

Agassi fundraiser nets \$9 million for students

LAS VEGAS (AP) - Andre Agassi's Grand Slam for Children netted \$9 million for the 580 students that attend the school his charity is helping to build.

Agassi's annual benefit, in its 12th year, is Las Vegas' showiest display of philanthropy, and it's the one with the speediest results. His favorite-son status as a Las Vegas native and direct connections to the casino industry marshaled construction of an entire K-through-12 school in just six years.

Agassi described the event as not just a concert "but a movement" and announced that the event had raised a combined \$8.1 million. The total was bumped up another million by a last-minute donation from Tuscan Suites and Casino owner Charles Heers.

When the school opened in 2001 with classes for third-through fifth-graders, Agassi began a race to build the rest of it in time for the first fifth-



The Andre Agassi Preparatory Academy continues to expand at Lake Mead and J Street.

graders to graduate in 2009.

Now, the nondescript exterior walls of the Andre Agassi Preparatory Academy, on Lake Mead Boulevard just west of Martin Luther King Boulevard, mask facilities rivaling private academies.

Every classroom has touch-screen whiteboards, and a full-production TV studio is in the final phases of construction. NBA players have tested the new basketball court.

"It's brick and mortar, you can feel it," said Michael

Ferenowicz, a vice president of Tamarack Resort, which is partnering with Agassi to build a Fairmont Resort in Idaho. "You can come here and not only feel the brick and mortar, but you can feel the love."

A ceremony the preceding day at the charter school was more low-key than Saturday's hubbub but just as important to those close to the cause. Pesky winds and rapidly cooling weather derailed plans for a dramatic

unveiling of a bridge connecting two campus buildings. It's a bridge students won't walk on until the day they graduate, and so far, said one school official, it hasn't been trod upon by anyone but construction workers and Agassi himself.

The bridge marks the completion of a \$20.4 million high school and gym, new space that will allow this year's 11th graders to become seniors at the school next fall.

The bridge is also symbolic in one of its prominent displays of corporate synergy. It carries the name "William J. Hornbuckle III," the late father of Mandalay Bay Resort's president and foundation board member, Bill Hornbuckle.

Agassi Prep still needs to pay down more than \$10 million in construction costs, and it wants to double its operational endowment. And then there's the scholarship money needed to get that Class of '09 into targeted universities such as Stanford and Yale.

"To deliver them on the doorstep to college and not get them in would be traumatic," Hornbuckle said.

With so many resources concentrated upon about 580 students, school supporters may need to battle donor's fatigue as the novelty wears off.

Admission to Agassi Prep is handled through a lottery.

About 800 students apply for about 50 spots. The lottery is weighted so that three-fourths of the slots go to youngsters within a two-mile radius of the school. The area is gradually becoming less residential thanks to new neighbors such as the FBI headquarters, but it still has more than its share of single-family houses.

The student body is 98 percent minority. School officials have not yet had to set a cut-off for maximum annual income and haven't heard of anyone moving into the neighborhood just to better their chances of admission.

Agassi Prep doubles the \$5,300 per pupil it receives from the Clark County School District. Parents sign a contract pledging participation and guaranteeing to get children to school by 7:30 a.m. for a day that's nearly two hours longer than those at public schools.

Future uncertain for SCHIP

Children's Nevada healthcare program safe for now

By Frank A. Albano
Sentinel-Voice

For the Gibsons, it was a matter of making choices. Then the SCHIP came in. "It gave us choices," Jonathan Gibson said, "Before SCHIP we had no coverage."

"For us the program allowed us to progress. We felt confident it was a great blessing. It helped me to succeed," Gibson, a working-class school teacher and part-time coach said.

SCHIP is the States Children's Health Insurance Program, which has been under attack by Bush and many right-wing Republicans in Congress. Bush recently vetoed an expansion that would have included more families with incomes a bit higher in the federal program. Democrats fighting to save the program had majority support in the Senate but a House disadvantage, which they will attempt later this month to maneuver in order to override Bush's veto.

U.S. Sen. Harry Reid stated: "We will work hard to override President Bush's veto because tens of thousands of Nevada children are counting on us. It won't be easy, but if a few Republicans will say no to the president and yes to children, we can renew and improve [our state's program] so Nevada kids can see a doctor when they need one."

In Nevada, about 31,000

children of working class families will be affected, but not for one to two years. Since there is a funding surplus, it's business as usual for the foreseeable future.

"We will continue to pay the bills, and we are still taking applications," said Betsy Aiello, SCHIP Nevada Coordinator.

"We had eight children all together and five living at home," Gibson said, explaining how the program aided his family.

"We have been on the program for about six years, from 2001 until recently. With the help of SCHIP, I was able to save the college tuition for my children's education."

Gibson said he found out about the program from co-workers. "I was unable to meet the \$470 monthly employer insurance premium."

Gibson said his daughter Shinaeah, now 17, needed minor surgery. An older brother, Benjamin, at the time was 15 years old and required extensive orthodontic work. Two other children, Jacob and Alma, 12 and 8 years old, respectively, were also covered.

"There were other minor scrapes and stitches," Gibson said, adding, "It was a huge benefit in case of emergencies."

SCHIP also covered dental care and eye care for the Gibson children.

He was quick to point out that he and his family no longer qualify for SCHIP.

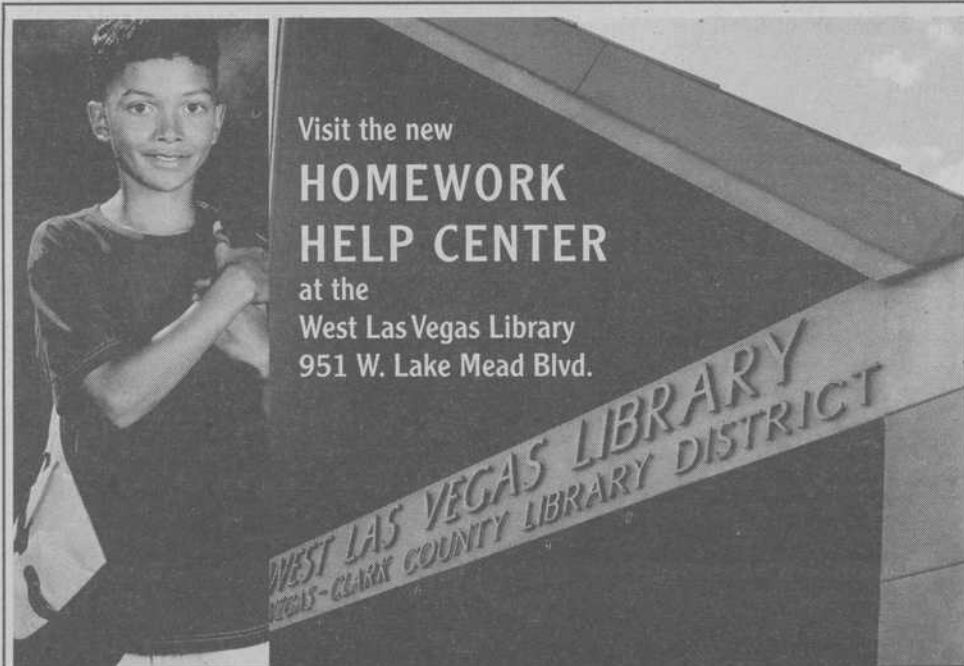
"We have made more money now and have fewer children living at home."

He said that he wrote a letter to the Nevada program in thanks because SCHIP positively "made a difference in our lives."

The Nevada Covering Kids & Families State and Local Coalitions will be conducting collaborative and coordinated activities statewide to increase enrollment and retention in Nevada Check-Up — Nevada's SCHIP Program — and Medicaid.

The project will include conducting and coordinating extensive outreach and advocacy activities, simplification of the enrollment and renewal process and the coordination of existing health coverage programs.

Nevada's program targets the entire state with two local projects. One covers the southern part of the state including Las Vegas. The second covers the northern urban cities of Reno, Sparks and Carson City and surrounding areas. Rural and frontier communities of the state will be covered through rural outreach and enrollment services in coordination with United Way of Northern Nevada, according to Aiello. For local information, call 1-877 KIDS-NOW.



Study Rooms | Homework Helpers | CCSD Textbooks | Support Materials

Computer lab with access to the Internet and the Library District's on-line Homework Help at www.lvccld.org featuring:

- Ask a Librarian
Librarians answer your questions through live chat or email
- Databases
Verified sources of information from magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias and reference books
- Live Homework Help
Free on-line tutoring for students in grades 4-12 in math, social studies, English language arts and science - also available in Spanish
- InfoGuides
InfoGuides highlight relevant library materials and services, on-line databases and local community resources for each topic covered
- Catalog
A kid-friendly source for library books, magazines, movies, music and more

All Library District services are free and open to the public.

Las Vegas-Clark County
LIBRARY DISTRICT