

How To Make a Difference

Bringing Hope to Children

An Interview with Brian Goldner, President and Chief Executive Officer,
and Karen Davis, Vice President of Community Relations, Hasbro, Inc.

EDITORS' NOTE Brian Goldner has held his current post since May 2008. He served as Chief Operating Officer of Hasbro, Inc., from January 2006 to 2008, and served as President of the U.S. Toys segment from 2001 to 2006. From 2000 to 2001, Goldner served as Senior Vice President and General Manager



Brian Goldner

of the U.S. Toys segment. Before joining Hasbro, he was Chief Operating Officer of Bandai America Incorporated from 1997 to 2000. Goldner serves on the Board of Directors of Rhode Island Hospital and is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

Karen Davis has led the company's philanthropy since 1998 and currently serves as the immediate past Chair and Founder of the Association of Corporate Contribution Professionals. She serves as the past President of the Grantmakers Council of Rhode Island and is the former Board Chair of City Year Rhode Island. Prior to joining Hasbro, Davis spent 14 years in the advancement field. She holds an M.A. and a B.S. degree from the University of Rhode Island and a certificate from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth for Hasbro's Global Leadership Program. In 2007, she was inducted into the University of Rhode Island College of Business Hall of Fame.

COMPANY BRIEF Hasbro, Inc. (www.hasbro.com) is a worldwide leader in children's and family leisure-time entertainment products and services, and designs, manufactures, and markets games and toys. Headquartered in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, the company markets its PLAYSKOOL, TONKA, MILTON BRADLEY, PARKER BROTHERS, TIGER, AND WIZARDS OF THE COAST brands in the United States and internationally.

How critical is corporate responsibility and community engagement to the culture of Hasbro?

Goldner: It is definitely a part of this company's DNA, and has been since its inception. It's something our employees take to heart, and it is top down and bottom up. We offer the majority of employees four hours of paid time off per month to volunteer with children, and we have groups who, instead of doing team-



Karen Davis

building activities, volunteer together. But it's also the way we do our giving. It's very much about bringing the best of our assets to an organization to help make a bigger impact. We have multi-year philanthropic partnerships that allow us to bring the best of who we are to the table.

We support programs that bring "the sparkle of

hope, the joy of play, and the power of service" to children who really need it. For example, there is an organization in Kissimmee, Florida, designed to accommodate the wishes of children who are suffering from life-threatening illnesses. The children and their families are given a week's vacation at a Give Kids The World village, which wraps its arms around the family, providing meals, theme park passes, and a beautiful villa designed to accommodate special needs.

Davis: We sponsor their weekly Christmas party and built a CANDY LAND themed Boundless Playground for them. This type of playground is designed specifically for children of all abilities so kids with disabilities and their friends or siblings can play together. We also made a special Give Kids The World CANDY LAND game for all the families to take home. We're one of the largest corporate funders of Hole in the Wall Camps across the world, which Paul Newman started for children. So, Give Kids The World, Boundless Playgrounds, and Hole in the Wall Camps are our biggest partners under "play."

Under "hope," we support a number of organizations including Operation Smile. Each year we support at least one mission where approximately 450 kids have facial surgery and end up being able to eat and smile because of that – that's a pretty great thing. We also have the Hasbro Children's Hospital, which is one of our proudest accomplishments – it is 15 years old. We have a program with World Vision where we support orphans in Africa, helping 40 schools a year in Zambia.

Goldner: For each one of these, we look at the partnership and ask what we can do to make a bigger impact than just giving a grant. For some, it's appropriate to give product; for others, it's appropriate to volunteer time. In 2009, we helped about four million kids.

Is it important that Hasbro's philanthropic involvement align with the business?

Goldner: Being strategic about our philanthropy allows us to make the biggest impact. How does it align with the business? For us, it has always been about kids. We understand them, and we can use all of our assets to help them. We have always felt a strong commitment to give back dating back to when the Hassenfeld brothers ran the company. So even in our most difficult days financially, we have contributed. We've never stopped. That's just part of who we are.

Are future business leaders interested in joining companies that have philanthropy ingrained in the culture?

Goldner: Absolutely. The most philanthropic generation is coming up through the ranks right now, so they're looking at how companies give back. They're used to volunteering, so they want to see the company offer that as a benefit. People tell us they've come to work for us because of what we do. We have record numbers of people applying to work at Hasbro, partially because of our CSR efforts, but also because, overall, it's a terrific company.

Do you get emotionally involved in the causes Hasbro supports?

Davis: Of course, it would be difficult not to. We see the kids in our hospital, and we know their struggles and the heartache of the families. With the work we do in Africa, we see how difficult life is for the children, but then we get to see the hope and joy we're able to bring. This work is a great privilege and a huge motivator; it's why a lot of us come to work and give it our all. Beyond making great products for kids, our employees know they're part of something bigger here. It's a larger good we're all striving for.

Why does the message about the good that is done by business leaders and corporations so often get lost?

Goldner: Good question. It seems that the media believes good news doesn't sell. We know from the research that corporate philanthropy does matter to the consumer and that they make buying decisions based on the company's reputation. We have never done our charitable giving to sell product; we have always done it because it is the right thing to do. Of course, we would be delighted to have folks buy Hasbro brands because they want to be associated with the good work we do around the world. ●