

Good call:  
NU's defensive  
coordinator  
picked the  
final play  
that ended in  
Hartzog's pick.  
**Sports**



It's Dorothy  
Lynch vs.  
Valentino's  
pizza sauce  
in first round  
of 'coolest'  
product contest.  
**Midlands**

# Omaha World-Herald

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

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NIKOS FRAZIER PHOTOS, THE WORLD-HERALD

The Child Saving Institute is finishing up a \$46 million renovation and expansion project, at 46th and Dodge Streets in Omaha, in time for a December open house.

## Child Saving Institute, Children's Square merge

The Omaha, Council Bluffs social services organizations formalize their partnership

**DAN CRISLER**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

The Child Saving Institute in Omaha and Children's Square U.S.A. in Council Bluffs, which have each provided social services for nearly 150 years, announced Tuesday they have merged.

Children's Square programs and operations have been absorbed and carried out by the Child Saving Institute, which will now have a presence in Iowa as well as Nebraska. The merger took effect on Monday but full integration, including software, will take months, the Child Saving Institute said.

The approximately \$750,000 merger formalizes a partnership that has become more apparent over the last couple of years, said Child Saving Institute President and CEO Jaymes Sime. He said the merger will add as much as \$10 million to the Child Saving Institute's operating budget next fiscal year.

With Children's Square having reduced some of its services, including the ability to provide foster care and the closing of a child care center, Sime said the time was right to merge the two organizations that had similar missions and origin stories. Children's Square and Child Saving Institute were founded by Christian ministers in the 19th century. Chil-



A look inside a classroom Tuesday at the Child Saving Institute. The institute will maintain services at its main Mary Holland campus in Omaha while also continuing to keep the Children's Square campus active near Avenue G and Kanesville Boulevard in Council Bluffs.

dren's Square will operate under the Child Saving Institute's name and organizational structure.

"We do a lot of similar things. We could probably do that under one leadership umbrella," he said in an interview.

The Child Saving Institute will maintain services at its main Mary Holland campus — which is finishing up a \$46 million renovation and expansion project in time for a December open house — at 46th and Dodge Streets. Sime said Child Saving Institute will continue to keep the Children's Square campus active near Avenue G and Kanesville Boulevard in Council Bluffs.

The Child Saving Institute said

in a press release that it is committed to retaining "as many staff members as possible" in the aftermath of the merger. The organization added most staff members have "transitioned into similar roles."

Sime said the Child Saving Institute will share the history of Children's Square, which was founded on Dec. 23, 1882, by Rev. Joseph Goff Lemen, according to the Children's Square website. The website said the organization's founding occurred when a man asked Lemen and his wife, Florence, to provide care for the man's young daughters.

Please see **MERGER**, Page A2

## Omahan gets prison term in '21 fatal shooting

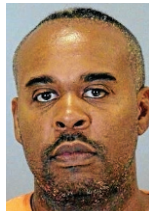
Sentence stems from killing of Creighton University baseball administrator

**DAN CRISLER**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

A Douglas County District Court judge sentenced a 47-year-old Omaha man to serve from 47 to 50 years in prison in connection with the killing of a Creighton University baseball administrator.

Judge Horacio Wheelock sentenced Ladell Thornton on Wednesday after Thornton previously pleaded no contest to being a felon in possession of a firearm. Thornton's sentence stems from the shooting death of 37-year-old Christopher Gradoville on Sept. 30, 2021.

Gradoville, who was director of operations for Creighton University's baseball team, had been delivering a toilet to a rental house he recently sold to a realty company near 61st and Pratt Streets when he was repeatedly shot by Thornton, who had been living in the house. Omaha police officers found Gradoville dead in the front yard.



Thornton



Gradoville

Please see **GRADOVILLE**, Page A2

## Ricketts says he disagrees with RFK Jr. on some items

**BEN DOODY**  
World-Herald Executive Editor

Sen. Pete Ricketts said Wednesday that he has "disagreements" with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. but expects to keep seeking common ground with Kennedy as the health and human services director faces calls for his resignation.

More than 1,000 current and former HHS employees signed onto a letter released Wednesday morning calling for Kennedy to resign.

Kennedy, a longtime vocal vaccine skeptic, has fired or laid off thousands of federal health officials. He's come under increasingly intense criticism in recent weeks after forcing the ouster of Susan Monarez as director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention just a month after

Please see **RICKETTS**, Page A2

### Plea to Congress

Jeffrey Epstein's victims implore Congress to act as the push for disclosure builds. **Page A3**

### Weather

**High:** 74  
Sun mixing with clouds  
**Low:** 52  
**Details:** A8

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20 PAGES • \$3.00



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## Omaha trauma nurse was proud 'girl dad'

Anthony Miller was known for dedication to patients at Nebraska Medicine

**JULIE ANDERSON**  
World-Herald Staff Writer

Anthony Miller was known within Nebraska Medicine for his dedication to patients and for the high-quality care he provided.

He worked in the surgical intensive care unit and later as an advanced practice provider in acute care surgery. He served as a charge nurse during the height of

the COVID-19 pandemic, where he strove to make sure no one died alone, and thrived under the challenge of trauma.

He won two Daisy awards, an accolade that recognizes nurses for their commitment to compassionate, quality patient care. In 2020, he was awarded the Carol M. Wilson Quality Award in Nursing. Named after a longtime nursing leader, it recognizes contributions to patients and students, commitment and leadership.

Please see **MILLER**, Page A2



MILLER FAMILY

Anthony Miller, wife Bailey Miller, and Annalise, 3, and Keely, 16 months, on a family trip to Disneyland amusement park. Anthony Miller was stuck by a vehicle and killed Aug. 31 while running.