

New project provides chance for students to help minorities

By Tammy Hedgpeth
Reporter

Some minority children have the potential to be successful, both in school and in society, but often aren't given an opportunity, says Dr. Donna Wiseman, a Texas A&M associate professor in educational curriculum and instruction.

Wiseman and Dr. Patricia Larke, an assistant professor in educational curriculum and instruction, have designed a mentorship project that will pair area minority children with students in order to help the children become aware of available opportunities.

"We want to get the student who has many times been overlooked," Larke says. "That's one of our top priorities."

Wiseman says she hopes to get children who want to be academically successful if given the opportunity.

"We're going to look more at attitude — a willingness of the student to be involved," she says.

The participating A&M student will have a great responsibility, Wiseman says.

"Each kid will be matched up with an A&M student," she says. "A&M students will do things like tutor the minority student, keep in touch with

the student by mail through the summer and take the student to an Aggie basketball game or a MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society production. Funding will be provided for our students to do that."

"By working academically with the children, the A&M students will provide role models the children can look back on if they decide to become professionals."

— Dr. Donna Wiseman, associate professor

Wiseman adds that the project will be funded for \$300,000 through the College of Education and the elementary education department.

"We would not only like to help minority children with academic success, but we would also like to change their environment to show them the opportunities that are available for them," Wiseman said.

"By exposing minority children to higher education," she says, "the child's goal will hopefully change at an early age. By working academically with the children, the A&M students will provide role models the children can look back on if they decide to become professionals."

"Getting to know a college student

mind, Larke says.

"We are looking for undergraduates who work well with minority students," Larke says.

"We think most of our people involved in this project will be education majors," Wiseman says. "However, some people who are not education majors are interested, so we're going to have a screening where we will do interviews. We will select the ones who have the greatest potential success with this kind of project."

To qualify, the undergraduates will have to look at their degree plans and be available for at least three years. This part of the program lasts three years and will be an

ongoing program which would last six years, Larke says.

"We will start with sixth graders and hope this type of mentorship program will be available for students when they are high school seniors," Larke says. The A&M student needs to make a commitment to work with the same minority student for the entire three-year period, she added.

Wiseman says the long-term aspect of the program makes it unique. "That's what's different about it," she says. "Many mentorship programs are set up for short-term basis. But this is a long-term program."

She adds that this project may decrease the school dropout rate and increase college admissions.

In Texas, the school dropout rate is 33 percent overall, 45 percent for Hispanics and 34 percent for blacks, she says.

"One of our ultimate goals is to pool the students to go into higher education," Larke says.

Parent involvement is essential — both the child and the parents must consent, she says.

Neither the A&M students nor the minority students will be drafted, she says — both must volunteer and want to succeed.

FBI inspects S&L dealings for illegal acts

HOUSTON (AP) — Some savings and loan associations in Texas may have tried to disguise their financial weakness by trading non-performing loans or foreclosed assets, the *Houston Post* reported Sunday.

One of the Texas thrifts believed to have been involved in the practice was the former Mainland Savings of Houston, which had \$800 million in assets when it was closed in March 1986, unidentified industry sources told the newspaper.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Houston confirmed that it was waiting for the results of a FBI review of the matter, the newspaper reported.

While selling loans and other assets among savings and loans is not illegal, the trouble starts when loans or foreclosed assets are represented as being worth more than they actually are worth, experts told the newspaper.

The practice of passing along non-performing loans or foreclosed assets from one thrift to another is known as a "daisy chain," the newspaper reported.

"The typical thrift is not a daisy-chain operation," said Frank Anderson, banking consultant with Ferguson and Co. "I believe the really bad stuff involved no more than a dozen S&Ls."

Mainland appeared to have been active in moving non-performing loans around to escape detection by regulators, said W.W. McAllister III, chairman of San Antonio Savings Association.

The company was hired by regulators to manage Mainland's successor, AllenPark Federal Savings & Loan.

"There was a daisy chain," McAllister said. "The feeling was that Mainland was one of them."

Mainland was among five savings and loan associations mentioned by name as possibly having engaged in the purchase and sale of bad loans and assets among each other, the newspaper said.

Problem with housing in C.S. intensifies during summer

By D.A. Jensen
Reporter

The abundance of off-campus housing is a perpetual problem in College Station, and the problem intensifies during the summer, an employee at the Texas A&M Off-Campus Housing Center says.

Apartment complexes suffer high vacancy rates, and students struggle to find roommates to combat the costs of summer housing, says Cheri Zdziarski, who works at the center.

She says the off-campus center has more than 150 people searching for roommates to share an apartment during the summer and less than 40 who are interested in moving to another person's apartment.

"Typically, we always have more cards in our roommate service of people who already have housing because they have signed a lease and are obligated for a particular length of time," Zdziarski says.

More than 1,322 people utilized

the center in March. Some successfully found roommates, and others did not.

Janice Riggs, a junior general studies major, says, "During the first week of April, I called over 32 people trying to find someone to move into my apartment with me."

"All of those 32 people had either found a place to live already or didn't want to make a decision about their living arrangements until after the beginning of May."

"I can understand their reluctance to sign a lease too early in the month because it is worth the effort of looking around to find the best housing deal you can get."

"The people who already have places are trying to entice people to live with them, so they are offering extraordinary deals. There just aren't enough roommates to go around."

Brian Ratzler, a freshman accounting major, agrees.

"I wanted to stay in College Sta-

tion during the summer and go to summer school because the apartment prices were reduced at my complex, but I couldn't find anyone to move in with me," Ratzler says.

"I have so much furniture that I really didn't feel that moving to another apartment was an option for me," he says.

"At one point my neighbor and I were so concerned about finding roommates that we considered living together, even though her parents wouldn't approve of her living with a guy, Ratzler says. "I finally decided to go home to Dallas for the summer and work."

"Staying here isn't worth the hassle." If more students take Ratzler's attitude and leave town for the summer despite lower apartment rental rates, higher vacancy rates for apartment complexes may result, making it more difficult for students undertaking the roommate hunt.

Church members stand behind minister who attempted suicide

DALLAS (AP) — Church members offered tearful prayers Sunday for a Methodist minister who police say attempted suicide before they could question him about discrepancies in his account of the attempted strangling of his wife.

"In the midst of all the police and media reports that attempt to discern fact from fiction, and truth from sensation, we must strive to maintain the quality of mercy that befits the followers of Jesus," the Rev. Gordon Casad said in a statement read to the congregation of First United Methodist Church.

Casad told the congregation that the Rev. Walker Railey's condition has improved to satisfactory. But his wife, Peggy Railey, remains in critical condition.

"We must remember our pastor is troubled in mind and spirit, the depth of which only the future will tell," Casad said.

Friday, police guards discovered Railey in his hospital suite where he had been living since his wife was hospitalized last month. Railey found his wife lying unconscious on the floor of their garage early on the morning of April 22.

The *Dallas Times Herald* and *Dallas Morning News* quoted unidentified sources Saturday as saying a letter in Railey's suite said he was tired of pretending to be good, that he had fought demons for years and that suicide was the best way out.

The five-page handwritten letter

also contained instructions for burial, the newspapers said.

Police have declined to comment on the contents of the note.

Authorities also say threatening letters sent to Railey, known for his strong stands on civil rights, appeared to have been typed on a church typewriter. Police had examined the letters for any link with the attack.

Church members said after the service that their congregation sticks together and that their faith in Railey remains.

Van Baggett, who has been a member of the church since 1950, said, "I believe everybody is saddened and confused, as I am. But this is a strong congregation. We have to carry on."

Pentagon puts medical center plans on hold

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The Defense Department has taken the unusual move of going public with a counter offensive against critics of its Brooke Army Medical Center replacement plans.

"A handful of cantankerous and irresponsible general officers could be robbing beneficiaries of health care in San Antonio," David Newhall III, principal deputy assistant secretary of defense, told the *San Antonio Light*.

"Unfortunately, the egos of a few retired general officers who didn't get their way" have placed plans to build a new BAMC in jeopardy, he said.

The Pentagon's harsh language was aimed at a group of retirees, but the new hard-line approach was prompted by a proposal submitted last month by the retirees' champion on Capitol Hill, U.S. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez.

Gonzalez' proposal, if passed into law, would prohibit the spending of any money on the planned 200-bed facility until the Pentagon comes up with exact cost estimates.

The Pentagon responded to Gonzalez' move by canceling plans to break ground for the new facility and said they will divert the \$135 million authorized for BAMC to other programs.

Some officials believe the events of last week may prove to be a watershed in a battle that has gone on for nearly a decade and has raised passions more than any other local military issue.

A House-Senate conference committee meeting next month to resolve differences between the two versions of the Defense Department budget bills likely will produce a showdown.

Pentagon officials say they are fed up with the political uncertainty caused by Gonzalez.

Newhall said that if the "Gonzalez cloud" is not cleared up by this summer, "the BAMC replacement is dead."

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