

Rites of Passage offering empowers young boys

John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

Eleven African-American boys, ages 6 to 16, stand in a line outside Zion Methodist Church ready to complete one 10-week session of Rites of Passage. Mike Waller smiles.

A member of 100 Committed Men, a group which pairs professional men with young boys, Waller runs its Rites of Passage program and can't help but beam about its success.

"I saw other cultures training their young men and made it my objective to do the same for African-American youth," he said, referring to Jewish Bar Mitzvahs and Native Americans' manhood ceremonies used to herald youth into manhood. "I was fortunate enough to have a mentor at a young age to expose me to the African perspective."

Minister Joseph Sayles of Good Shepherd Church of God in Christ has two sons in the program. By being involved they get to see other

African-American men in the community and see what they do to make a living," he said.

Uri Clinton, a native Las Vegas and an attorney, organizes the speakers. Community activist and engineer Ken Evans and financial planner and investor Jeff Clemons are two of the many who volunteered their time.

"You see the children develop and take off with confidence from the efforts of the program," Clinton said. "It's my way of giving back to the community — the community that is responsible for raising me and getting me through law school."

The program consists of three 10-week periods that start in the fall semester. Participants learn etiquette, study black history and math, work on reading skills and learn conflict resolution and life skills.

The program is free and has no requirements.

"It's great," 9-year-old Joseph Sayles, Jr. said. "We got to go on field trips, like

the Rio, UNLV and Mesquite."

"I liked that they helped us with our reading and math," said James Sayles, 8.

Upon completion of the three 10-week sessions, the graduates receive certificates.

"I feel obligated to get involved," said Emmitt Lamb, computer programmer for Clark County. "I'll stay involved as long as the 100 Committed Men are in existence."

Vandals

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said, calling the vandalism "senseless" and saying it destroyed the hard work of the students.

"I've told the kids not to let this get them down," he continued. "This is a real-life experience. Vandals do hit businesses. They don't have time to be angry — just pick up and keep on going."

"You would have thought they would have broken into the snack bar or something to steal and sell candy," said Alicia Holmes, president of Green Thumb Kids. "What would they want with plants?"

On Saturday, Doolittle Senior Center was broken into. Windows and glass door panes were shattered, fire extinguishers were

unhinged and discharged and every room was ransacked.

Taken were televisions, cameras and videocassette recorders. Sound equipment was also destroyed.

"It's very frustrating," said Jerlys Baker, Doolittle's director. "We're going to install a better alarm system, put grates over the windows and the Deputy Marshals will be checking on the center three times nightly."

"We should have security guards, especially at night. That's when they do their dirty work," said Mary Fisher, who frequents Doolittle. Although she feels safe at the center, she wants security beefed up. "We should also have helicopters circling the place."



I-15 South Corridor Study TRANSPORTATION NOTICE PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING January 21st & 26th, 1999

WHEN AND WHERE:

- ▶ THURSDAY - January 21, 1999
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Enterprise Library
25 East Shelbourne (Corner of Shelbourne and South Las Vegas Boulevard)
- ▶ TUESDAY - January 26, 1999
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Silver Springs Recreation Center
1951 Silver Parkway (off Green Valley Parkway, South of Warm Springs Road)

MEETING PURPOSE:

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) seeks public input and comments to determine the best possible solutions for enhancing transportation mobility within the South Central Las Vegas Valley. A number of proposed improvements to the transportation network are now under consideration. Public comment is needed on a series of improvements that include: State Route 160-Blue Diamond Highway; Lake Mead Drive from I-15 to the Southern Beltway; Rainbow Boulevard, I-15; and the local arterial street network. These alternatives were developed through a cooperative effort by NDOT, Clark County, and the City of Henderson and through previous public input.

The meetings will be conducted in an "Open House" format. Public comment can be given by several methods, to the court reporter at the public meetings, comment forms, by mail to: Kent Cooper, Program Development Manager, Nevada Department of Transportation, 123 East Washington, Las Vegas, NV 89101. In addition to any comments received at the meeting, written comments will also be accepted until 5:00 p.m., February 5, 1999.

WHY:

Based upon previous public comment, technical analysis, and discussions amongst study participants, a series of four transportation alternatives have been developed for the South Central Las Vegas Valley. These alternatives are described as follows:

- ▶ **Baseline Alternative** - assumes buildout of the currently adopted Regional Transportation Plan 1998-2020.
- ▶ **Alternative A** - expands the Baseline by completing the arterial grid network and adds 4 interchanges to Interstate 15.
- ▶ **Alternative B** - adds one additional interchange and proposes an "Outerbelt" Superarterial
- ▶ **Alternative C** - includes all Alternative A improvements, eliminates the "Outerbelt" Superarterial and substitutes a Superarterial on Rainbow Boulevard, between Cactus and the Southern Beltway.

Each alternative will have different impacts on existing and proposed development in the study area. Documentation including existing conditions, impacts, and benefits of each alternative will be available for review at the public meetings. The balance of this study will narrow the focus to a range of improvements that best meet transportation needs for the study area.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Kristine Bunnell, Project Coordinator, I-15 South Corridor Study
123 East Washington, Building C, Las Vegas, NV 89101 (702) 385-6531 Fax: (702) 385-6596

Parcel owner to erect fence for safety reasons

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

Bowing to pressure, the owner of a company charged with building affordable housing at the Herbert Gerson housing project, has agreed to fence off the area which now contains thousands of pounds of debris.

Frank Hawkins, whose nonprofit redevelopment group owns the 40-acre property at Martin L. King and Lake Mead boulevards, said he will fence off Balzar and Comstock streets while the complex is being razed.

Parents said the demolition near Kermit R. Booker elementary posed a risk to children.

"If we were in Summerlin or somewhere, there'd be a gate," Victoria Conway said. "I have two kids and a niece (that go to Booker) and they should be protected."

Hawkins was against fencing the area, calling it impractical because heavy-duty industrial machinery needed a way in and out of the complex. He downplayed the need for a barrier around the site.

"We've never had an accident, but if building a fence saves a life or prevents an injury, it's worth it," said Hawkins, who agreed to erect a fence after some prodding from Las Vegas City Councilman Gary Reese.

The area will be fenced completely once construction begins on the apartments and single family homes planned for the area. The project is expected to be completed by December 2001.

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