

BLAZING A TRAIL

Morris Fifth Grade Center prepares for opening bell

Trailblazers were known throughout history as those who lead the way and are determined to create a path to success. When the Billie and Kathleen Morris Fifth Grade Center opens in August, Principal Susan Blalock says teachers will be ready to help students blaze their own trail toward academic excellence.

The Morris Fifth Grade Center will be the second campus of its kind to open in the district and in the state. It will serve as a new beginning in the building that has served as Beverly Hills Intermediate School since 1964. The building is being converted to house the fifth grade center through funding approved by voters in February 2000 as part of the "Make Room For Children" bond program. The school will draw students from Atkinson, Burnett, Frazier, Jessup, Meador, Moore and Stuchbery elementary schools.

"We'll have an elementary school philosophy, while at the same time, giving students the knowledge and resources they will need to make a

successful transition into intermediate school," Blalock said.

The school is named after the late Billie and Kathleen Morris, who were both active supporters of Pasadena ISD. Kathleen served as a teacher in the Pasadena schools from 1955-1967 and touched the lives of children through her involvement in such organizations as the

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Girl Scouts, the Salvation Army, the March of Dimes, the Red Cross and the Lions' Crippled Childrens' Camp. She received the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce's Humanitarian Award in 1992 and was named the Pasadena ISD's Distinguished Citizen in 1997. Billie, a World War II veteran, worked for Champion Papers for 40 years and then became the Corporate Manager for Safety for S&B Engineering. He was an avid volunteer in the schools and served on

the Pasadena ISD Board of Trustees from 1968-1980. His involvement with children also included serving as a chairman of the Boy Scout Council and as an advisory board member of the Salvation Army. Billie and Kathleen were also very active as mentors in the Helping One Student To Succeed (HOSTS) program.

The academic plan for the school includes students receiving personalized instruction from teams of teachers in all content areas. Blalock said teams of three reading, math and science specialists will play an important role in tailoring instruction. Exploring the world of science is also going to be a vital part of the learning experience at the school and will conduct innovative instruction involving experimentation in five fully-equipped science labs.

Blalock said the campus will feature the latest technology, as mobile laptop computer labs will be located on campus. Technological applications also will be integrated into regular classroom lessons. In the fine arts and physical education curriculum, students will be able to choose from one of four fine arts courses, including art, band, choir or orchestra. An innovative physical education program that will utilize two gymnasiums will be offered to students. ●

'3C's' guide students at The Summit

Challenges. Choices. Change. Those three words describe the mission of The Summit, Pasadena ISD's new disciplinary alternative education center that will open to students at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year.

When school starts in August, two categories of students will be referred to The Summit. Students who are having persistent behavioral difficulties can be referred to the center. In addition, students who commit certain offenses must be placed at The Summit. Most of those offenses are drug or alcohol related. The campus, located at the corner of Beltway 8 and Pasadena Boulevard, will serve all high school and intermediate campuses in the district.

Chris Bolyard, The Summit's principal, said the goals of the school are to get students back into the regular classroom setting where they can be productive academically and socially.

"We plan to achieve this by each student having a positive healthy relationship with at least one adult on our campus," he said. "Teaching and learning can only happen through an interpersonal relationship. This is true for all students but it becomes especially important for students who are struggling."

Bolyard also said The Summit will follow the same curriculum timelines as the rest of the district so that students will return to their regular campus "on the same page." He added that the structure of the school is designed so that remediation and enrichment activities will occur daily.

The Summit will provide a student services program with four full time staff whose mission is to help students grow emotionally and socially. "The student services staff will also be aggressively reaching out to the needs of the family," Bolyard said.

Bolyard said it will be the job of himself and his staff to ensure that the "challenges, choices, change" motto becomes a part of students' everyday lives. ●

Principal Susan Blalock (center) is set to welcome students from the South Belt area elementary schools to the Morris Fifth Grade Center this year.

