

Health fair attracts hundreds

By Parker Philpot
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The community was urged to "Take a Loved One to the

Doctor" to get free health screenings and dozens of people in Las Vegas did just that. The day set aside was

Friday, April 30 in the Doolittle Community Center on 'J' Street. The health fair was sponsored by radio sta-

tion V-108. Announcers broadcast live on 107.9-FM from the all-day event. About 200 visitors attended, according to Frank Woodbeck, the station's general manager.

There were more than 15 healthcare provider booths. Free health screenings included tests for blood pressure, respiratory function, HIV, bone density, vision and others. During the event the announcers interviewed some of the medical providers on-air. Several medical doctors were there to answer questions and explain test results: Dr. Kodwo Dickson of Swanlake Medical Center; Dr. B. A. Hanna of General Surgery Solutions; Dr. Kelley J. Woods of Sole to Soul Podiatry; Dr. Conrad Murray of

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Sentinel-Voice photo by Parker Philpot

Dr. Conrad Murray, an interventional cardiologist with Global Cardiovascular Associates, Inc., converses with visitors at radio station V-108's "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day" health fair April 30 at Doolittle Community Center. Murry broached the function of the heart and ways to reduce risks of heart disease, among other salient health topics.

Jamaica invites Haitian refugees

By Dionne Jackson Miller
Special to Sentinel-Voice

KINGSTON (NNPA) - Nearly 500 Haitians fleeing violence and turmoil in their country have made the precarious journey in small, often over-crowded boats across the 160 kms of ocean separating Haiti from Jamaica since a political crisis erupted there in February.

When the boats appear off Jamaica's east coast, usually at the parish of Portland, they are often pulled to shore by local fishermen and their passengers welcomed by community members before they are turned over to the authorities.

In contrast, U.S. residents rarely see the Haitian refugees bound for their shores — their worn vessels are stopped by U.S. Coast Guard ships at sea and the asylum-seekers returned to Haiti — a process known as interdiction — in violation of international law.

The policy was spelled out by U.S. President George W. Bush on Feb. 25, as a violent rebel uprising swept from Haiti's north toward the capital Port-au-Prince, and fearful residents started fleeing the Caribbean island.

"We will turn back any refugee that attempts to reach our shore, and that message needs to be very clear as well to the Haitian people," announced Bush.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) described

the statement as, "the first time in more than 50 years that the U.S. has flagrantly rejected the legal and ethical obligation to protect refugees."

The policy has resulted in Washington returning 1,948

Haitians to their homeland in 2004, as of Apr. 26, already an increase over the 1,490 intercepted at sea in all of 2003, according to the Coast Guard.

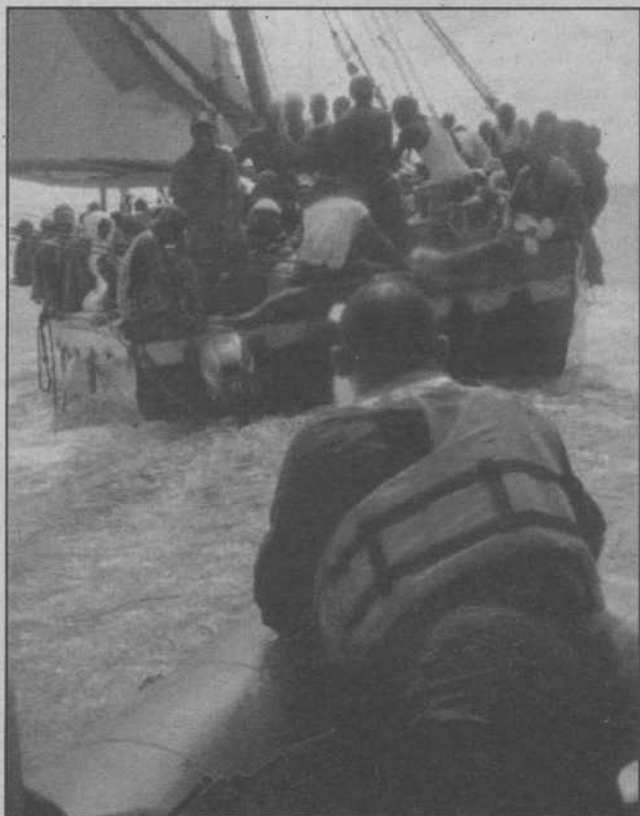
USCR's Director of Communications Steven Forester says Haitian refugees long settled in the United States, some with U.S.-born children, also face similar drastic measures.

About three thousand asylum-seekers who arrived in the United States by plane in the 1980s and '90s (known now as "airplane refugees") are at risk of being deported because they were not included in a law — thanks to a drafting error — designed to regularize Haitian refugees who arrived before 1996, he explained in an interview.

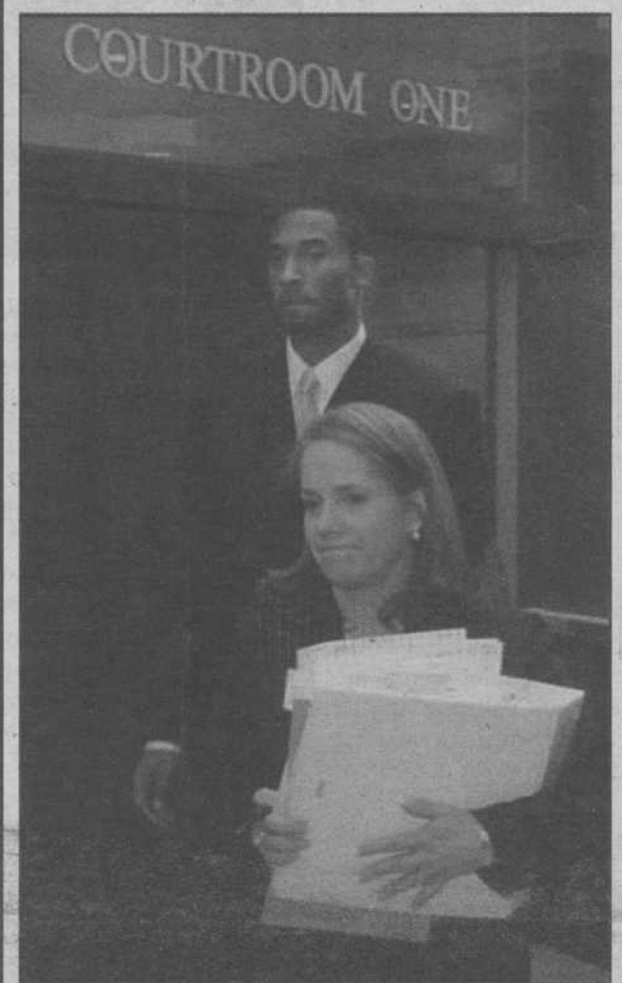
Some "airplane refugees" have already been deported.

"If our policy ... is to send a deterrent signal to Haitians — 'we want you to stay there and not to flee because when you flee you not only risk your life but you tax our Coast Guard and border patrol resources that are needed in the "war on terror" — if that's our reasoning, (then) to deport people who are produc-

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An interpreter (foreground) from the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Forward communicates with the nearly 400 Haitian migrants on board a dangerously overcrowded 50-foot sail freighter, in order to help maintain calm so they can be removed safely and orderly in the Windward Passage.



Los Angeles Lakers' superstar guard Kobe Bryant, accompanied by his attorney Pamela Mackey, leaves court during a morning break in a pretrial motions hearing at the Justice Center Tuesday, in Eagle Co. The NBA star entered a formal plea of not guilty.

Bryant plea: Not guilty of assault

EAGLE, Colo. (AP) - As the parents of his accuser looked on, NBA star Kobe Bryant pleaded not guilty to a rape charge that was brought against him almost a year ago.

At the end of a two-day hearing Tuesday, Bryant stood with his hands clasped in front of him. He spoke only four words during a brief arraignment on the felony count that could send him to prison for life.

"Yes, sir," he said, bending his 6-foot-6 frame slightly to speak into a microphone when asked if he understood the charge and potential penalty. Asked for his plea, he said, "Not guilty," and then sat down.

District Judge Terry Ruckriegle moments later adjourned the hearing, saying he might set a trial date at a May 27 hearing. Bryant flew back to Los Angeles, where he scored 42 points in the Lakers' 98-90 playoff victory over the San Antonio Spurs.

The trial must be set within six months unless Bryant waives that right. Both sides have told the judge a trial would take two to three weeks.

The parents of the 19-year-old accuser watched from the gallery, sitting about 20 feet from Bryant. The woman, who made a surprise appearance Monday to watch pre-trial arguments, was not there.

Bryant, 25, has said he had consensual sex with the woman last summer at the Vail-area resort where she

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