

Taylor Home closes its doors

BY PHYLLIS SIDES
Journal Times

RACINE — Taylor Home is closing.

The agency that has served families and at-risk children is merging its remaining program, the Family Support For Gang Diversion After-School Program, with the Racine Family YMCA as part of the Strong Communities Agenda, executive director Delores Teale said Wednesday.

Taylor Home's two other programs, the Community Placement Program and the Taylor Education Center, ended in May.

"Things are happening at Taylor Home. We're undergoing a major restructuring after 135 years in town on the same property," Teale said.

Under the restructuring, the agency will no longer produce programs, but will support youth programs through the development of the Taylor Home Youth Fund, Teale said.

The property at 3131 Taylor Ave. will be sold and assets from the sale will go to the fund.

"The movers are coming Wednesday morning to move our equipment and by the end of August everything will be ready to go," Teale said.

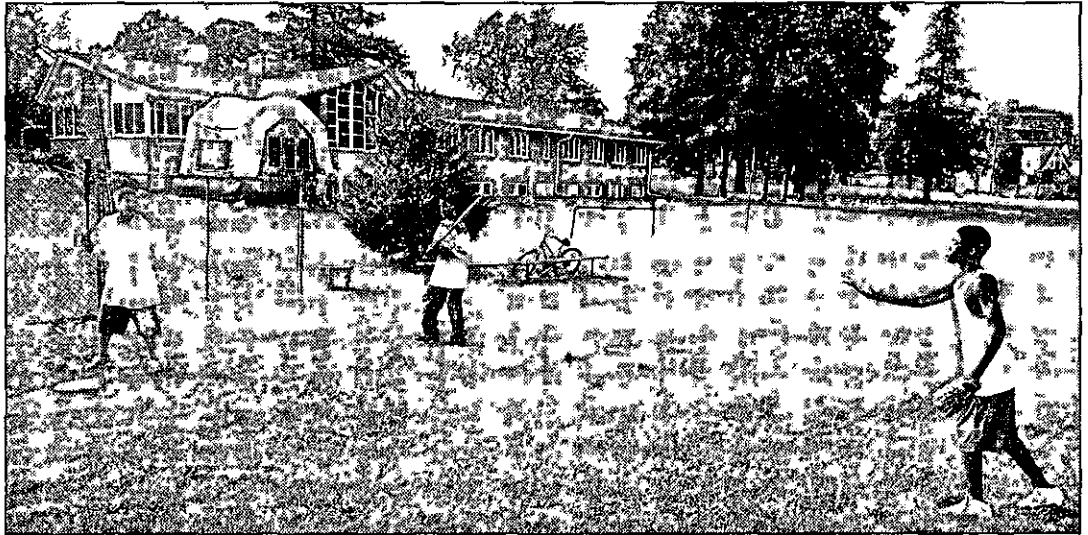
Initially, the fund's assets will be used to help provide funding for the after school program. The program will move to the YMCA and will be a collaborative effort, with programs under the YMCA Strong Communities Agenda.

The program will be renamed Young Challengers at its new location. Program Coordinator Beverly Hecht, two full-time members and one part-time staff member will continue in their jobs, but will work for the YMCA.

"We're blending resources to better serve at-risk youth. Our goal is keeping children at home and families together in family homes," Teale said.

The \$150,000 Taylor Home will receive from the state to help combat violence in Racine will go to the YMCA as pass-through funding, Teale said.

"We are very excited about this new relationship," said Mary Beth Ormiston, executive director of the Racine Family YMCA. "This is an opportunity to leverage our resources in the community. Our goal is to have a continuum of services that allows us to reach kids at an earlier age. That allows us to keep them in



SCOTT ANDERSON
Journal Times

Above: Kids play a game of baseball on the lawn behind the Taylor Home on Thursday. After 135 years, the Taylor Home will be closing. The foundation's assets will be used to support other programs in the city.



Left: Taylor Home was founded as an orphanage.

Photo courtesy of
the Racine Heritage Museum

AUG 19 2005 JT

our arms for a longer time. We will have a better chance to make sure they don't reach the judicial system."

The collaborating programs will provide a variety of opportunities that support a continuum of services for youth from ages six through 18 and their families. Young Challengers will join the Strong Community Agenda, which includes the Youth Leadership Academy, the Ophelia Project and the Teen Achievers Initiative.

The saying "The more things change, the more they stay the same" can be applied to the changes at Taylor Home.

"Our original mission was to establish and maintain an orphanage, and 135 years later we're still serving the same population. Then the children were called half-orphans, and today, 98 percent of the population we serve is still half-orphans, but now we call them single-parent families," Teale said.

Even though the Taylor Home is closing, the vision and mission of Isaac and Emerline Taylor —

P. 13A NewsTracker

LAST WE KNEW: Taylor Home ended its Community Placement Program and the Taylor Education Center in May.

THE LATEST: Taylor Home is closing. The agency is moving its Family Support For Gang Diversion After-School Program to the Racine Family YMCA as part of the Strong Communities Agenda. The program will be

renamed Young Challengers.

WHAT'S NEXT: The movers are coming Wednesday morning to move Taylor Home's equipment to the YMCA. The property at 3131 Taylor Ave. will be sold and the assets will be used to support youth programs through the development of the Taylor Home Youth Fund.

to serve children — will continue through the collaboration with the YMCA, Hecht said.

Taylor Home was founded in the 1870s. Isaac Taylor, who was born in England, was orphaned and mistreated as a child. He decided if he ever had money he would build a home for children. And since he had been mistreated by men, he stipulated that women would be in charge of the home because they were a "more

compassionate sex," according to a history of Taylor Home.

Taylor died in 1865 and his wife a year later. Almost half her estate went toward carrying out her husband's wishes. Also in keeping with his wishes, Emerline Taylor's will stipulated that women trustees, who were appointed for life, would annually elect four men "who could behave themselves" to serve with them on the home's board.

Budget cuts hit Taylor Home

RACINE

TAYLOR

P. 11A

BY MICHAEL BURKE
Journal Times

NewsTracker

RACINE — Taylor Home and Education Center has dropped two of its three programs, including one for students that the Racine Unified School District has not been able to handle.

The decision has forced Unified to rearrange its programs and take those youths back.

Taylor Home, 3131 Taylor Ave., had contracted for years with Unified to run Taylor Education Center, an alternative school program for middle and high school students.

Taylor Home Director Delores Teale said the center was closed last week "because of underfunding by Unified for the last 15 to 20 years." She said the funds have fallen short by an average of \$70,000 during that time.

"It was (kept in operation) as part of the Taylor Home mission, but there's only so long you can do that," Teale said.

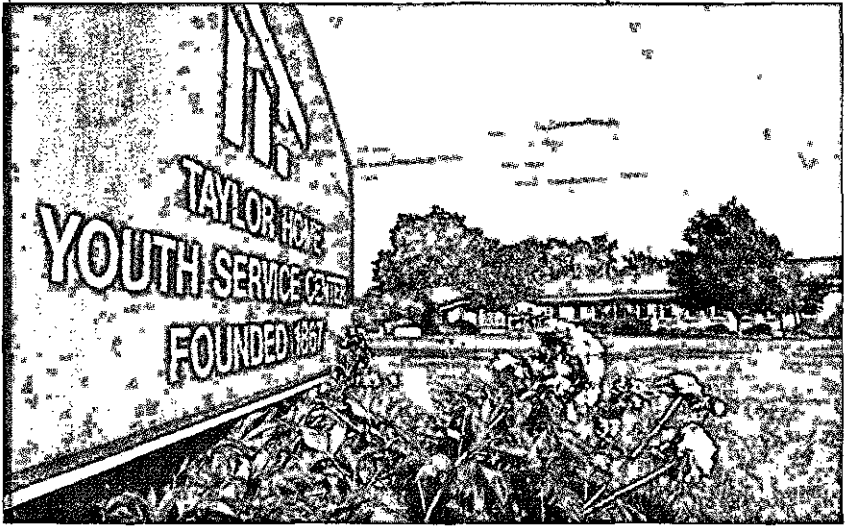
Jose Martinez, Unified's assistant

▶ More on TAYLOR, Page 11A

LAST WE KNEW: Taylor Home and Education Center had contracted for years with Unified to run Taylor Education Center, an alternative school program for middle- and high-school students. Taylor Home also started a live-in program for delinquent adolescent boys about a year ago.

THE LATEST: Taylor Home dropped those two programs. Taylor Education Center was closed last week because of "underfunding by Unified," according to director Delores Teale. The Community Placement Program for boys was cancelled because of low usage.

WHAT'S NEXT: Unified must take the youths who were enrolled in Taylor Education Center back into the system. The boys in the Community Placement Program will be served from their own home or in residential care centers in other cities.



GREGORY SHAVER *Journal Times*

Taylor Home, which started as an orphanage, has closed two of its three programs that served some of the community's most troubled youths. It closed the Taylor Education Center because of a continuing shortfall of funding from the Racine Unified School District and closed the Community Placement Program because of the county's financial pinch and relatively low number of youths involved.

JUN 15 2005 JT

K.A. Taylor

TAYLOR Home

From Page 1B JUN 15 2005 JT

superintendent for secondary education, said Unified was paying Taylor Home exactly what the contract called for. The amount was \$253,600 last school year. But he acknowledged it was less money than the program actually cost to offer.

Burned bridges

Teale said the program was "for kids who have burned their bridges behind them in other school programs. They have gone through all other options and then would come here." Those other options included the Mack Achievement Center for middle and high school students with various issues including truancy and criminal histories.

Taylor Education Center typically had 25 to 30 youths at any given time and about 40 to 45 during the course of a year, Teale said. Each student might stay for two or three semesters.

Taylor Home also dropped the Community Placement Program, a live-in program for delinquent adolescent boys. Community Placement, which was less than a year old, was done in collaboration with Racine County and Professional Services Group.

It cost \$150 per day per boy, and \$184 per boy per day for those with more complex issues such as mental health problems.

Where they'll go

P. 14A

Teale said the number of users was too low to justify continuing the program. May 31 was its last day.

Many of those boys, she said, will now be served from their own homes; a few went to other residential care centers in other cities. Racine County is looking for more cost-effective ways of doing things, Teale said.

"It really is a loss of services for the Racine community," she said. "So it's been very difficult." Rising costs for insurance, utilities and other needs forced Taylor Home to cut loose the programs that weren't paying their way.

Teale said some users of the now-defunct Taylor Education Center will likely return to the streets rather than to school. "There are some that were expelled," she said. "They had one more chance, and that's Taylor Education Center. And I don't know that there's going to be an option for those kids at this time."

Martinez said Unified will use what it calls Creative Options For Youth, comprised of some old and some new programs, to address various kinds of students. Much of that will happen at the Mack Center.

Unified will also add the Transitional Education Program in cooperation with Racine County Human Services Department and Professional Services Group, he said. The services will run from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for youths who have been through the criminal justice system. Most also have drug and/or alcohol issues.

The one remaining program at Taylor Home now is Family Support For Gang Diversion, an after-school program. Teale said the board will, in the next few months, decide what additional services to offer.