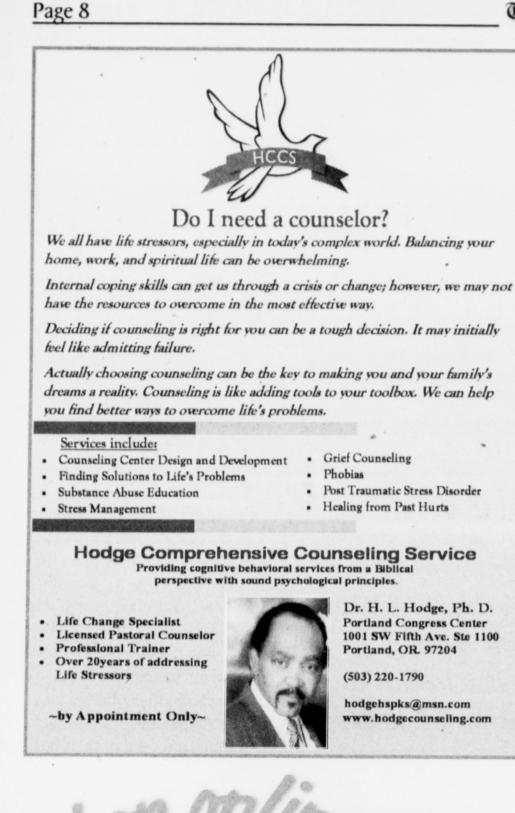
The Flortland Observer -



Homes for Seniors Mentoring Kids

Unique neighborhood rises on old school site

Bridge Meadows has broken ground of their new intergenerational neighborhood in the Portsmouth neighborhood of north Portland.

When finished sometime next year, the new neighborhood will offer families and children a unique intergenerational approach to traditional foster care by providing housing to seniors who want to become mentors to youth in foster care.

The program is modeled after a highly successful program in Chicago that has seen a 90 percent adoption rate for children within the program.

John Ball Elementary School site on North Willis Avenue will consist of 36 family homes and elder living units, a community center, and garfered at the new facility, including

An artist's rendering shows the design of one of 36 housing units that will form a new neighborhood on the grounds of the former John Ball Elementary School on North Willis Avenue.

reation options as well as commu- mission of finding safe and adop-The neighborhood on the former nity gatherings to celebrate holidays, birthdays, and special events.

"We are thrilled to break ground on the new facility. This project has been a dream," said Rhonda Meaddens. Many programs will be of- ows, founder of Bridge Meadows.

The non-profit was founded in after-school programs, summer rec- 2004 by Rhonda Meadows with the

tive family situations for foster children and at the same time, offering safety and meaningful purpose to the lives of older adults.

The project began with the hope of stopping the revolving door of the foster care system. The program aims to address adoption options for youth to prevent them from "aging out" of the foster care system and becoming at risk for homelessness, poverty, lack of academic opportunities and mental health problems.

Bridge Meadows will provide at risk children with not only loving. adoptive homes, but also surrogate grandparents, mentors and playmates. The program allows children of all ages and ethnic backgrounds that are separated from their biological parents the chance at stability, constancy and permanence with older adults serving as volunteers and living within the community can learn how their presence in the children's lives can make an impact. Parr Lumber has stepped up to donate the lumber as well as time and volunteers to organize the construction of the new facility. "We are delighted to be in a position to help the Bridge Meadows Project. It is a wonderful idea and we are confident that the new facility will help many within our community," said David Hamill, chief excutive officer of Parr Lumber. Support also comes from many caring citizens and the following sponsors: Windermere Foundation, Homer Williams, Legend Homes, Columbia Distributing, Mt. Hood Solutions, The Collins Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Ann & Bill Swindell's Charitable Trust, Juan Young Trust, Rose E. Tucker Trust, Juliet Ashby Hillman Foundation, Ray Hickey Foundation and Hedinger Foundation.



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The partners for the project include Guardian Management, Carleton Hart Architecture, and Walsh Construction.