



## CLOSEUP

Photographer David Yarrow back in Durango **1B**

## REVOLVING DOOR

DHS looks for a new coach after Holmes leaves **6A**

# THE Durango HERALD

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DURANGO

## Boys ditch Gametime for Wendy's restaurant

City day care program placed on probation after kids wander off

BY CHRISTIAN BURNLEY  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Durango Community Recreation Center is on probation with the Colorado Department of Early Childhood after two children went missing for about 30 minutes during a Gametime day care program on July 28.

A Durango Parks and Recreation incident report obtained by *The Durango Herald* in a records request described how Gametime staff members realized two 6-year-old boys were missing and the resulting search that led to the boys being found safe and unstressed nine blocks south at Wendy's fast-food restaurant.

"The Department recently completed its investigation of the incident and the city has entered an agreement with the state to continue operating childcare programs for the next nine months on a probationary status," Scott McClain, Parks and Recreation director, said in a letter to Gametime families also shared by the city in a news release. "During the probationary period, city programs will be required to follow additional requirements prescribed by the state."

According to the incident report, two boys were part of a 5-year-old cohort and were playing on a playground around 10:10 a.m. July 28 when a Gametime staff member placed them in a two-minute timeout for cursing. Five minutes later, a Gametime staff leader called for all children to gather for a snack.

When the children gathered at 10:15 a.m., staff members performed a head count and realized the two boys were missing. Two other boys from an older cohort informed staff members at 10:20 a.m. they saw the two younger boys walking toward the La Plata County Fairgrounds. Two staff members were immediately sent in that direction to search for the children, according to the report. All Gametime staff members were notified by radio

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Durango's problem-solving court connects residents with vital resources



Matt Margeson, municipal judge for the city of Durango, said his problem-solving court program aims to connect residents experiencing substance abuse and mental health issues with resources that can help. Graduates receive a certificate of completion and are celebrated at a ceremony at City Hall before court operations begin.

JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald photos

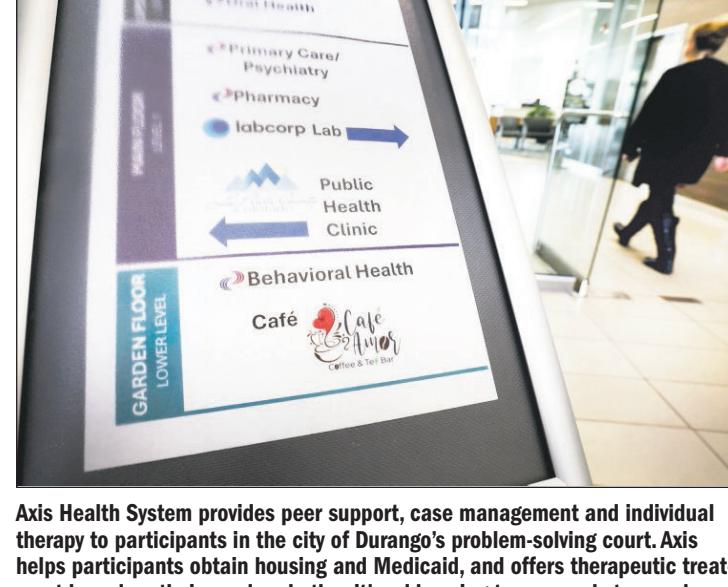
## A chance to move FORWARD

BY CHRISTIAN BURNLEY  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Overcoming substance abuse, mental health issues and the hardships associated with being unhoused isn't easy, especially with stigma, court fines or potential jail time hanging over one's head.

When Matt Margeson, municipal judge for the city of Durango, accepted his appointment to the bench in late 2023, he did so with a plan to connect people with resources they otherwise wouldn't receive.

It has been about a year since Margeson implemented a specialty program he calls problem-solving court. The program has developed a net-



Axis Health System provides peer support, case management and individual therapy to participants in the city of Durango's problem-solving court. Axis helps participants obtain housing and Medicaid, and offers therapeutic treatment based on their needs, whether it's addressing trauma, substance abuse or other mental health conditions.

work of resources between the court and community partners such as Axis Health System and Manna soup kitchen, which he said is improving defendants' lives.

Oftentimes, Margeson said, the program is about telling people what resources exist around the community – where to find help and how help can best be provided.

"It's really fortunate that we have such strong mental health agencies within our community, because most of the people that are entering this program qualify for free mental health assistance via (Medicaid)," he said.

The biggest challenge, he said, is finding housing for participants. The problem-solving

See COURT, **8A**

## Durango activists react to Minneapolis shooting

"This shakes us to the core," said Enrique Orozco-Perez of Compañeros

BY JESSICA BOWMAN  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and killed a woman in Minneapolis on Wednesday, making national headlines and sending national tensions – already running high – even higher.

More than 1,200 miles away, the shooting sent shock waves through immigration activists in Durango, where clashes between protesters and ICE agents have escalated at local demonstrations in recent months.

"This shakes us to the core," said Enrique Orozco-Perez, co-executive director of Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center. "Again, we always know there's a danger in rapid response, but to see an innocent person, who was a legal observer, who literally posed no threat with her car, get gunned down like that, is disgusting."

Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old U.S. citizen originally from Colorado, was shot in her vehicle after she began backing up and driving forward as masked

### INSIDE

BE AWARE: Police department issues guidelines for safe protesting. **8A**

ICE agents attempted to open the driver's side door. Her vehicle appeared to be blocking a street where protesters were demonstrating.

Federal officials, including U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem and President Donald Trump have said the shooting was done in self-defense after Good attempted to use her car as a deadly weapon against law enforcement. Many who have viewed the video contest that description of events.

Durango's immigrant-rights activists said the incident under-

scores how far ICE activity has escalated beyond constitutional bounds.

It represents a continued pattern of unlawful violence by federal agents in the face of peaceful activism, Orozco-Perez said.

It is not an isolated incident, said Beatriz Garcia-Wadell, Western Slope organizer for the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition. Durango has witnessed escalating violent techniques on the part of federal officers, she said.

ICE agents appear to be operating without forethought or anticipation of consequences, Garcia-Wadell said. The lack of strategy is deeply concerning, she said, and Good's death is a tragic result.

"That woman could be any of us," she said. "You don't even need to be the target."

Organizers plan an emergency protest in memory of Good and in solidarity with Minneapolis at 4:30 p.m. today at Buckley Park, 1250 Main Ave.

Fear, already heightened in Durango and throughout the immigrant community, has reached a new peak, Garcia-Wadell said. Since the shooting, she has heard that some are afraid to continue protesting and are debating whether it is safe to attend today's local demonstration in memory of Good.

"I'm terrified," said Franci Stagi, describing how she felt

See ACTIVISTS, **8A**