

# MGM Mirage promotes family adoptions, foster care

By *Lés Pierres Streater*  
*Sentinel-Voice*

The MGM Mirage hosted an informational orientation session recently at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center to encourage its 70,000 employees to become part of the solution in addressing the need to find a suitable home for thousands of children waiting for adoption and foster homes. Earlier this month, a kick-off campaign sponsored by the Clark County Department of Family Services announced its "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent" program aimed at enrolling approximately 400 new homes by May of 2006 to help the 2,100 children in need of good homes.

The MGM Mirage, one of Nevada's largest employers, believes that as a corporate member of the broader community, they have a responsibility to help address the need to find homes for needy children wanting to live in a stable, loving, nurturing, and caring environment with compassionate parents. At present there are over 4,500 children of all ages awaiting foster care or adoption in Clark County, including over 100 older children who have been wards of the County for years between temporary placements.

Punam Mathur, Senior Vice President of Corporate

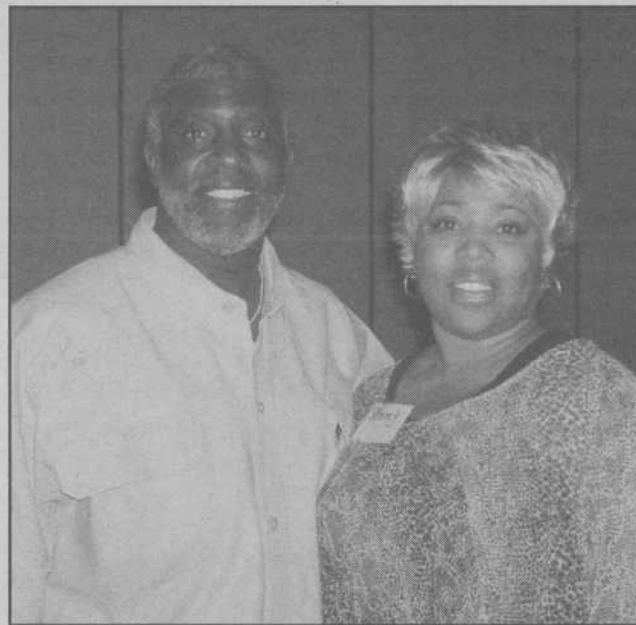
Diversity and Community Affairs for the MGM Mirage hosted the ceremonies for this event and welcomed the participants. Mathur has been an adoptive parent for the past seven years where she has adopted three children herself.

Leading off the efforts of the MGM Mirage to foster more involvement by its employees to provide foster care or adoption of needy children was Jim Murren, President, Chief Financial Officer, and Treasurer.

He told the audience, "Tonight's a night to help spread the awareness of a crisis that we have. There's a tremendous need to take care of the most vulnerable in our community, and that is our kids. MGM Mirage is very committed to getting the word out that there are some great opportunities for people to become foster or adoptive parents, and the company is going to help spread the word out to its 73,000 employees."

Murren announced that the company would be donating \$250,000 to Child Haven to assist in the care of children residing at that facility awaiting foster care or adoption, along with \$2,500 to MGM Mirage employees to help defray the cost of becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Clark County Manager Thom Reilly spoke on the



*Sentinel-Voice photo by Lés Pierres Streater*

**Gregory and Pamela Seals have been involved with adoption and foster care in Las Vegas for more than 14 years.**

significance of the MGM Mirage to support the program. He said, "First of all, the efforts that the MGM Mirage has gone through are greatly appreciated by the County... This is the culmination of one of many orientation sessions to introduce the community on what it takes to be a foster parent or adoptive parent."

Reilly continued, "We hope to entice, and excite individuals to begin the process of foster care or adoption, and if we get them hooked with the training and background check, then hopefully they can become licensed to assist us with the tremendous

backlog of needy children waiting to be placed with a loving family."

He concluded by stating that the county spends about \$100 a day for children residing at Child Haven, and many of those children stay there for months at a time.

Wanda Porter, management analyst and adoption/foster care trainer for Clark County, conducted the informational orientation session.

"This is a wonderful event that we're having here to-

night. We're looking to recruit more foster and adoptive parents, with the goal of placing children with 400 families by next May. We have a tremendous turnout here tonight and we believe that every child deserves a loving home."

Sharing information on the requirements needed to become a foster or adoptive parent, Porter stated, "First, you must be 21-years-old, having the basic necessities of an active telephone, transportation access, financial stability, a lifestyle free from drugs, alcohol or law enforcement difficulties, and a stable living environment being in a home or an apartment."

Other requirements are that you attend 18 hours of pre-service training, and have a willingness to accept children with a variety of emotional, medical, behavioral or other needs. Candidates must have a home inspection to determine that all safety issues have been addressed. Tuberculosis testing is required for all adults in the home.

In addition, participants must attend ongoing parent education programs.

Gregory and Pamela

Seals, two individuals who have been associated with providing foster care for children for the last 14 years, spoke about their involvement with this program. Gregory stated, "Our main objective in providing foster care to children has been to provide them a safe and caring environment where they can learn the concepts of becoming a responsible adult. This experience has taught me that I am a fortunate individual to be a part of someone else's life, who is not my biological child, and that I can help make a difference to, in a structured environment, with positive reinforcement."

Pamela said, "I've learned a sense of family, trust, and excitement from having children within our home. It means a lot to me to be a part of their development and preparing these children for adoption. The transition period of going from foster care to adoption can be tough, so we work in educating our children about this experience and prepare them for this final process. We've learned to deal with the good, bad and the unexpected. I encourage others to share their love and become involved with caring for children."

## Arena

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pass to wide receiver Kevin McKenzie to set up a 20 yard field goal that would give Colorado the win.

Crush kicker Clay Rush, who made two other field goals in the game, was privileged to kick the game winning field goal with the final second's ticking off the clock.

"The whole Georgia team is a great ball club. It could have gone either way today, and I'm just fortunate I got to knock it home," said Colorado Crush kicker Clay Rush.

After only three years in existence, the Colorado Crush is the World Champion of the Arena Football League.

"All we did this week was believe that we

had a chance to win this game. And what these guys showed us today is that if you believe in something, it can happen," said Harrell.

After the game, the legendary r&b, pop, jazz group, Kool & The Gang, topped off the Arena Football weekend of multiple venue events around town in style with a fantastic performance.

"With all the activities they had, they did a great job," said Georgia Force head coach Doug Plank.

After signing a three-year contract, including this season, the Arena Bowl championship game will be held in Las Vegas for the next two years.

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