

PENSACOLA News Journal

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2008

Provided by
Councilwoman Hill

CITY BUDGET SHORTFALLS



Gary McCracken/gmccracken@pq.com

Joseph Rojas, 12, returns a ball in a table tennis game at the Bayview Community Center. The East Hill center will be shut down throughout the summer beginning at the end of May, and the City Council will decide soon if it will remain closed until October.

Ax falls on recs

Pensacola cuts community centers, summer camps, public pool to save

Jamie Page
jpage@pq.com

The City of Pensacola likely will stop operating a community center, quit staffing another and shut down a popular public swimming pool for two years to cut its budget.

That would save the city about \$200,000 a year, part of \$5 million in cuts needed following state voter approval of a constitutional amendment that significantly will reduce property-tax funds.

■ The Roger Scott Municipal Swimming Pool at Cardova Park will be closed until summer 2010 for repairs and enhancements.

■ Bayview Community Center in East Hill will be shut down throughout the summer beginning at the end of May, and the City Council will decide soon if it will remain closed until October 2009.

■ City staff no longer will be provided at Malcolm Yonge Center near Old East Hill. Instead, the city has entered into a five-year agreement with the Southern Youth Sports Association to provide staffing.

The moves are being made because "we need to consolidate our resources," said David Flaherty, director of city parks and recreation. "There are going to be a lot of things we can't afford, but it will work out. People will get used to it."



Ben Twingley/btwingley@pq.com

Charles Morgan of the Parks and Recreation Department points out work being done to the Roger Scott swimming pool Tuesday. The pool will remain closed until 2010.

Bayview center

The city has been operating a summer camp at Bayview for more than 30 years. But it has had lower attendance than any of the city's five summer camps. Only 65 children participated at Bayview last year compared to almost twice that number at the Cobb Center, Fricker Center and Victory Community Center. Summer camp attendance at the Gull Point Center was slightly higher than Bayview.

That's one big reason the city is closing Bayview this summer. Further savings of \$50,000 will be seen if the council elects to pull the city out of programs at Bayview for an additional year.

Want to go?

The Pensacola City Council will hold its first budget workshop of the year at 3 p.m. April 14 in the second floor conference room of City Hall, 180 Governmental Center, downtown Pensacola.

City cutbacks



CITY BUDGET SHORTFALLS

Cutbacks

FROM 1A

Summer camp will still be held at Bayview. The building will be rented to the YMCA, which will run its own camp. The YMCA operated eight local camps last year and will have 11 this summer.

The summer camps offer swimming, field trips, skating, arts and crafts, movies, tennis, and a range of classes and sports.

The YMCA camp at Bayview is expected to cost more than the city's camp there, since the city has been subsidizing the program and the YMCA must break even on its costs.

Pensacola children were charged \$56 a week at the city's Bayview camp; the YMCA will charge \$110 for nonmembers, said Skip Vogelsang, director of YMCA of Northwest Florida. However, it's \$56 for YMCA members.

In addition, other programs at Bayview will be shifted to other city community centers, as will staffers. The majority of those program participants have been non-city residents, Pensacola officials said.

About a dozen programs have been offered to all ages, including belly dancing, ping pong, volleyball, dog obedience, Girl Scouts, art classes and boxing fitness.

Pensacola residents Jesse and Kris Edwards have been taking their 7-year-old daughter to the summer camp at Bayview. Now they're unsure where they'll

"If I had known certain things would get cut within the city or county, I wouldn't mind paying that extra property tax. But I understand they've got to cut something, and this is the least used."

— Pensacola resident Jesse Edwards

take her this year.

In addition, Jesse Edwards, 38, plays basketball at Bayview two to three days a week. He'll have to find somewhere else to play.

"If I had known certain things would get cut within the city or county, I wouldn't mind paying that extra property tax," he said. "But I understand they've got to cut something, and this is the least used."

Malcolm Yonge Center

By not staffing the Malcolm Yonge Center, the city expects to save \$40,000, a cost that will be picked up by the Southern Youth Sports Association, already a partner with the city on youth programs.

The city will continue to pay annual operational costs totaling \$42,000.

The East Jackson Street facility, built in the late 1950s, has one of the more popular gyms in town with at least 1,000 children using it each year, said Raymond Palmer, association director.

"Many of these children couldn't afford to go elsewhere for these activities," said Lumon May, a member of the association board. "The city can't afford to provide as much programming anymore. But we don't think the children should have to suffer because of the

cutbacks."

Brian Stallworth, 21, has been playing basketball about three days a week at Malcolm Yonge for several years. Now he helps the association as a coach.

"I appreciate (the association) taking it over. We wouldn't have anywhere else to shoot ball," Stallworth said. "There are 300 to 400 kids just in the basketball league who come here. The next closest place is the Cobb Center, but you have to sign up and wait to play."

The two city employees at Malcolm Yonge won't lose their jobs. They'll be hired by the association.

The Southern Youth Sports Association is funded mostly through community donations and some government grants. Malcolm Yonge is essentially the hub of everything the association is involved with. It partners with the city to provide baseball, football, basketball, cheerleading and other programs.

The association also has programs to provide tutoring and provide transportation to children so they can attend church.

Roger Scott pool

For the next three years, Pensacola residents will have only one city pool.

The more popular of the

two, the Roger Scott pool on Summit Boulevard, is undergoing about \$700,000 in repairs and renovations, which will keep it closed for two years. When it reopens, Cecil T. Hunter Municipal Swimming Pool on East Blount Street under Interstate 110 will be closed a year for renovations.

Critical leaks and plumbing issues at the Roger Scott pool are being repaired. When that work is done, further enhancement will be undertaken.

That means the Roger Scott pool won't reopen until summer 2016, a savings on operational costs of \$106,000 a year for the city.

Bill Brown, 72, has been using the Roger Scott pool since 1989, when it was a private pool. He said he's "really unhappy to learn" the pool he lives within minutes of will be closed for two years.

"We are sad and disappointed we aren't going to have a pool this summer or the next," he said. "Roger Scott has been a big attraction. It's going to be a real loss not to have it."

Enhancements at Roger Scott will include poolside spraying water features for kids, a fire hydrant that squirts when bumped, a zero-depth splash area, shade structures and a concession stand to be converted from a storage building.

"We like the pool as it was. I hope they have a pool that serves people of all ages, not just children," Brown said. "They said it will be bigger and better. I hope that's the truth."



NEW BALBOA JR. TEMPLE CIVIC CENTER
As it formerly housed the school.

\$85,000 Structure

City Civic Center Ceremonies Set For Thursday

Annual opening of the city's new \$85,000 Balboa Jr. Temple Civic Center is scheduled Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. The first ceremonies include a dedicatory service at 8:30 p.m. and a reception to follow. The center, located at Jackson street and 19th avenue, has been under construction since December.

The center, designed by Jackson Street and 19th Avenue, has been under construction since December.

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DR. J. J. ...

Amateur Astronomer Joe Rosenthal: Enthusiastic Star-Gazer

By ALY SIMON, News Staff Reporter

The heavens are a vast and mysterious place. To Joe Rosenthal, an amateur astronomer, the night sky is a treasure trove of wonders. He has spent countless hours peering through his telescope, chasing after distant stars and galaxies.

Rosenthal, who lives at 111 W. ... has been a hobbyist for many years. He has a deep passion for the subject and has spent a great deal of time and money on his hobby.

The purchase of a telescope is a significant investment for any amateur astronomer. Rosenthal's telescope is a fine example of modern astronomical equipment.

The other type of scope, which is the Galilei telescope, was used by Galileo Galilei in the 17th century. It is a simple design and is still used today for educational purposes.



JOE ROSENTHAL AND TELESCOPE
Home in its own

'Year-Around School'; No Football Team, Etc. 'Boca U' Program Will Vary From Conventional Methods

By BOB ...

The 'Boca U' program is a year-round school that offers a unique educational experience. It is designed to provide students with a more comprehensive and flexible learning environment.

Not Funny to C of C, Either

Have You Been 'Conned' Lately?

By ...

The author of this article is a member of the C of C and has seen many people who have been misled by false promises and deceptive marketing techniques.

The C of C is a well-known organization that has been around for many years. It has a long history and a strong reputation. However, in recent years, it has become a target for those who want to exploit its name for their own gain.

Building Started On Youth Center

The first spadeful of dirt toward construction of the \$78,000 Malcolm R. Yonge Youth Center was turned Wednesday by the widow of Mr. Yonge.

The center, named after the charter member of the City Recreation Board, will be located on the southwest corner of the intersection of 10th Avenue and Jackson Street.

Mr. Yonge served on the board 20 years and was chairman at the time of his death nine years ago.

Roger Smith, present chairman of the board, presided at the ceremonies.

The center, according to architect Ellis Bullock, will be of contemporary design with a laminated roof, supported by segmented circular beams.

The center will have a basketball court, two dressing rooms and shower facilities for players, a lobby, manager's office, restrooms, and a room in which to check personal belongings while using the facilities.

Ed Costner Construction Co. is the contractor and construction time is 120 working days.

Smith said construction of the center is the "fulfillment of a dream the board has had since its beginning."

Members of Mr. Yonge's family and recreation department officials, and Mayor Roy S. Philpot, were present for the ceremonies.

The center will be under the direction of James W. Hitzman, superintendent of the recreation department.

Looking up to him

Brooks spends time as role model, leader

By Bill Vilona
News Journal

The whistle blew and the chatter stopped. Derrick Brooks was calling order in the gym.

Players thin and wide, pint-size and full-size, dutifully sat on the bleachers to hear instructions from a former neighborhood kid who has grown into a role model.

It was opening day for the city's 3-on-3 youth basketball league at Malcolm Yonge Center. Brooks, attired in a Washington High T-shirt and Florida State shorts, emblems of his past and present career, was explaining the rules like any tournament organizer.

Of course, he is different.

"Imagine someone like me getting this kind of respect," said Dave McCormack, a staff member for Pensacola's Department of Leisure Services. "These kids listen to him."

The irony is that Brooks will respond to a different whistle in about seven weeks. That's when FSU coach Bobby Bowden starts preseason football practice.

In both positions, Brooks is being counted upon as a leader.

For now, he is spending his summer at home, giving back to a community where he was raised. Brooks is working for minimum wage as a combination counselor/organizer/referee/big brother to participants in the summer recreation basketball league.

HE HAS AN OFFICE in the Yonge Center, shared with fellow supervisor Ryan Erbacher, a baseball player for Chipola Junior College. And Brooks understands he has a responsibility.

"I used to come here all the time when I was a kid," said Brooks, 19, an FSU sophomore linebacker. "I didn't really have anyone to look up to. I kind of wish I had. It feels kind of odd for me to be thought of that way."

But he is. A couple blocks away, Brooks lives at his grandmother's house because of its proximity to the gym. He has told the players it is also their home, a place



Dean Saito/News Journal

Derrick Brooks chooses team members for a 3-on-3 basketball game recently at the Malcolm Yonge Center. The Florida State football player from Pensacola is working with young children at the center this summer.

they can visit for any reason, at any time.

"They know I have a key to the gym and I'll open it if they want to play at night," said Brooks, a 1990 Washington High graduate and the USA Today defensive player of the year. "I tell them to come down every time they get bored. It's better for them to do that than be hanging around on the street."

"Or if they just want to talk, I tell them to come down and talk."

His offer has been used. Children have inquiring minds. They ask Brooks about being a college football star, about the food he eats, about getting so big, about girlfriends, about anything.

"I FEEL GOOD about it," Brooks said. "I didn't really place myself in this position. It has its moments. I don't have much privacy. But I was once a kid myself and I know how it is to have someone to talk to."

The 3-on-3 league features divisions in 18-under, 15-under, 12-under. Brooks has drawn up a tournament bracket and referees the games with Erbacher. It will run through August, until the time Brooks departs for FSU.

BROOKS' POPULARITY extends well beyond the Yonge Center, which is located at the corner of 10th Avenue and Jackson Street. McCormack tells about Brooks' first week on the job, when he helped work a tennis clinic at the Roger Scott Center. When he was spotted, it was like Elvis had arrived.

"He was mobbed," McCormack said. "The kids wanted him to autograph everything, their rackets, their racket covers, visors. Those kids loved him."

"We're always looking for a Cadillac personality to help us, but we've never had one that was this hands-on. Derrick has been super."

In his minimal spare time, Brooks has to prepare for a football season. He lifts weights and watches his diet. For conditioning, he participates in half-court basketball games with the older players at the center.

"The gym is extremely hot. It gets me ready for the weather in Tallahassee in August," said Brooks, expected to be a starter and key member of the Seminoles' defense.

BROOKS KNOWS THAT most of these players will be unable to repeat his athletic success, so he has stressed the importance of staying in school and making good grades.

The Dial National Scholar Athlete of the Year as a high school senior, Brooks has made the dean's list at Florida State.

"I tell them it takes a lot more than talent. Once you get yourself established, you have to get a good education."

Want to submit an e

Fax items to 434-6241. Mail the News Journal, Sports Department, 32591 or e-mail to sports@per

Deadline

REACTION

Ready for fight night?

Escambia PAL set to host its third amateur show

Benny Allen

benallen@pensacola-news-journal.com

Local boxer Martin Downs might be 13 years old, but he already has had 19 amateur fights, compiling 14 wins and five losses.

And while he'll look to improve on that record Saturday when the Escambia County Police Athletic League holds its third amateur fight night of the year at the Malcolm Yonge Center, he never was prepared for what happened during the last show nearly two months ago during the first round of his bout.

"Martin came back to the corner after Round 1 — a round the other kid dominated — and he said, 'Dad, what do I do? He's left-handed,'" said Larry Downs, Martin's father and trainer, as well as the founder of the Pensacola Boxing Academy. "Believe it or not, in all those fights he had, he'd never seen a southpaw fighter. So, I told him what adjustments to make and how to handle it, and sure enough he went back out and dominated the final two rounds."

Martin's performance was so impressive after losing the first round, he not only defeated his opponent by a unanimous 2-rounds-to-1 decision, but he also won the award for outstanding boxer out of 60 other amateur fighters who competed that night.

To boot, the Pensacola Boxing Academy fighters won seven of the nine fights that evening, which also earned the troupe the award for best overall team.

And Saturday, Downs and the PBA, along with another local trainer, Kenneth Davis and his fighters from Pensacola's ShadowBox Academy, will try to duplicate that success.

"We're hoping to have even more (fighters and spectators) than we had last time," said Davis, who is aiming higher than the more than 600 combined boxers and fight fans who packed the walls of Malcolm Yonge back on July 22. This time, the PAL has invited 18 clubs from Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida and Alabama, and has received confirmation from at least half.

"These guys have been working really hard since the last fight," added Davis "and we expect everyone to be even sharper than before."

While the PBA and ShadowBox are separate clubs, each team's fighters train and workout at the Escambia PAL's boxing facility in West Pensacola. And while many of the fighters are making repeat appearances Saturday — guys like



Ben Twingley@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Local amateur fighters train at the Escambia County Police Athletic gym in preparation for the club's amateur boxing show Saturday at the Malcolm Yonge Center in Pensacola. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Want to go?

- **WHO:** Amateur fighters from Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.
- **WHAT:** Escambia County Police Athletic League boxing show.
- **WHEN:** 6 p.m. Saturday.
- **WHERE:** Malcolm Yonge Center.
- **COST:** \$5 a person at door. (8 and older).

Eric Kitt, Steve Benjamin, Jeremy Rand, Anthony Ramirez, David Hill, Martin Downs and Gai Vurachack — there also are a few new faces Downs and Davis say to watch out for.

From PBA, Ryan Mullins and Jeremiah Curtis will be making their amateur debuts, while Larry Downs' brother,

Chad, also will fight for the first time.

"Chad came to our last show, and as soon it was over, the very next Monday he showed up ready to learn how to box," Larry said. "Really, ever since we've started bringing boxing shows back to Pensacola, we've probably added 15 new fighters who just want to learn what it's all about."

From ShadowBox, Davis, a longtime boxing veteran, says to watch out for 240-pound heavyweight Yui Donatell and newener Ryan Meijsa.

"Ryan's been with us four or five months, but this will be his first fight," Davis said. "He's been coming along, but wasn't ready until now. The way I do things, I'll never put a guy in the ring until he can defend himself. And right now, Ryan's best defense is that he's got a good offense — because as long as you never stop punching, you don't have to worry about the other guy stopping you."

Council plans to pick company to repair roof

The Pensacola City Council plans to select one of three roofing companies Thursday that bid on the roof repairs contract for the Malcolm Yonge Gym.

Edwards Roofing Co. Inc. of Pensacola submitted the lowest bid — \$258,048 — for the contract. The gym at 10th Avenue and Jackson Street, sustained considerable damage to its roof as a result of Hurricane Ivan in 2004. Temporary repairs were made so activities could continue.

From staff reports

Bullock builds architectural legacy

Vision of future, appreciation of past mark long career for retiring planner

By Kimberly Blair
News Journal staff writer

Ellis W. Bullock Jr. talks about architecture with enthusiastic expressions, dramatic hand gestures and emotionally evoking words.

Architecture is not merely lines and space, although those elements are significant pieces to the puzzle, he says.

"Architecture is the visible manifestation of history," he says, then begins to describe 16th century European architecture, meanwhile drawing images in the air with his hands to illustrate embellishments of the era.

And whether people realize it or not, he says, architecture is the most studied by the general population.

"Why else do people travel to Europe? New York or New

Orleans? To look at the architecture," says Bullock, a high-profile Pensacola architect whose vision for design can be seen on numerous Pensacola street corners.

Fifty, and even 100 years from now, Bullock hopes people will study the buildings he and his firm have designed and see quality work. And perhaps glimpse today's society reflected in those designs.

Today, Bullock-Tice Associates Architects, Pensacola's largest architectural and interior design firm, founded by Bullock in 1968, is celebrating 40 years of design and honoring Bullock's official retirement with an open house.

It also is marking the second generation of the firm,



Ellis W. Bullock is retiring after 40 years.



Debi Loveland/Correspondent

The SunTrust Bank building in downtown Pensacola is one of Bullock's striking contemporary designs.

which has a new vision that will take the firm into the new century with the added service of facility management, president and CEO John Tice says.

reduce operating costs.

"And make best use of what they have first before they renovate or expand," Tice says.

"Our corporate mission is to positively impact society through the success of our clients," he says. "We trust our 1997 ranking by Florida Trend reflects the value of services our people provide to our clients."

Florida Trend's 1997 edition of TopRank Florida listed Bullock-Tice among the state's top 25 architectural firms, a rank that's a source of pride to Bullock.

Bullock began his transition into retirement over two years ago, leaving behind a legacy of award-winning interior and exterior designs — overly lung to be completely listed. Those who have worked with him applaud his vision.

"The thing that attracted me to move here, was his pioneering spirit. He is always looking to doing things newer and better," Tice says.

Tice moved from Nashville, Tenn., in 1979 to join the firm as marketing director. He became a partner in 1984.

Bullock's desire to become an architect was sparked by watching engineers draw, when as a teen he worked in

See BULLOCK, 7D

ELLIS W. BULLOCK JR.

IN THE NEWS: Retiring from Bullock-Tice Associates Architects, 909 E. Cervantes St.

NEW POSITION: CEO emeritus.

CAREER: Architect, Bullock-Tice founder.

HOMETOWN: Birmingham, Ala.

AGE: 68.

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Architecture, Auburn University, 1964; Pennsylvania State University Graduate School of Management, 1978; Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1977.

FAMILY: Wife, Ann Pope Bullock; sons Ellis W. Bullock III of E.W. Bullock Associates Advertising; Eibert Pope Bullock, Atlanta architect; Keith Bullock, architect with Spencer Maxwell Bullock; Frank Bullock, plant manager, Lamar Advertising, Albany, Ga.

HONORS: Chancellor of the American Institute of Architects, 1995 to 1998.

Gold Medalist, Florida Association of the AIA 1988 Community Leaders of America 1987.

Anthony L. Pullera Memorial Award (Outstanding Service to Profession and Florida Association of AIA), 1980 Who's Who in America 1975-1995.

FIRM AWARDS: 40 awards, including:

- Florida Northwest Chapter of the AIA Design Award for Excellence in Architecture 1982 for Saenger Theater Restoration. Also won Governor's Design Award in 1984.
- Florida Northwest Chapter AIA Award for Excellence in Architecture 1980, Educational Research and Development Center, UWF.

QUOTE: "Architects can truly enrich the human experience. They can enlighten it and enhance it. That is what we are all about, making nice, uplifting spaces for the people we are serving."

THE NORTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHITECTURE OF ELLIS W. BULLOCK JR.

- SunTrust Bank and office tower.
- State of Florida Regional Service Center (joint venture).
- Central Engineering Operations Control and General Warehousing, Gulf Power Co.
- University of West Florida

- Educational Research and Development Center.
- Pensacola Junior College Library.
- Woodham High School.
- Master plan and dormitories, U.S. Federal Prison, Eglin AFB.

- Pensacola Area Housing Authority.
- T.T. Wentworth State Museum (Adaptive reuse of old City Hall).
- PJC's Baroco Center for Advanced Science and Technology.
- NTTC Corry Station Bowling Center Complex.

- Helen Caro Elementary
- UWF Student Union.
- Okaloosa-Walton/UWF Joint Campus Fort Walton Beach.
- PJC Kugelman Communications Center, WSRE-TV Channel 23.



The T.T. Wentworth State Museum, above; and PJC's Kugelman Communications Center, right.



- Enlisted Men's Open Mess, Eglin Air Force Base.
- NCO Club, Tyndall Air Force Base, Panama City.
- Petty Officer's Open Mess, Pensacola Naval Air Station.
- Aviation Survival Training Facility, Pensacola NAS.
- U.S. Navy Commissary, Pensacola NAS.
- 75 Units Public Housing



Helen Caro Elementary School, above; and PJC's Baroco Center, left.

Want to go?

WHAT: Reggie Evans Basketball Camp

WHEN: Monday
Breakfast 7 to 8 a.m. Ages 7 to 12 from 8 a.m. to noon; ages 13 to 18 from 1 to 5 p.m.

WHERE: Malcolm Young Center

COST: \$10

INFORMATION: Call Woodham coach Benny Washington at 535-9044

Evans gives back

NBA player's 1st youth camp starts Monday

By Vikona

@PensacolaNewsJournal.com

Reggie Evans already had become an elite-level basketball player before realizing what he missed.

"When I was at Iowa, guys were always talking about going to all these AAU tournaments, all these big-time camps near their homes, and growing up in Pensacola, we never really had anything like that," said Evans, who played two seasons for the Iowa Hawkeyes and led the nation in rebounding in 2001.

"I never had anything to talk about."

He's hoping to fill that void for future Pensacola Bay Area players.

Evans, a Woodham High alumnus

Evans, who recently completed his fourth season in the NBA, continues charitable efforts in his hometown with the first Reggie Evans Basketball Camp that begins Monday at the Malcolm Young Center.

Response for the five day camp, which divides age groups into two sessions, has exceeded expectations.

"We're very excited about it," said Woodham coach Benny Washington, who is helping Evans with the camp. "Reggie really wanted to do something for the kids in this area to try and promote and grow basketball in this community."

"Many of these camps cost \$150 or more. Ours is \$50. Unlike a lot of camps, Reggie isn't just going to show up and wave. He's going to be there every day working with these kids."

"And when an NBA player takes a week of out his time, in the offseason, when he could be doing anything he wanted, I think that says a lot about the kind of guy Reggie Evans is."

See EVANS, 8D



Evans will teach at 5-day camp

FROM 1D

Here's another example: At the recent Reggie Evans Southeastern Tournament, a Pensacola event he sponsors, Evans was approached by a woman who couldn't find a size 15 shoe for her son. That's the size Evans wears.

Sporting goods stores typically don't carry sizes that large, and getting a custom-made shoe is expensive.

Evans immediately called his current team, the Denver Nuggets, and asked for an overnight shipment of shoes. He provided the young player with proper footing.

"Now, how many guys would do that for a total stranger?" Washington said. "But that's Reggie."

Evans, 26, was raised in Pensacola playing at gyms such as Malcolm Yonge and the Cobb Center. He rose from a hardscrabble neighborhood, got good enough to play at Coffeyville Community College in Kansas, then earned a scholarship from Iowa. After leading the Big Ten in rebounding for two seasons, Evans was signed as a free agent by the Seattle SuperSonics.

He's hoping the camp will help inspire other disadvantaged youths.

"In a lot of respects, we're still a football state in Florida," Evans said. "We're still crawling in basketball. I'm trying to open up some doors. A lot of good players may not have the exposure they need."

Washington said the week-long camp, designed for youths ages 7 to 18, will include a pizza party, gifts for players and the chance to ask Evans questions. It's part of his desire to connect with his hometown.

"He's a perfect example of a kid who didn't have much but worked his tail off ... and look where he's at right now."

— Benny Washington, who coached Reggie Evans at Woodham High School

"He wasn't one of these kids that came out of a luxurious area," Washington said. "He didn't have the best grades. But he's a perfect example of a kid who didn't have much but worked his tail off, didn't stop believing in himself and look where he's at right now."

Returning home has been a bit of a sanctuary for Evans. The NBA season was eventful.

The Nuggets have not decided whether to re-sign Evans or let him pursue options as a free agent. He was acquired Feb. 26 in a trade from Seattle.

Regarded as one of the NBA's most tenacious rebounders, he was accused April 30 of grabbing Los Angeles Clippers center Chris Kaman in the groin area while battling for a rebound. Evans was fined \$10,000 but not suspended

for the incident.

It has been the only negative incident during an NBA career that began four years ago. Evans was the first undrafted rookie to open a season in the starting lineup for the SuperSonics. He continually has proved himself as a rebounder.

"The biggest thing I have to work on right now is free-throw shooting," Evans said.

This week, however, it will be all about helping others.

"I wanted to get established in the league before I did a camp," Evans said. "I felt this was the right time to do it. The main thing I want to try and teach the kids is ... getting them to work hard, stay competitive, but most of all have love for the game."

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