

Clark County among top 10 in AIDS infection

John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

"Westside, We've finally been put on the map! One of the highest HIV infection rates in the nation."

Billboards touting this sobering fact will soon be placed around West Las Vegas. Donrey Media Group is donating the billboards. Fighting Aids in our Community, F.A.C.T. is providing the message.

F.A.C.T. recently held an intervention program June 21 to educate the community about the risks of AIDS.



WENDELL WILLIAMS

"For far too long this community has been on the outskirts for information

about AIDS," Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson-Gates said. "We need to do the right thing and get information out."

Clark County has the ninth highest rate of new HIV cases in the nation. Twenty percent of those cases lie the 89106 zip code region. Sixty percent of all new HIV/AIDS infections in Clark County are African-American.

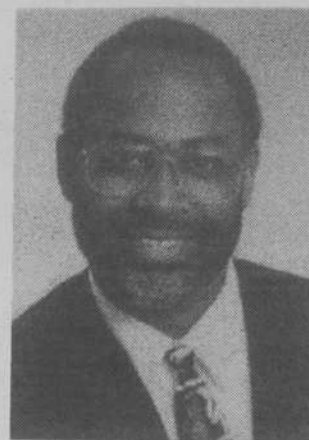
AIDS is the fastest growing disease and No. 1 killer of African-American women between the ages of 25 and 44. Every 45 minutes, a child between the ages of

13 and 19, is infected with the AIDS virus.

"We need education in the schools. If they (children) don't know about AIDS, they won't have a future," said Hydea Broadbent, 15.

Broadbent, who has AIDS, has toured the nation raising awareness. She recently received the 1999 Essence Humanitarian Award for her work.

"I do what I do (tour the country and speak to adults and children about AIDS prevention) so that others don't have to go through what



MORSE ARBERRY

I go through," she said.

"The awareness of AIDS is a great value to me," said

Olympic champion Jackie Joyner-Kersey, in attendance for the event. "People need to understand that AIDS does not discriminate."

"The message about AIDS and its prevention must get out to the community," Assemblyman Morse Arberry said, who also came.

"This is extremely encouraging. A bold statement is being made here," said Assemblyman Wendell Williams. "A community initiative where the community is willing to pitch in and deal with the problem."

Plaza heralds new beginning on MLK Blvd.

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

The grand opening of Martin Luther King Plaza Sunday on the northeast corner of Washington and the street named in honor of the slain civil rights leader proved to be a festive and celebratory affair.

Officials such as Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson-Gates and Councilman Gary Reese mingled with the 50 or so community members who came out in the heat of the day to eat, drink and be merry.

Phaz II Accessories, formerly Head West, Larry's Sight and Sound, Studio 702 Hair and Nail Gallery, Hair Unlimited barber shop, and House of Flava are all neighbors within the new shopping complex.

"This is a means of

progress for the black community," said Booker Burney, proprietor of the plaza and co-owner of Hair Unlimited barber shop.

"Now we have Nucleus (Plaza) and the corner of Washington and MLK. We have quality, decent, first-class businesses. We're getting away from the mom and pop businesses... We're providing services that are essential to the community, all offered in one complex."

Four thousand square feet of space was added to the 8,000 square foot facility and there was new landscaping done.

The City of Las Vegas Redevelopment Agency paid for the improvements.

"The blend of businesses is great," said Kyle Heckard, co-owner of the clothing store House of Flava. "We cater to



Sentinel-Voice photo by Kimberly Edwards

Proprietors at the new Martin Luther King Plaza on 1000 Martin Luther King Blvd. expect brisk business.

the same clientele but we offer different services. It's working out for everybody."

Valencia Burch, owner of Studio 702, was elated about the success of her business since relocating from Los Angeles.

"This impregnates people with a new mindset about business on the Westside," said Burch. "We have thriving businesses. ...

"People think that if you have a Martin Luther King street or boulevard, it runs through the ghetto in whatever city you're in. It's like, 'Beware, you're on MLK.' They expect your equipment to be broken down and service to be poor, but it's not like that here. You get quality services from our businesses, and good customer service at comparable prices."

Mayor —

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"Everything is about the dollar. Business will revitalize the Westside and help make less crime," he said.

Robinson says that in her interactions with Goodman, she will stress economic and political opportunities, and redistricting as key issues for black Las Vegas.

"It's share the wealth time," she said.

Although he's not an insider like Robinson, political activist and local businessman Billy McCurdy echoed her sentiments that two of the major issues are representation in the form of political appointments and economic development.

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Overstreet

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two other committee members also did not meet residency requirements, David Rivers and Virginia Valentine, but still serve on the committee.

Although Rivers and Valentine may not meet residency requirements, according to David Broxterman, an administrative manager at the city, they would retain their positions because they fall under a grandfather clause until their terms end in June of 2000.

"This membership residency issue is a crock," said Barber. "The reason for requiring it really applies to the Attendance Advisory Zoning Committee, that deals with zoning for schools. The Bond Oversight Committee deals with district-wide school construction, so everyone should be doing what's best for the children in every school construction

project—where you live doesn't matter."

LuAnn Day, the current chair of the committee explained, "This is not personal. The Bond Oversight Committee concept was started in 1988. We decided as a group that we had no direction and we needed by-laws. We gathered information from the Community Relations Committee, the Attendance Zone Advisory Committee, and borrowed ideas from other organizations that we belong to individually to create by-laws. We started creating the new by-laws in January. Louis was present through the entire process and the only reason he was not reappointed was the residency issue."

Barber said that the by-law clause was orchestrated particularly to remove Overstreet.

"Firstly, two trustees got together and pushed this issue

behind closed doors, suggesting it to the committee. Then, instead of discussing this at a regular meeting, a special meeting was called on Monday, May 3, but the agenda for that meeting was designed to discuss RFP for superintendent and bond issues. It never said we would vote on the by-laws of the Bond Oversight Committee."

According to Day, Overstreet has turned the issue into something it's not by saying he didn't get reappointed because he's too

vocal. She said that Barber could have appointed him to an at-large position.

"There were only three at-large positions and the board already had nominations in," said Overstreet.

Barber said, "Dr. Cramm and Susan Brager railroaded the at-large appointments, so it wasn't even really an option. Cramm nominated Orlando Sandoval, who, incidentally, is also supposed to be serving on the committee the legislature set up to oversee the work of the bond committee. Susan

Brager nominated three people who had already served as at-large members. No one questioned it."

Overstreet didn't implicate committee members, but does blame Superintendent Brian Cramm for the pressure to rid the school board of him.

"This is part of Cramm's vow to get rid of all the

'unqualified blacks', according to his view, that former Superintendent Clark hired," Overstreet said. "Everyone knows that Cramm wants to eliminate black men in his administration. Plus, he's a Mormon bishop and there are three other Mormons on the board. They're not going to

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