

The Grazer

(Continued from Page 1)
 the alliance for six years. Washington, a 47-year-old executive chef at the Rampart Casino on Rampart Boulevard near the Summerlin Parkway, said it is an opportunity to attract young Blacks to the business and show them that the alliance provides an environment where they can be nurtured.

To ensure the nurturing is there, the roughly 20 members of the alliance mentor young people pursuing careers in the culinary arts.

Alliance members talk with young people about working in the restaurant business and how to reach various levels from fry cook to sous chefs and all that lies in between.

The Grazer is key to the alliance's efforts to help rising star chefs because the proceeds from the event benefit the organization's Educational Scholarship Fund and various community service projects.

"We hope that some of our youngsters will use our scholarships to go to New York, New Orleans and cities where these top chefs like Emeril Lagasse are coming from and learn and come back and be able to take some of the positions here in Las Vegas. We want our young people to get involved (with the alliance) and learn so that they are ready to take on positions in any restaurant," Washington said.

Washington's counterpart, Williams, began his work in the culinary arts decades ago.

Williams served in the Air Force, retiring from service at Nellis Air Base in 1982 as chief of food service. He got the idea to create the alliance after discovering the difficulties Blacks were facing when trying to secure positions as executive chefs.

After observing the culinary landscape in Las Vegas and lack of Black chefs in key positions at Strip hotels, he began talking with other chefs. Ultimately, he learned that many Blacks working in culinary felt that a glass ceiling existed and there was no way beyond it.

In response he founded the alliance to help prepare them for positions when they became available.

About a year after the alliance formed, the first Black executive chef was named at the Sahara Hotel and Casino.

Williams was hired to fill a teaching post and is an instructor at the Southern Nevada Vocational Technical

Center. Teaching is perhaps the most vital part of culinary training, Washington said despite how much he misses the daily preparation of fare for his patrons.

"Culinary is multi-level. You accomplish the food training, you get into cooking competitions and you get into opening restaurants. At the executive chef level, where I am, you are in the educational field," Washington said. "Being on that educational level takes away the on-hand experience and that was a hard adjustment for me not being able to cook everyday because that is what I got into it for besides the money. Seeing that I could create something new, something that I liked, something that people liked was great."

Washington started in the

business at age 15 at the Marina Hotel now the site of the MGM Grand.

It was where the money was in the past and even today with the emergence of popular restaurants like Craft and Nob Hill at the MGM Grand, Picasso at Bellagio and Aureole at Mandalay Bay. Still with some 78 major hotels, numbers show that less than 10 percent of the Strip properties have Black executive chefs.

Williams hopes the alliance's work will continue to change that and support for The Grazer will provide scholarships that pay for college and the development of bright new chefs to take positions in Las Vegas. For more information or to reserve Grazer tickets, call 702-896-1929 or 702-271-8743.

Ferguson

(Continued from Page 1)
 filed against Southern Highlands Golf Club, LLC, as well as Southern Highlands/Christopher Homes, LLC, a federal civil rights action for violation of the federal fair housing rules.

In front of the federal building located on Las Vegas Blvd., the 50-year-old calmly expressed his feelings about anyone having to experience racism in any form, "I have fought against racism by White people, African-Americans and other people of color."

In a prepared statement, Ishman expressed disbelief that, in 2005, the alleged acts were happening in our community.

He asked that the whole community stand with the NAACP in condemning Southern Highlands' actions.

Asking for equal access to the golf club's facilities to which he is entitled as a Southern Highlands homeowner and member, Ferguson alleges that the property management is improperly withholding a large portion of his dues during the lawsuit.

During his dispute with Southern Highlands, Ferguson said he had recently experienced acts of vandalism, including egg throwing at his residence.

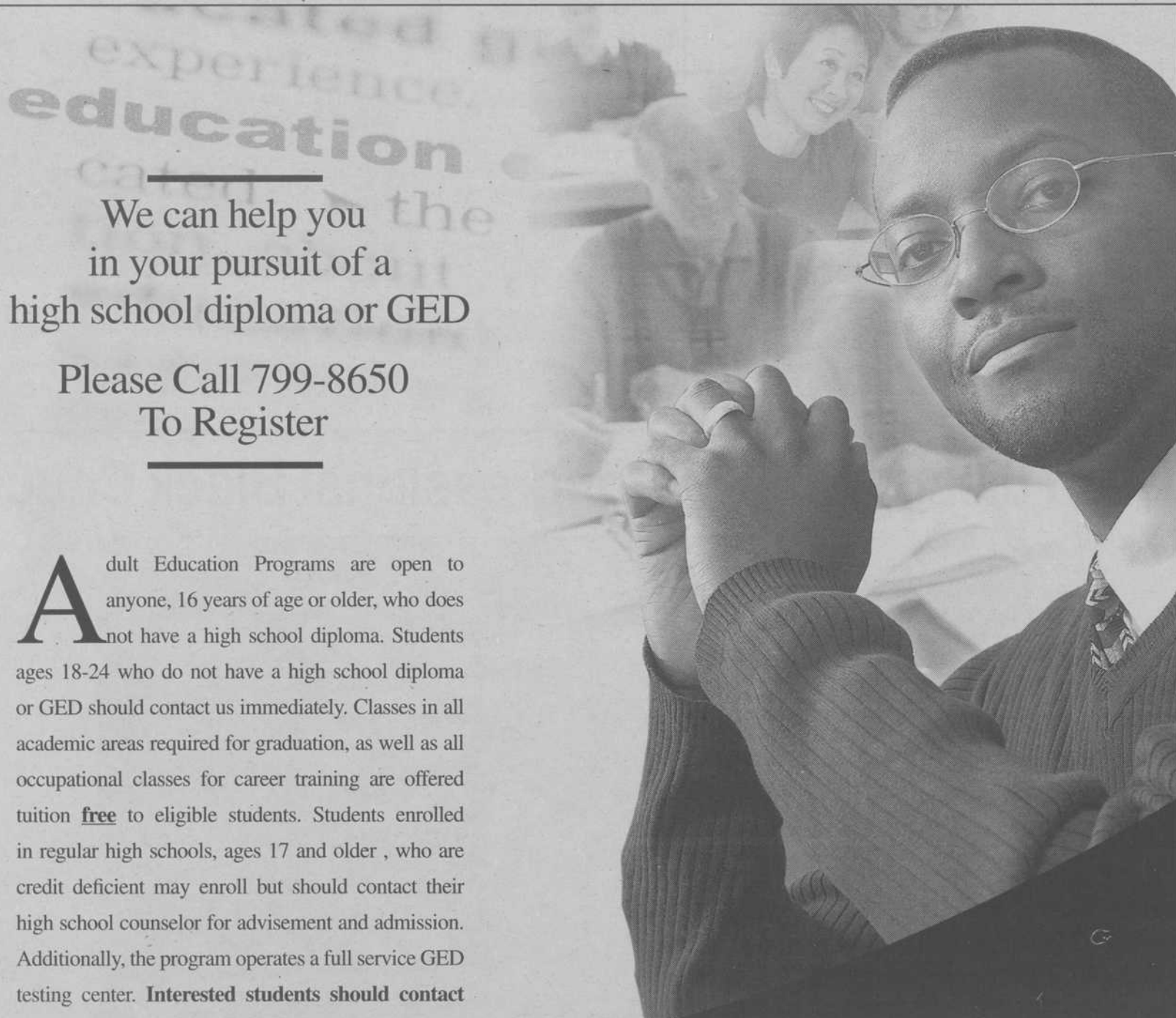
Ferguson, since relocating here from Marina Del Rey in southern California three years ago, feels he's living in a racially hostile environment where he is being spied upon by staff and residents.

Expressing that he never has experienced anything like this before, he is not holding all Whites responsible for these present acts.

"I'm the kind of person [who has] an eternal optimism. I believe in the best of mankind, not the worst. I don't judge people by things that they do that are bad. I judge by the good in all of us," Ferguson said.

Calls were placed to the management at the property, and Stan Spraul, general manager of Southern Highlands Golf Club, referred all calls and questions to attorney Mark Ferrario.

At press time no return calls had been received.



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Clark County School District ADULT HIGH SCHOOL

Adult Education Programs
 2701 East St. Louis Ave.
 Las Vegas, NV 89104

7:30am-8:30pm (Mon-Thur)
 7:30am-5:00pm (Friday)

Rancho High School
 1900 East Owens Ave.
 (Portable 2)
 N. Las Vegas, NV 89030

4:30pm-8:30pm (Mon-Thur)

Garside Middle School
 300 S. Torrey Pines
 (Room 809)
 Las Vegas, NV 89107

4:30pm-8:30pm (Mon-Thur)

Monaco Middle School
 1870 N. Lamont Street
 (Room 702)
 Las Vegas, NV 89115

4:30pm-8:30pm (Mon-Thur)

Nevada Partners
 700 W. Lake Mead Blvd.
 Las Vegas, NV 89106

8:30am-12:00pm (Mon-Thur)
 4:30pm-8:30pm (Mon-Thur)

Desert Rose Adult High
 1251 Robin Street
 Las Vegas, NV 89115

8:00am-8:00pm (Mon-Thur)
 8:00am-2:00pm (Friday)