

Childhaven receives newer, better facility

John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

Childhaven, the city's most well-known child welfare center, is getting a major overhaul, which began with a groundbreaking on Tuesday.

"It's a project long overdue," said District Court Judge Robert Gaston. "The juvenile facilities have been long overlooked."

The campus is located at 701 N. Pecos Rd. and is a home for abused and neglected children of southern Nevada, as well as juveniles who have had a run-in with the law.

For years, staff and the youths have complained about overcrowding and the inability to adequately help those children in need.

"We've been housing over a 100 youths in facilities built for 80 and over 200 juvenile offenders in detention centers meant for 112," Director of the ChildHaven Campus Kirby Burgess said, "This will help us to eliminate a lot of these conditions and help the children get back home."

The expansion is made possible by the funding monies from the 1996 \$120 million Justice Bond proceeds.

The Clark County Adult Detention Center, the Regional Justice Center, and Clark County Department of Family and Youth Services will be the three projects that will benefit from this financial boon.

"The people in this community are realizing the great need we have to provide service to the children," Gaston said.

"This is why there is a desperate need to build this facility."

Five new detention cottages, a new Children's Center at Child Haven, a new Teen Cottage, a Special



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

Kirby Burgess, county family and youth services director, Clark County Commission chairwoman Yvonne Atkinson-Gates and Judge Lee Gates stand in front of a rendering of Child Haven's new facility.

Needs Cottage, recreational facilities, and a new heating and cooling system will be some of the spoils enjoyed by the outcome of a joint partnership of the Family

Courts and the Clark County Family and Youth Services division.

"We are excited about this opportunity to provide better and more efficient facilities

to the family and youth of Clark County," Burgess said about the 144,000 square feet of new construction and 22,000 square feet of renovations.

Low-income apartment plan draws discriminatory calls

RENO, Nev. (AP) - Opponents of a plan to build affordable housing in an upscale south Reno neighborhood are resorting to racist phone messages to show their displeasure, developers said.

One man left a message on developer Dane Hillyard's machine identifying himself as a San Francisco Bay area woman and saying, "I wishes to rent one a them."

"I don't have any money, but I am subsidized by everybody," the caller said, thanking Hillyard for trying to provide low-income housing. "I gots nine kids an' three more on the way."

Another man left a message at Hillyard's Pacific West Builders office saying he wanted to move his seven sons from the ethnically diverse city of Oakland, Calif., into the Diamond Creek apartments because they will

have a community basketball court, the developer said.

Reno Councilwoman Sherrie Doyle, an avid supporter of the project, said she also received a harassing phone call.

"I was disgusted," she said. "It reminded me of growing up and people would make fun of me for being half-Korean. It's pure racism."

Many homeowners in the Double Diamond subdivision have opposed the project ever since the City Council gave developers a \$6 million affordable housing bond in February.

Homeowners fear the project will lower property values, ruin their lifestyle, burden schools and adversely affect roads.

But the opposition also is clearly tinged with racism, said Lonnie Feemster, president of the Reno-Sparks chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored

People, who called it segregation by economics.

Minorities make up less than 2 percent of the neighborhood population.

"There have been cases where people say: If I prevent affordable housing in my neighborhood, I can keep minorities out," Feemster said.

Nevada was known as the "Mississippi of the West" until state legislators passed fair-housing laws in the 1960s.

"I was shocked," Hillyard said. "I didn't know this kind of thing exists in Reno, Nev., today."

Double Diamond Ranch owner Craig Rowe acknowledges he mailed letters to homeowners, urging them to let elected officials know they opposed the project.

But he decried the phone calls, calling

them embarrassing and offensive.

"I don't condone this," he said. "If I find out who did it, I will personally go talk to them. Did we help organize these people? Sure we did. But we didn't tell them what to say."

Rowe insisted the dispute is not racially discriminatory, saying homeowners have legitimate concerns about the project.

"We keep hearing that we're a bunch of bigots and that we don't want these people in our back yards ... We have a responsibility to protect these (homeowners)," he said.

Feemster said the NAACP chapter would consider filing a fair housing complaint if the opposition continued.

"It's abominable that those people don't have courage to stand up and take the sheet off," he said.

Archaeologists find ex-slave part of 19th-Century Nevada life

Scott Sonner
Associated Press

VIRGINIA CITY, Nev. - The buried remains of a black-owned saloon that catered to all races in the 1860s may prove to be a gold mine for archaeologists trying to learn more about ex-slaves in the Old West.

The Boston Saloon was owned and operated by a free black man from Massachusetts from 1864 until it burned in a fire that destroyed most of Virginia City in 1875, researchers said in interviews last week.

Not much is known about the enclave of about 100 blacks who lived in the

bustling mining town of 20,000 - the biggest city west of the Mississippi River at the time.

"In general, a mining camp like that may be perceived as a white phenomenon," said Ron James, Nevada's state historic preservation officer. "African-Americans who are visiting Nevada and go up to Virginia City are not always aware that they have roots in that community."

"But there were a lot of (black) business owners who were well known and much respected. One ran for mayor. Another fellow was a doctor practicing for well over 10 years."

The fact that Virginia City was a "remarkably integrated community" has deterred efforts to learn more about blacks of that era, James said.

Unlike the Chinese, who formed their own Chinatown, blacks lived among the Irish, French and German immigrants. Whites rented rooms from blacks and blacks rented rooms from whites, he said.

"To me, that means it was a healthy society, but it's not a good environment for archaeologists," James said.

"There isn't a black neighborhood. If there were, it would be easy. We would excavate the black


neighborhood," said James. He said the saloon "may very well be a one-of-a-kind site

in the Inner-Mountain West." The gold and silver mined from beneath Virginia City

and nearby Gold Hill and Silver City helped finance (See Ex-Slave, Page 16)

Correction


In our April 29 issue, we mistakenly gave an incorrect contact number for Louise Banks, who is offering educational seminars about South Africa. The correct number is 649-1733. We apologize for any inconvenience we have caused.

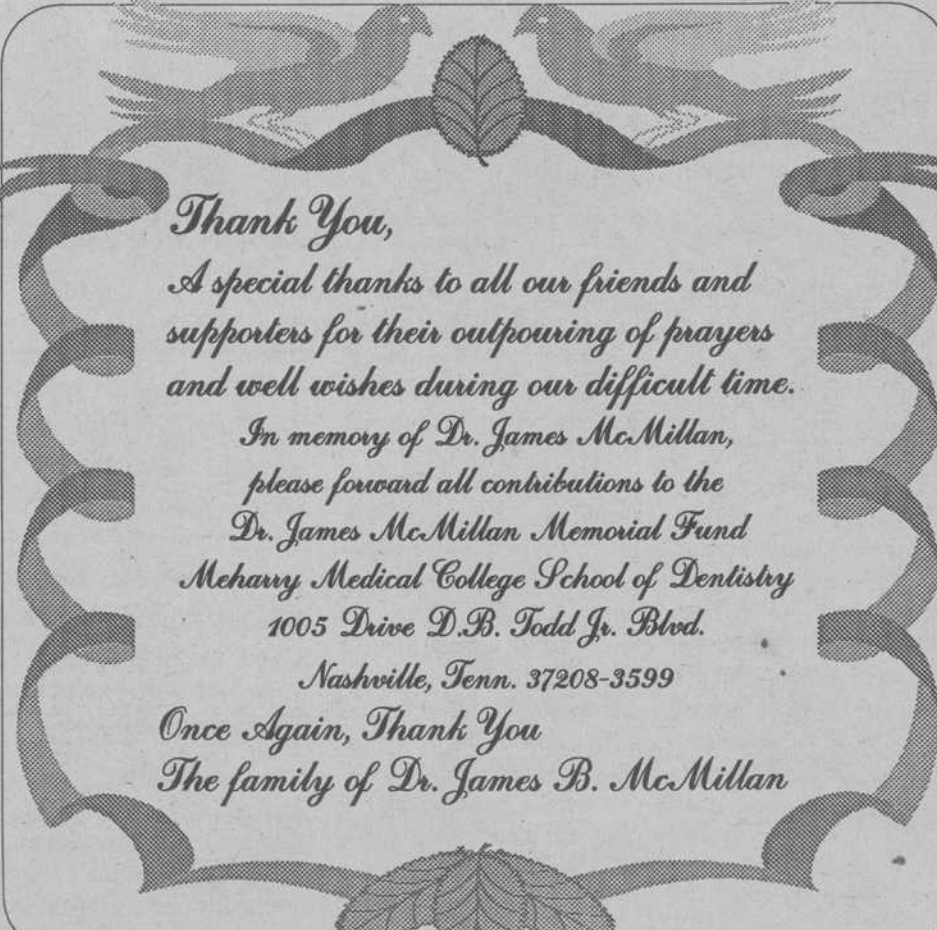


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Once Again, Thank You
The family of Dr. James B. McMillan