

Community Got Behind Youth Center

The Marshall P. Riddick Youth Center, meeting place for organized groups from Overland Ave. School in Rancho Park, has a history which is the result of a community effort.

Originally the structure was erected as a recreation hall of Coast Guard 770th AAA gun battalion on Overland Ave. during the war. Harry R. Smiley, local resident, helped the men with their project by locating materials and equipment.

Through this association, Smiley was able to secure transfer of the building to the Crescent Bay Council of Boy Scouts on abandonment of the camp.

Through his efforts the project of converting the building into a youth house was undertaken and completed. Councilman Harold Harby of the 11th District, became interested and gave his assistance.

Ben Sheldon, subdivider and local resident, became interested in the work and made available the corner lot at Overland and Ashby Aves. upon terms of \$100 down and \$10 a month which enabled workers to go ahead.

George Olsen and Mrs. Mildred Reeder, and Mrs. Edward Virgin at a later date, devised ways of raising money for the youth house. The building was moved to its corner lot and prepared for occupancy.

Mrs. Edna S. Van Dyke, principal of Overland School, became first president of the board of directors. The center was named for Marshall P. Riddick, son of local residents, who was the first Scout from the area to lose his life in World War II.

Twenty-three youth groups use the facility. An annual donation from Hollywood Turf Club helps defray the yearly \$1,500 operating cost. Individual donations and Overland P-TA donations are used for the operating fund.

The Rancho Park Lions Club takes an active interest in the center and several months ago provided a new coat of paint both inside and outside.