

# Trip

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soon became the painful truth.

At 10:00 a.m., after three hours of containing the uncapped energy of 55 young boys, the COACH USA bus finally arrived. However, not only did it arrive late, the bus driver was instructed not to take them until he secured a \$500 check! California Cutz saved the day with the check, and they were on their way.

You know I couldn't wait to dial those COACH digits. I had to hear it from the mouth of a COACH USA representative — that they actually donated a bus and then decided to renege on the day of the trip. The contact, George Sibley, had not returned my call by this week's deadline, but I'll be damned if I miss another one.

Of course, everyone on the bus had fallen asleep by the time they arrived at the dam. Can you imagine: lily-white Hoover Dam and all those beautiful black boys? It was awesome. Seven-year-old Cade Clark seemed hypnotized by the rushing water. He said with a satisfied smile, "Hoover Dam was really cool," definitely "representing." Imagine the strength and discipline they displayed at the dam, and then smile with pride.

After a 3-hour wait and a bus ride down, Hoover Dam, rated "one of America's seven modern civil engineering wonders," had lost some of its impact, but for some who had never left the neighborhood, it was like going across the country.

Back on the bus, now heading for what would be an afternoon of fun at full capacity, the parents were also invited to join the park activities. Upon arriving at Mountain Crest Park on North Durango Drive, we were greeted by so many flags and colorful directional signs that even Stevie Wonder could have found his spot. The flags were donated by the Craig Rd. Home Depot, and mylar

balloons by Madonna, of Phaz II on MLK, both complimenting the exceptional artwork of a neighborhood artist known as "A.J."

DJ Ronnie "O" of Cali Roc, giving the area a festive feel, pumped up the music. The food was well under the control of novice chef mentor Billy Banks, who brought his own barbecue pits, the barrel on top of the shopping cart. Neighborhood grocer, Mario's Westside Market, donated a large portion of the food.

The Activities Director, mentor Don Petross, was ready with the sack relay, basketball shoot-off, and tug-o'-war — which, by the way, was nothing short of a blast. (When the mothers began to feel sorry for their sons they jumped in the fun.) This was the most memorable part of the trip for eleven-year-old Greg Turpin. "I liked the tug-o'-war," he said, "because we won."

When they began the sack relay race, kids were falling and laughing all over the place. At first, this task seemed difficult, but after falling so many times and receiving the constant encouragement of the staff, the young boys prevailed. Throughout the day I realized that this was not just a field trip, but also a channel through which the mentors worked, diligently planting the positive messages. During the sack race the message was about falling, getting back up, and, always keep going.

By now, not only were the boys absorbed with fun, but a couple of the mentors approached the basketball court for the shoot-off with the air of Michael Jordan — note that I said approached, because they departed with a lot less fanfare.

The area was always secure during the games. Patrolled with radios, the excited boys never moved outside of perimeters defined by

the gentlemen. Each adult covered a zone that included all exits from the park, and they were manned the entire time. I was impressed with the fact that all children were escorted to the restrooms. Not only were they identifiable by their t-shirts, but also by the fluorescent armbands and nametags.

The park area was equipped with canopy, electricity and built-in barbecue pits just perfect for the event. Set up under the canopy was a short program, featuring mentors Ward, who spoke on

"education, obedience and safety," and Rucker on "preventive medicine, health and hygiene." Every mother was appreciative of both gentlemen, and their "hit home" comments. After the day of fun, I could not imagine these guys topping this one.

That was when the Hummer limousine pulled up.

All day, the mentors had been watching the behavior, ability to follow directions and degree of cooperation of each group. Little did we all know, that the age group that was most well-behaved

(which turned out to be the 8 to 10-year-old group), would ride back to California Cutz in a sleek, black, stretch Hummer limousine, donated by James Perez of Jet Set VIP Hummer limousine service.

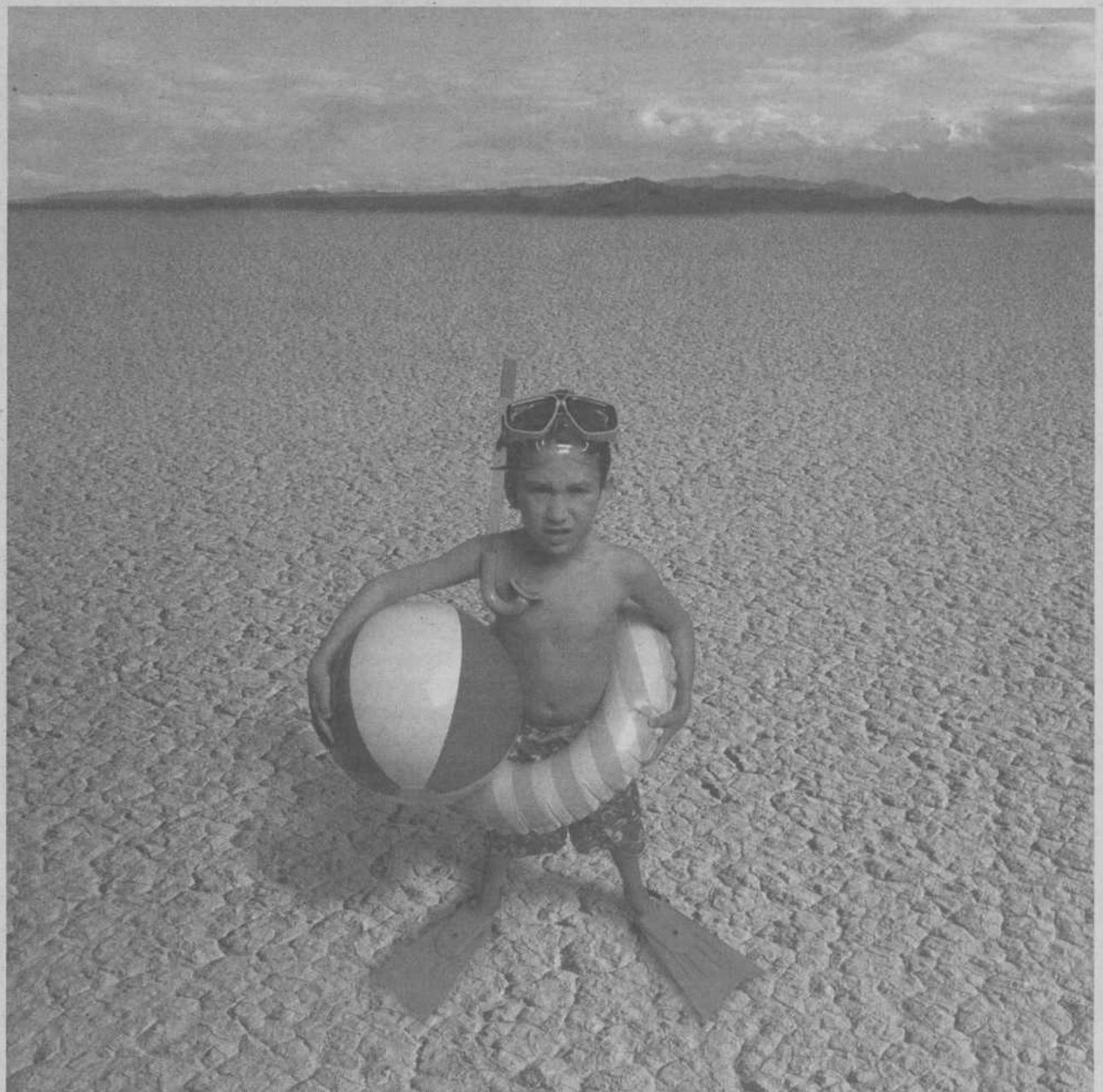
After reaching the shop, I had an opportunity to speak with Stanley, the organizer, who has an unwavering commitment to the youth of the community.

"Our focus is culture, obedience and direction. The core of the problem is direction. Today the young men had the opportunity to see the real

stand-up Black man; the kind of man that knows their situation because they are products of the same reality."

This was a day to remember for all; for those who gave, and most importantly, those who received. There is no joy greater than the joy you see in a child's eyes.

The mentors, all part of Cali Roc Entertainment and the AACAF, are gearing up for their next event, the "Easter Egg Hood Hunt," which will include girls, but will remain limited to the 5-12 age range.



# WHAT WILL YOU LEAVE YOUR CHILDREN?

Sometimes it's easy to forget we're in the middle of the worst drought on record. If we don't conserve now, our children will be the ones left high and dry. For smart ways to prevent overwatering your landscape, call 258-SAVE or log on to snwa.com. Because it's time we saved some for them.

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# Moynihan

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Moynihan should also be credited with another legacy that is rarely mentioned.

Although many have complained that the controversy over his report stifled research on black families, in fact, it was the catalyst for hundreds of such studies by both black and white scholars which have markedly increased our understanding of family life among blacks and other economically disadvantaged groups.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan labored unstintingly over the years to improve the social and economic well being of families of all races. His passing marks the loss of a truly visionary scholar and statesman.

Robert B. Hill, a former director of research at the National Urban League, is Senior Researcher at Westat, Inc., a research firm in Rockville, Maryland.