

Santa Monica Daily Press

HARCOURT LEAVES KCRW
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We have you covered

THE YOUR BALL, COUNCIL ISSUE

Samohi wrestling with racist acts

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

SAMOH Victoria Gray didn't think much of it when her 17-year-old son stayed home from school on May 5.

Everyone needs a mental health day sometimes, she told him, thinking that perhaps he needed the extra freedom to get caught up on homework or take a breather from the pressure cooker of high school.

It would take another three and a half weeks before her phone rang. A woman Gray

SEE SAMOH PAGE 8

Man arrested for allegedly committing lewd act on child

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Editor in Chief

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY Police have arrested a homeless man with a lengthy criminal record for allegedly rubbing his body up against a 10-year-old girl, it was announced on Thursday.

SMPD Sgt. Richard Lewis said Thursday that Anthony Eugene Evans, 51, was positively identified by the victim after she pointed him out in a photo line-up, commonly referred to as a "six pack," because it includes six photos of potential suspects.

The girl was allegedly assaulted on Tuesday morning around 8 a.m. while she and a friend were on their way to school. The girls were walking in the 800 block of Montana Avenue when they noticed Evans following them, Lewis said. They went to a nearby Pavilions market to elude him.

While in the checkout line, Evans allegedly "rubbed" his body against the victim. When he was confronted, Evans quickly left the store, Lewis said.

The two girls left, went to school and notified administrators, who called police. Officers were able to get a good look at the suspect using the grocery store's surveillance

SEE ARREST PAGE 9



Brandon Wise brandonw@smdp.com

NO GO: Saint John's has been absolved by the Planning Commission of building a parking structure. The City Council has final say.

Angels singing for Saint John's Planning Commission nixes promised subterranean parking structure

BY ASHLEY ARCHIBALD
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL It took a list of neighborhood protections, a choir of supporters and almost \$1.9 million in benefits, but Saint John's Health Center is one step closer to getting a pass on a \$25 million parking structure it promised to build over a decade ago.

The Planning Commission voted 5-1, with Commissioner Jennifer Kennedy against, to recommend that the City Council approve the amendment to the development agreement that the hospital signed in 1998 when it began the process of rebuilding after the 1994 Northridge earthquake.

The decision didn't come easily, even for

supporters.

"I've been bandying about this more than I should," said Commissioner Ted Winterer. "It's the mother of all parking variances."

The amendment codifies an existing arrangement where the hospital leases out 450 spaces in the nearby Yahoo! Center and 95 spaces at Saint Anne's Catholic Church, located a few blocks south on Colorado Avenue.

By the time the hospital's first phase of construction is completed in 2012, it will supply 749 spaces spread out across its north and south campuses for a total of 1,528 parking spaces.

That's a slightly higher number than would have been achieved with the 1998 agreement that requires a 442-space subter-

anean parking garage.

The amendment is a gamble on City Hall's good will in many ways, however.

The hospital promises to deliver "functionally equivalent parking" to what would have been achieved if the parking garage was built, meaning not only the number of spaces, but also functionality and impact.

Should any of these things change, City Hall has the ability under the terms of the agreement to force Saint John's to build the parking structure anyway, on top of the other commitments spelled out in the agreement.

That concept of "functionally equivalent" came into question almost immedi-

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SAMOHI

FROM PAGE 1

did not know informed her there had been an incident at school.

According to the parents of minors who witnessed the alleged events, on May 4 before wrestling practice during sixth period at Santa Monica High School, teammates entered the practice room and saw a noose. Nearby was a wrestling practice dummy.

Varying reports describe the noose and dummy in different configurations. Although pictures were taken using students' cell phones, most if not all were deleted at the request of staff, according to multiple sources, including Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Superintendent Tim Cuneo.

Gray's son, who is on the team and is African American, walked past the dummy and noose into the locker room to change into gym clothes.

Two boys allegedly approached him in the locker room. One grabbed him in what Gray described as a "bear hug," while the other slipped a lock through his belt loop and connected it to a nearby locker.

The boys allegedly then walked back out of the room, shouting, "Slave for sale."

The wrestling coach, Mark Black, walked in on the scene and broke it up immediately. The incident was reported to administration that night, and counseling sessions were held for students that needed to speak about what they had seen.

That day, May 5, Gray's son did not attend school.

Gray was at work on May 31 when she found out about what had happened. Her son didn't tell her, not wanting to make a big deal out of it.

Although other parents on the team had been told, Cuneo said, for some reason, Gray was not informed.

"I apologized to her personally," he said.

Whether the juvenile victim wanted it to be or not, the situation was a big deal, said Darrell Goode, president of the NAACP for Santa Monica and Venice.

"When behavior comes out this darkly, it requires a high level of awareness and reaction to it," Goode said. "One, we have to make sure the victim is OK. Two, if there's a crime committed, we must make sure it's addressed appropriately."

Even the symbolic use of a noose is considered a hate crime in California, Goode said.

The school district does have a policy that deals with hate-motivated behavior that states that behavior or statements that "degrade an individual on the basis of his or her race, ethnicity, culture, heritage, sexual orientation, physical or mental attributes, religious beliefs or practices shall not be tolerated."

Students found guilty of perpetrating a hate crime can be suspended or recommended for expulsion, according to the policy, and must attend the appropriate counseling, sensitivity training and diversity education.

Counseling may also be provided for the victims. In this case, there was a workshop

the day following the incident, and a wider workshop held for all athletes subsequent to that.

"We expanded discussions at that level because we felt that when the horseplay you see happen between kids turns into something like this, we're concerned about it expanding," Cuneo said.

The two juveniles involved were punished under the hate-motivated behavior policy, which is the same as the harassment policy, Cuneo said.

WE WANT IT CLEAR SO WE CAN UNRAVEL THE WHOLE SITUATION."

Darrell Goode

President of the NAACP for Santa Monica and Venice

One of the boys is homeschooled, and attends one class at Samohi. The other is registered as a daily student.

They were suspended, will attend counseling and will work with staff to provide anti-bullying and anti-hazing workshops for incoming freshmen.

Cuneo met with Gray Wednesday afternoon to discuss what had happened, and what steps the district would take to shed light on the matter.

Gray had three requests: To send out a mass e-mail to parents and teachers saying that a racial incident had occurred, to create a separate document in the student handbook for students to sign regarding racial discrimination and to clarify punishment for the involved students.

A mass e-mail, sent on behalf of Samohi Principal Dr. Hugo Pedroza, was sent Thursday afternoon. It described the event as "an incident with racial overtones," but did not give details about what had occurred.

Cuneo did not agree to including a separate form, noting that harassment was covered by a wider policy that mentioned race, found on page 14 of the student handbook.

Goode, who also attended the meeting with the superintendent, called for a full investigation of the incident in its totality to clarify many of the points that remain uncertain, including the use of the noose and the positioning of the dummy.

"We want it clear so we can unravel the whole situation," Goode said.

Parents remain unhappy about the outcome, and ultimately worried for both the wrestling program and for its leader, Black, who they hold in high regard.

"He is respected, and loves my child," said parent Sherri Walker. "He helped her with her homework. He's a very rare coach who looks out for the overall good of the child, not just the athleticism of the child. Those boys did a discredit to him."

Cuneo confirmed that neither the wrestling team nor its coach were in jeopardy.

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