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A Hundred Happy Kids

Pride of country and pleasure in one's countrymen would seem to be a good prescription for a Fourth of July holiday. Our founding fathers must have thought when the United States was a-borning that such a young, vital, idealist little country would be filled with citizens who like and enjoy and care about one another. Alas, we grew and departed somewhat from that dream. But for at least six or seven hundred readers of The Constitution it's true — and they should have the happiest possible celebration today.

They cared about nearly a hundred little Negro children they didn't even know. They were stirred by the plight of little ones who live skimpy lives in a shabby part of town, shut off from outings and expeditions and carnival good times that are a part of growing up. And they did something about it. They sent over 500 books of green stamps, \$5 checks and one dollar bills and \$10 checks and one \$50 check so the children of Bowen Homes Head Start day care center could go to Six Flags Over Georgia.

The green stamp people themselves were moved by the desire of the children to have a day-long outing at Six Flags. They sent 100,000 stamps, amounting to 60 books.

"We haven't been able to think of the words to say thank you," said Mrs. Frances Wyatt, director of the school. "We've been so busy opening the mail. It's been a revelation to me. I didn't know things like this happened. And

the children ... you should see how excited they are!"

I did see. Bill Wilson, our photographer, and I went out to Six Flags. Don Daniel of the publicity staff met us and took us to the gate where the Bowen Homes Head Starters would be coming through. We saw them coming—85 little dark-skinned youngsters, looking spruce and clean and combed and hair-ribboned and polished. They clung to the hands of mothers and teachers and volunteers, who, thanks to your generosity, were able to come along too.

The turnstile gate was a bafflement to most of the children and Don explained it and helped them through it one at the time, murmuring words of encouragement and welcome. Once inside the children stopped and stood stock still, gazing in wonderment at little railroad trains chugging over a trestle, old-timey automobiles driven by children along a big track, an Englishman ringing a bell, a band playing, great tubs of gardenias blooming and filling the air with perfume. They caught a glimpse of air-borne cable carts moving across the sky and the fine, ineffable fragrance of hamburgers rose from a nearby sandwich shop.

They didn't push or run about or squeal like most of the three-to-six-year-olds I know. They moved quietly, nudged along by the hands of adults, but their faces were alive with excitement and awe. When I left them they were to take a train ride. After that they had a marionette show and the musical revue at the Crystal Pistol before them. They were going to lunch at one of the score of eating places there—a "boughten" lunch, which was an entirely new experience or most of them. The center had at first planned to take lunch but the money you all sent convinced them the children should have a totally glamorous day and I think they had it.

And there are stamps left—so many that Mrs. Wyatt thinks the center may use them to buy a television set.

All of you who helped ... I wish you could have seen them, too. It would have been thanks enough



Tina Usher Prepares to Devour Ice Cream at Six Flags