under host franchisees.

"Our business is diagnostic and prescriptive," says Ms. Nicholes. "Like our students, our franchisees come in with different skills, and we tailor their training based on those skills."

Martha Stuart, 48, was a 5th grade teacher when she bought her Midland, Texas, Sylvan franchise 11 years ago. "I breezed through the education training, but I had no clue about the business part of things," she says.

Today, Ms. Stuart relies on Sylvan videotapes to walk her through each new professional test — for everyone from nurses to Federal Aviation Administration employees — she administers in her Sylvan Technology Center. She and other franchisees with tech centers stay connected electronically, through the Sylvan Wide Area Network.

Technology takes a back seat to old-fashioned standards in the training program for Putt Putt Golf and Games in Fayetteville, N.C.

"We bring new franchisees in for a day of training on sales techniques and cash control and assign them to managers of existing Putt Putts to learn the ba-

sics," says Mark Ross, director of franchise services. "But most important of all, we train our franchisees in the five senses: Do you see piles of leaves in the parking lot, weeds on the course? Does the ice cream in your concession stand taste good? Are the golf balls and clubs sticky to the touch? Do you smell algae growing in your water holes?"

"And do you hear people laughing on the course? If you don't, you'd better announce some kind of special contest. After all, our motto is 'Putt Putt for the Fun of It.'"

Leslie Herbert, 35, attended three days of training at Putt Putt Golf and Games' headquarters in Fayetteville, Ark., and spent another four days working with the owner of a Putt Putt in Augusta, Ga., before opening her own 36-hole facility in Johns Creek, Ga.

"I had played golf for Florida State University and spent eight years as a training and human resources manager, so I didn't need help with golf or employee relations," Ms. Herbert says. "But I certainly needed help with marketing, and Putt Putt's training in sales techniques showed me how to make money at this."

Ms. Herbert, who opened her business in mid-August, says her training is already paying off. "By using Putt Putt promotion staples, like Super Saturday Unlimited Play, our weekends are great," she says. "We're right where we thought we'd be."

PHOTO BY KATHLEEN LAMBERT



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Parents Sing MINDSURF Praises

Dear MINDSURF:

We really like the MINDSURF after school program. Sarah, in grade seven, has been participating for about two months now, coming three days each week. She enjoys the computer programs, especially *Carmen Sandiego*. She finds the topics interesting -- particularly learning about Australia and figuring out how to make an effective commercial. The projects and materials are fun and the snacks are good. There is time for sports, too. Sarah really likes the program.

From the parents' point of view, the program fits our family schedule well. It is terrific to have enrichment, fun, and support for getting homework done available to middle school students in the after-school hours. This frees up evenings for families to spend time together having fun, instead of getting a late start on homework. The flexible schedule is helpful, and the staff is great. Thank you, MINDSURF!

The Van Anden Family

Dear Sylvan/MINDSURF:

My son Kean is in the 6th grade at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School. He just loves the Sylvan-National Geographic program. At MINDSURF he enjoys spending time with his peers, working on projects, and playing educational games. I am happy to know he is doing something positive and rewarding with his time after school, while I am at work. We are both happy with the guidance he receives with his homework. His reading skills have improved because of this special attention.

Sandra Long

MINDSURF Program:

I just wanted to let you know how thrilled and excited Ingrid has been about the MINDSURF program.

She has really enjoyed herself and cannot keep her enthusiasm concealed. I hope the program continues successfully.

Susan Rouse

MINDSURF Program:

MINDSURF is a wonderful program that helps to develop and challenge a child's mind. The program has great activities like Hollywood High -- where you make movies on a computer -- they learn about other countries, and do homework where they receive extra help. Children make a lot of new friends and play interesting games and sports. Most importantly, MINDSURF keeps children out of trouble. It is a wonderful program and I am looking forward to next year and the challenges it holds.

Debra German

Everyone Wins With MINDSURF



MINDSURF™ SAFARI

Volume I Number I

June 1997

Sylvan and National Geographic Team Up To Provide After-School Program

Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. and National Geographic Society have entered into a partnership to deliver an exciting after-school enrichment program in the schools for students in grades K through 8. The new program, MINDSURF, was piloted this spring in nine middle and elementary schools in Maryland and more schools are offering the program for the fall of 1997.

MINDSURF was designed to meet the growing need for after-school options for working parents. The program offers students the opportunity to discover, explore and invent from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m. Students are provided a healthy snack, homework support, physical activities, and "explorations" based on weekly themes covering art, technology, writing, geography, current events and more.

The program is affordable for parents and is offered at no cost to the schools. It operates in an average classroom and is effortless for the schools to manage. Sylvan handles the operations, enrollment and management of the program. National Geographic develops the interactive, creative curriculum. Each classroom is equipped with state-of-the-art technology, software, educational and entertainment materials.

Schools receive a selection of educational gifts from National Geographic for providing MINDSURF in their school. Scholarships are available for parents in need of financial assistance. State Superintendent of Schools, Nancy S. Grasmick stated she would "encourage school administrators throughout Maryland and across the country to explore how this program may be offered through their schools."



Thanks To Our Host Schools!

As a "thank you" for piloting MINDSURF, school partners will be given a choice of gifts to benefit the entire school population:

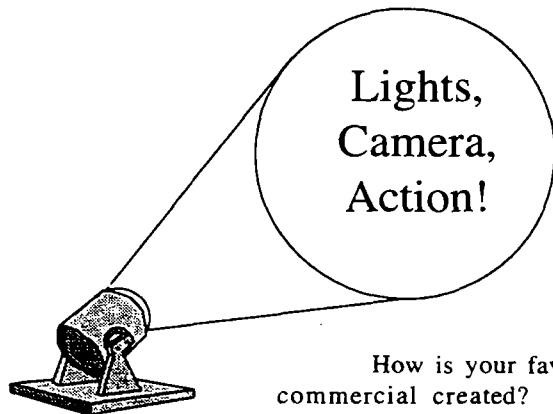
- National Geographic Book Series
- CD Rom lab packs for classrooms
- Site license of foreign language and geography software
- Books, globes and poster set for media centers
- Complete series of updated *Wonders Of Learning* kits for K-5 classrooms

These incredible gifts will be updated annually. The annual gift is worth \$1,200-\$1,500.



SYLVAN
LEARNING
SYSTEMS, INC.





Look what's happening in MINDSURF this month! This column highlights the exciting theme units taking place in your child's school.

How is your favorite TV show or commercial created? Answering these questions in a practical, hands-on way is the focus of the MINDSURF unit *Lights, Camera, Action!* We explored the creativity and technology that is involved with a series of multi-sensory activities.

It is exciting to discover students' talents -- sometimes hidden -- as they proceed to invent their own video in groups or on their own. MINDSURF provides this opportunity to your students.

Students looked at how video is used to involve, to entertain, and to persuade an audience. Students learned the basic capabilities of a video camera and analyzed techniques used in creating professional videos.

To begin *Lights, Camera Action!* students were given experience in acting. They actually developed a skit and videotaped each other's skits. Time was spent having students experiment with setting scenes and writing dialogue.

Then came the camera... Long shot! Pan! Dolly! Fade in/Fade out! were words used "on the set" as the unit continued. Students learned different shots, moves, and camera angles.

Students explored how a storyboard gives the opportunity to draw sketches and visualize on paper as a way of organizing their video before shooting it. It's a visual equivalent of a script for the actors.

With all of that under their belts, students viewed music videos to show how the visual elements can be added to a sound track to add interest and energy.

Finally, the big day came and their production was completed. Showing off the finished work was an exciting conclusion to this creative experience. MINDSURF had triumphed once again and the students did, too!

MINDSURF Benefits Everyone

Benefits to Students

- A place to be with your friends
- Homework support
- Discovery, exploration, invention, and fun!

Benefits to Parents

- Affordable and convenient
- Safe and secure
- Engaging for their children
- Educational enrichment
- Homework support
- Two full scholarships per classroom

Incredible Classroom Resources

Each MINDSURF classroom is equipped with:

- Two Windows '95 computers w/CD ROM
- Color ink jet printer
- 25" color TV and VCR
- Portable CD/cassette player
- Camcorder and Poloroid camera
- Hundreds of software activities
- Weekly theme materials
- Arts and crafts materials
- Board games and puzzles
- Curiosity Kits
- Sports equipment
- Portable cellular telephone

ARTICLES OF INTEREST FOR PARENTS

LATCHKEY KID TROUBLE

A new study conducted by the University of Illinois has concluded that preteens who are alone after school are more likely to experiment with drugs or alcohol. More than 600 students in grades five through seven were questioned for the survey. The results showed that "latchkey youths" were three times more likely than their peers to say they have been drunk at one time or another. Almost one in five, or 18.9% admitted to drinking, compared to 5.9% among other kids of the same age group.

On the issue of abuse of illicit drugs, latchkey kids were more than four times as likely to have used marijuana. Concerning cigarette smoking, 14.1% of latchkey kids said they have smoked within the past month, as compared to 6.3% of supervised students.

Experts blame the latchkey problem on the increase in dual-career couples and single parent families over the years. "I think that people would be surprised at how much time kids spend unsupervised," said researcher Peter Mulhall. He noted that more than 60% of the children questioned in the study were labeled in the unsupervised category. Mulhall said better after-school programs are needed for teens and preteens.

March 1997, LINKAGE, Impact Services of the
Office of Substance Abuse, Howard County Government.

THE HOLE IN THE DAY

By Ellen Goodman

Boston-I don't usually track social problems by the hour and the minute. But over the last few years, I have begun to notice research that literally clocks some of our biggest woes. And it's enough to set off alarm bells.

The first study asked the simple question: What time of day-not of month, but of day-do teen-age girls get pregnant? In short, when are they having sex? It turned out that it wasn't the weekend but the workday, it wasn't midnight but midafternoon.

Say what you will about biorhythms, the most fertile territory is an empty house.

Then came the study asking what time of day juvenile crimes were committed. Once again, the most popular hours were between 3 and 6 p.m. Many who weren't creating babies were creating mayhem.

Now this time line isn't meant to raise parental blood pressure. It's quite high enough, thank you. In the average office, the moment school lets out, anxiety goes up and productivity down. It's 3 p.m. do you know where your child is?

But any rational policy maker would figure out that the most effective way to reduce pregnancy and crime would be after-school programs.

And yet in many towns, there is more interest in curfews to get kids home at night than in programs to keep them busy after school. Instead of keeping them safe, we have gotten tough.

Gradually and tardily the pendulum is swinging. Not long ago, when the president came to Boston to promote a program combating youth crime, he included \$60 million for...after-school programs. The drug czar followed him, talking about combating drug use. Gen. Barry McCaffery, too seemed most animated boosting...after-school programs.

It's been twentysomething years since after-school care was actively promoted as an essential solution to the work-family conflict. Since then, some 5,000 programs have sprung up across the country, mostly in suburban pockets and overwhelmingly paid for by parents.

5 million in "self-care"

Still, when 75 percent of the mothers of school-age children are working, millions are left worrying about the hole in the day. There are 5 million children whose parents admit they are in that euphemism of euphemisms, self-care. For the most part, it's children from fifth grade up who are on their own because care is unavailable or unaffordable. Under welfare reform, the age will be going down. States don't have to provide any child care for kids who are over 6.

From teen-agers in trouble to 7 year olds alone, or to kids spending their afternoons in front of TV, after-school care has become the kids issue.

Michelle Seligson, who has headed the School-Age Child Care Project at Wellesley college for nearly a generation, says that "There is enough knowledge about good after-school programs. There are enough people who realize their importance. This should be something we commit to as a country."

That long-delayed commitment would build on the variety of already successful models. Some are funded privately, some in concert with the business community, some publicly. It would mean that communities set this as a priority, that they work to keep school doors open, to find space and transportation.

At best, these programs are not an extension of school so much as an enrichment, a place for the arts, sports, hobbies, safe socializing. The research shows that they make a difference in the way kids feel and perform. They don't just supervise the young, but engage them with what we know they lack and need most-caring adults.

Today we are too quick to turn a skeptical ear to new social programs. But we are acknowledging how much kids need adult supervision and relationships, and this makes Ms. Seligson hopeful. "I have a vision of sitting down with the drug people, the education people, and everybody, and together getting this done."

This is an idea whose time-3 p.m.to 6 p.m.-has finally come.

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**AN AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FROM
SYLVAN LEARNING SYSTEMS, INC. AND NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY**

MINDSURF™ is an innovative, exciting after-school program developed by Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. and National Geographic Society, two nationally renowned educational organizations. MINDSURF is an alternative to standard after-school care, offering an educational, fun and engaging program for students in grades K through 8. Students “Discover, Explore, Invent” in their own schools, with their friends, three, four or five afternoons per week.

WHAT IS IT?

MINDSURF launches students on two-week explorations such as “Lost in Space,” “Destination: Africa,” “Masters of Fine Art” and “Animal World.” Each exploration includes multi-sensory projects and activities emphasizing science, art, geography, literature, music, history and current events. The program also utilizes a wide selection of National Geographic software and videos that support these explorations. Students enhance their computer knowledge using the latest math, science, writing and creativity software.

Other exciting aspects of MINDSURF include hands-on project kits developed by Sylvan, National Geographic and Curiosity Kits® that specifically support the current explorations. These engaging activities are *child-driven*, with teachers acting as facilitators or coaches in providing support and guidance. What’s more, each day’s activities are separate, so a child attending fewer than five days per week still will benefit from the program.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR STUDENTS?

Students “surf their minds” from the end of the school day until 6:00 p.m. Each day includes:

- **Homework help**, in a quiet environment dedicated to the completion of homework, with assistance, if requested, from the MINDSURF teachers. A large selection of reference materials and software is provided. A homework incentive program encourages

students to complete their homework thoroughly, accurately and on time, and rewards them for a job well done!

- **Fun, experiential learning activities** (described below), which offer students the unprecedented opportunity to enhance their educational skills through stimulating, hands-on explorations! These exciting activities follow the curriculum written and designed by the educators at National Geographic and Sylvan Learning Systems.
- **Physical activities**, sports and games from all over the world, many of which tie in with the current exploration theme.
- **Free time**, during which students can choose from a huge selection of games, computer activities, physical or art activities, etc.
- **A nutritious snack and drink**, so students are ready to enjoy the program.

At the end of the MINDSURF day, students must be signed out by a parent or other family member or friend previously authorized to pick up the student. Students may be picked up earlier than 6:00 if desired.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR PARENTS?

Some experts believe the hours immediately following the school day to be the most critical time of day in a student’s life. MINDSURF provides parents with a convenient and reliable alternative to standard after-school care, at an affordable price. MINDSURF offers a safe and secure environment designed not only to fill the needs of parents who work outside the home, but also to offer all students a stimulating and *fun* place to spend their afternoons!

You are welcome to visit an existing MINDSURF site if you would like a first-hand look at our program.

HOW IT HAPPENS

We equip each classroom with state-of-the-art technology and equipment, including two computers with Windows 95, a color ink jet printer, a 25" color TV, a VCR, a portable CD/cassette player, a camcorder, a digital camera, a cellular telephone, and an extensive selection of exciting software. Each classroom has a large selection of games, sports equipment, books, magazines, videos and art supplies. Supervised Internet access is available in most schools.

Each MINDSURF classroom is staffed by one certified Lead Teacher and two instructional aides. Staff act as facilitators in helping students manage their own projects. Teachers are available to assist students with their homework and, if requested, will work with the student's school teachers to lend extra assistance with particular subjects. MINDSURF teachers always are available to parents to discuss any special needs or concerns parents may have about their children.

To maximize interaction between students and teachers/aides, MINDSURF classes are limited to just 30 students, resulting in an average student:teacher ratio of 8:1. Students are grouped by age for some activities, and will work both within their group and individually.

WHAT IT COSTS

Compare the costs below with other, non-educational after-school alternatives. We think you'll agree that MINDSURF is a minimal investment well spent!

5 days per week -- \$255 per month
(approximately \$4.25 per hour)

4 days per week -- \$240 per month
(approximately \$5.00 per hour)

3 days per week -- \$207 per month
(approximately \$5.75 per hour)

There is an annual \$25 enrollment fee per year (plus only \$10 for each additional family member). Sylvan also will offer a 15% discount to families enrolling more than one student. MasterCard and Visa are accepted.

Payment is due one month in advance; timely payment guaranteeing your child's enrollment in the program for the following month. A late pick-up fee of \$5.00 will be charged for every five-minute period after 6:05 p.m.

FINANCIAL AID

A limited number of scholarships are provided to each school, distributed on the basis of need and special circumstances.

If you would like an application for financial aid, please check the appropriate place on the Enrollment Form. It is recommended that you submit your application as soon as possible as most awards will be given in the beginning of the program.

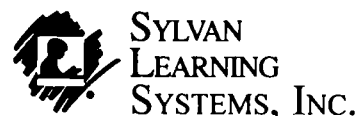
HOW TO ENROLL

To enroll your child in the MINDSURF program, simply complete the Enrollment Form and send it to Sylvan with your registration fee.

Because of MINDSURF's popularity, students are enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. Although class size is limited to 30 students, we will form as many classes as enrollment numbers justify. Students may be placed on a waiting list until an opening exists or until there is a sufficient number of students on waiting lists to form another class.

Students are enrolled on a monthly basis. You may enroll your child for three, four or five days a week and may change the number or choice of days enrolled with one month's written notice. There are a limited number of spaces for three- and four-day enrollments. (Please remember that if you enroll your child for three or four days and later want to increase to five days, you will need to check with the Lead Teacher to make certain there is room for your child.)

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR
NEED FURTHER INFORMATION
ABOUT THE MINDSURF PROGRAM,
PLEASE CALL 888-356-3456 (TOLL-FREE)**



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Successful student

**IMPROVE YOUR
CHILD'S READING
COMPREHENSION**

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**WHAT'S YOUR
LEARNING STYLE?**

**15 Questions
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**CREATE A
SCHOLAR:**

**Nourishing Your
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MINDSURF™ RESPONSE FORM

_____ Yes, we are interested in learning more about MINDSURF. Please call me or the individual listed to arrange an overview of the program.

Name: _____

Title: _____

District: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Facsimile Number: _____

**Please return via fax to: 410-843-8768 Attention Britt Schroeter, MINDSURF
or mail in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.**

BUSINESS

December 20, 1996

THE  SUN

Section C

Education

After school learning's goal

National Geographic, Sylvan join in program for latch-key kids

School rooms would be used

Scope is nationwide; pilots to start in Baltimore next year

By GREG SCHNEIDER
SUN STAFF

Sylvan Learning Systems Inc. and the National Geographic Society said yesterday that they are teaming up to offer a nationwide after-school program that would give latch-key kids a place to learn and have fun until their

parents get off work.

Held in school facilities from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., the Sylvan/National Geographic After School program is scheduled to get under way early next year with pilot programs in the Baltimore area and possibly in Los Angeles.

"If there's one problem with programs existing today, they tend to be places to leave kids where you know they'll be safe as opposed to educational programs or enriching programs," Douglas L. Becker, co-chief executive officer of Sylvan, said from his headquarters in Baltimore.

"Having National Geographic as a partner is a pretty quick answer for ensuring this is going to be exciting for kids," Becker said.

Parents would pay for their children to take part in

an after-school curriculum of "hands-on experiments and exploration activities," the companies said in a joint announcement.

"This is a substantial new direction for the National Geographic Society, and one about which we are extremely enthusiastic," society President Reg Murphy said in the release.

"We are confident that the combination of the National Geographic Society's content and Sylvan's expertise in high quality education programs makes this a very attractive opportunity for students and their parents."

State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick said she would "encourage school ad- [See Sylvan, 10c]

Sylvan and Geographic start latch-key program

[Sylvan, from Page 1c]

ministrators throughout Maryland and across the country to explore how this program may be offered through their schools."

Education experts say caring for children in the hours between the end of the school day and the end of the workday is a mushrooming need for parents around the country.

"We're seeing a huge increase over the past couple of decades in the number of single-parent homes and the number of homes in which both parents are working," said Gary Marx of the American Association of School Administrators, which has about 16,000 members.

Texas program expands

While many neighborhood organizations or individual school districts have developed their own after-school programs, only one

other nationwide effort seems to be under way, Marx said.

The Voyager Expanded Learning program of Dallas, Texas, has expanded to about 100 schools in Texas, Indiana, Washington and New Mexico in the past two years.

Becker said he learned of the concept while attending industry conferences early this year. Sylvan already has a national network of more than 600 learning centers that provide instruction to children and adults alike, and it administers more than 1,000 centers for educational and professional testing.

Once the company decided to branch into after-school care, Becker said, Sylvan considered several partners. But National Geographic was the first choice, he said. And the society was immediately receptive.

"I think it's very attractive because it basically speaks to what National Geographic has been do-

ing since its creation," said Nina Hoffman, senior vice president of publications for the society. "It's an extension of ... the mission of the society, which is to diffuse geographic knowledge."

Much already done

Hoffman said National Geographic has convened focus groups and tested possible activities in an effort to develop materials for the curriculum.

The society will create "activity packages" from its vast educational resources — a library of 10 million images, its Web site and online programs, its CD-ROM, curriculum materials and more.

Sylvan will staff the effort and handle day-to-day administration.

The program will arrange partnerships with public and private schools to allow access to facilities after classes end. There will be no charge to the schools.

Becker said the company hasn't determined how much parents will pay for the service, but he expects the fees to be as affordable as existing after-school care programs or even cheaper. And he said Sylvan would help schools find state and federal funds to provide discounts or scholarships to poor children.

"This program will not work if it's just available to a select group

of kids," Becker said.

He said Sylvan has been in contact with "some of the large suburban districts in the state of Maryland" about establishing pilot programs by early next year.

The Baltimore city school district "has also expressed an interest in us working with them," he said.

If the pilots go well, the full national program would gear up next fall, he said.

The Voyager program in Texas is finding great demand in the marketplace, according to company CEO Vernon Johnson. "We are receiving calls daily from school districts across the country," he said.

The Voyager program is different in that it provides materials and a curriculum to school officials, who staff the effort themselves.

Christian Hansen, a spokeswoman for the Family Research Council advocacy group in Washington, said such programs may not be as desirable as having kids spend time with parents. But they're better than the alternative.

"A lot of children like to come home and play Nintendo, so anything related to books and learning is a positive impact on a child's life," Hansen said.

OLNEY Gazette

Wednesday, June 11, 1997 • 25c

Gazette Community News

Wednesday, June 11, 1997 o

Farquhar Middle School students participate in after-school adventure

by Susan Singer-Bart
Staff Writer

For Farquhar Middle School Principal Dorothy Colding, the decision to pilot the MINDSURF program in her school was easy and personal.

Her daughter Dominique is in sixth grade, and Colding knows that middle school children are too old for traditional day care but parents still worry about them being home alone.

MINDSURF is an after-school program created by Sylvan Learning Systems and National Geographic Society to give students a creative way to spend their time.

"I heard about the program from the Interagency Coordinating Board," Colding said. "It's an after-school enrichment program, not just total recreation. A combination of learning experience and fun. MINDSURF had all that."

Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Germantown was the first county school to start the program earlier this year, Colding said. The program began in February in one Baltimore City school and six Howard County schools. Next year it will be available at more schools.

"I talked to the principal at Martin Luther King and she raved about it," she said.

The Farquhar program started in May and will end this week. It met Monday through Thursday.

MINDSURF students get a snack, do homework, participate in some outdoor activities, then work on creative projects organized around weekly themes. Students take turns as the disk jockey for the day, bringing in background music for the activities.

The MINDSURF classroom is equipped with two computers with CD ROMs, software, a color printer, television, videocassette recorder, camcorder and portable cellular telephone.

MINDSURF allows the school to borrow its equipment and promises a \$1,500 annual gift to each school.

Last week the theme at Farquhar was Lights, Cameras, Action. Small groups of students were using a video recorder to film short documentaries or commercials they had made. Other themes during the program are river adventure, the world down under, flying high and dream team world tour.

"We're trying to expose children to different things in the world in a

fun way," said Nancy Trimble, the campus director. "A lot of students find they enjoy things they didn't know they'd enjoy."

MINDSURF supplies the program materials and hires teachers and aides from the school to run the program.

The teachers understand how things are taught at their own schools and can help with homework because they know what is expected of the students, Trimble said.

"My mom signed me up for it because she wanted me to do my homework and have something to do while she's at work," said Eric German, 12. "I didn't want to go, but I had so much fun on the first day I wanted to come back."

The other children had similar stories of their parents enrolling them first and then telling them about the program later.

"I really like it," said Dominique Colding, 12. "This is something for me to do. I don't just have to sit around and do nothing."

Next year parents will have the option of sending children to MINDSURF three, four or five days a week, Trimble said.

Here's what PARENTS are saying about the MINDSURF™ After-School PROGRAM:

"This is the best thing that ever happened for middle school students. My child came from a C average to A and B. She also grew to a more mature child. This program helps the student's self-esteem. The staff were all excellent [and] great with the students."
(Parent of Laurine, Grade 6)

"My son often did not want to leave when it was time to go home."
(Parent of Sam H., Grade 3)

"MINDSURF . . . offers children a chance to add depth to the knowledge they have accumulated."
(Parent of Khura, Grade 3)

"Sarah really likes the program. From the parents' point of view, the program fits our family schedule well. It is terrific to have enrichment, fun, and support for getting homework done. This frees up evenings for families to spend time together having fun, instead of getting a late start on homework. The flexible schedule is helpful, and the staff is great. Thank you, MINDSURF!"
(Parent of Sarah, Grade 7)

"I think the idea is great! Rafael thanked me for signing him up for next year. The changes you are planning look exciting."
(Parent of Rafael, Grade 6)

"[My son] is teaching me things I didn't know much about. We hated to have it end for the summer. The staff are always open to suggestions and comments, and are very helpful with any and all questions. Keep up the great work!"
(Parent of Brett, Grade 1)

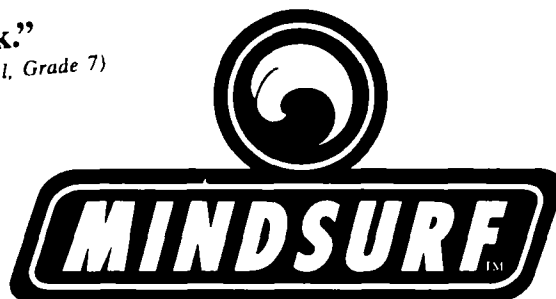
"My son really enjoyed the program and is asking to come back!"
(Parent of Sam S., Grade 7)

"I just wanted to let you know how thrilled and excited Ingrid has been about the MINDSURF program. She has really enjoyed herself and cannot keep her enthusiasm concealed. I hope the program continues successfully."

(Parent of Ingrid, Grade 5)

"My son is motivated to complete homework."
(Parent of Michael, Grade 7)

"It kept Lynnette's interest. She wanted to participate."
(Parent of Lynnette, Grade 7)

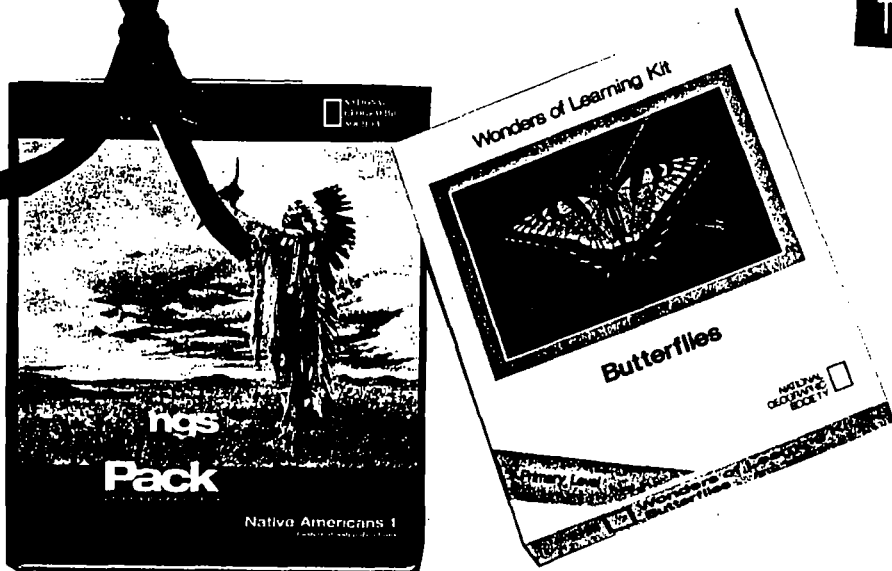


From Sylvan & National Geographic

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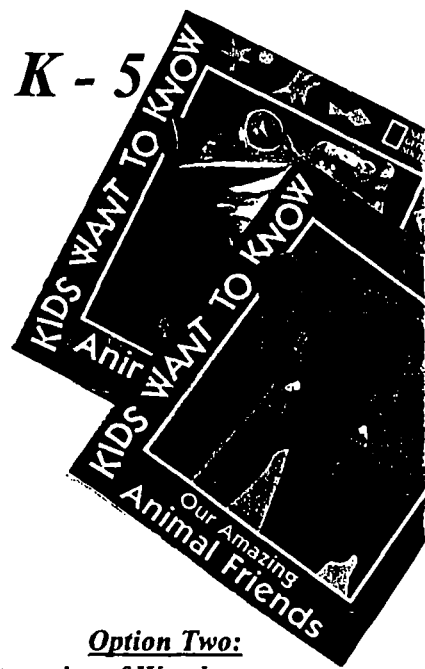
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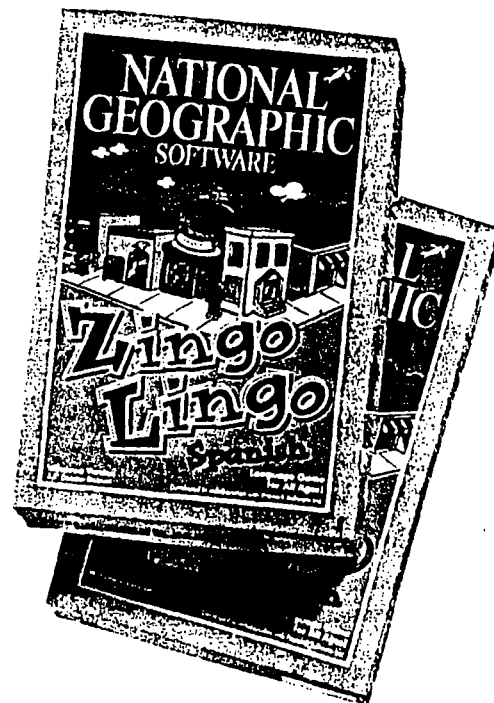
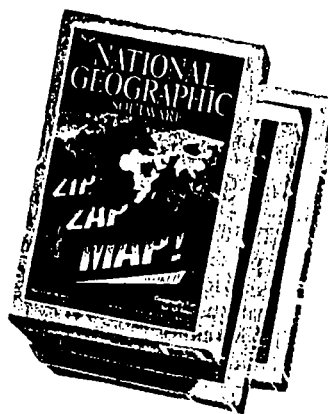
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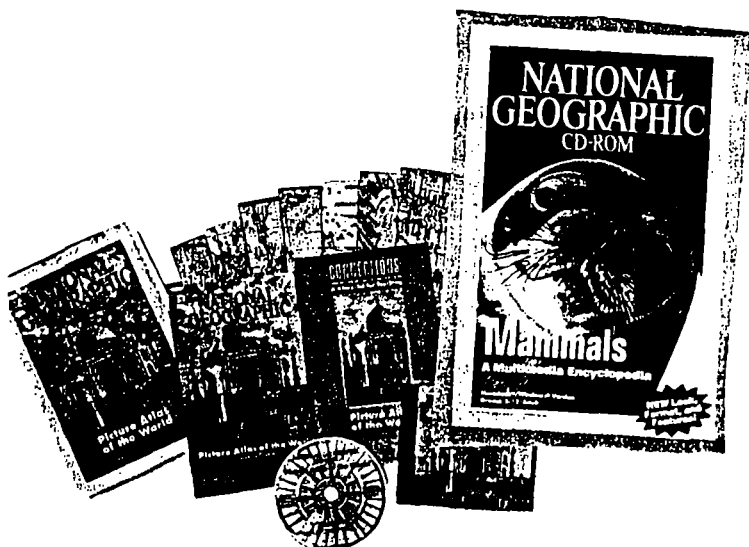
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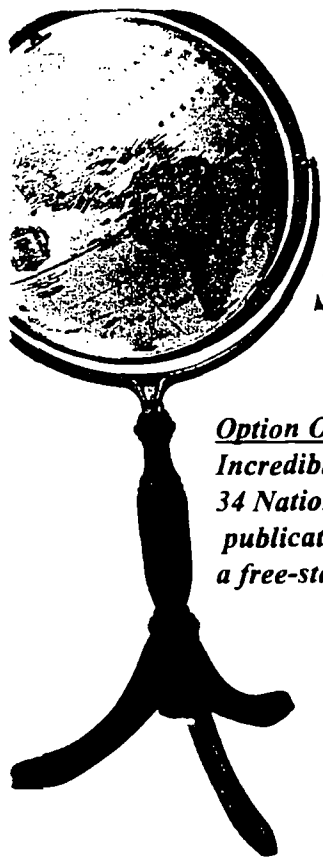
Complete school software package of foreign language instruction through Zingo Lingo (Spanish and French versions) and Zip, Zap, Map (World and USA versions) an entertaining and educational Geography Software for use by your entire school population



Option Four:

6 educational CD ROM packages (for 5 computers) includes User Guide, library catalogue cards, lesson plans activity sheets and world maps





School Gifts Package / Grades 6 - 8

Option One:

*Incredible selection of
34 National Geographic
publications and
a free-standing globe*



Option Two:

*8 educational CD ROM
packages (for 5 computers)
includes User Guide,
library catalogue cards,
lesson plans activity sheets
and world maps*



Option Three:

*Complete school software
package of foreign language
instruction through Zingo Lingo
(Spanish and French versions)
and Zip, Zap, Map
(World and USA versions)
an entertaining
and educational
Geography Software for use by
your entire school population*

