

Dallasite has \$100M plan to restore historic Galveston hotel to glory days



Photos by Thomas B. Shea

Galveston's historic Galvez Hotel, which opened in 1911, is being refurbished as the Grand Galvez by Mark and Lorenda Wyant of Dallas. He paid over \$50 million for the 224-room property, but that's just half of what he expects the total cost will be.

Gussying up the Galvez

Mark oversees construction and operations for the Galvez project, while Lorenda supervises interiors — much as they've done with Wyant's three previous historical building projects in New Orleans, Charleston, S.C., and Key West, Fla.



GALVESTON — Mark Wyant wants to give the grand dame of Galveston a little spring to her step.

In May, the 62-year-old owner and CEO of Dallas-based Seawall Hospitality LLC bought the Hotel Galvez & Spa, the matriarch of Galveston's seafloor.

He's intent on bringing the 110-year-old property to her original splendor while adding vivacity to her personality.

He's changed the name to Grand Galvez.

"I want to respect its past and ready it for the future," Wyant said in an interview at the hotel along Galveston's famed Seawall Boulevard. "It's gotten into a bit of a rut. I want people to come here for its history and provenance, but enjoy its energy and vibes."

Wyant's wife, Lorenda, who is overseeing the hotel's new interior design, puts it this way: "It's got great bones and so much potential. It just needs a little love."

Wyant paid in excess of \$50 million for the 224-room property, but that's just half of what he expects the total cost will be. "By the time I

IDEAS AT WORK



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get finished with the redo, I will have spent well over \$100 million, absolutely," Wyant said.

He purchased the property from heirs of the late George Mitchell, a billionaire shale oil extraction pio-

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BUSINESS INSIGHT



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Forgoing vaccines exacting huge cost

If the health risks of COVID-19 aren't enough to drive more people to get vaccinated, what about the cost of treatment — or even health insurance?

In June and July, the estimated costs for treating unvaccinated patients hospitalized for COVID-19 were at least \$2.3 billion, according to a recent report by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation. In Texas, the total probably surpassed \$280 million, although researchers acknowledge the actual burden was probably higher in the state and country. They estimated that 113,000 preventable hospitalizations occurred nationwide at an average cost of \$20,000 a person. This doesn't include the August surge caused by the delta variant, which has pushed COVID-19 hospitalizations in Texas near the peak set in January. And it doesn't include the cost of follow-up outpatient care, which can be substantial.

The Kaiser report emphasizes the word "preventable." Because vaccinations are so effective at reducing hospitalization and death, the costs are viewed differently than a year ago, before we had a clear way to combat the coronavirus.

"We really wanted to focus on the avoidable COVID hospitalizations, to illustrate what they would cost taxpayers

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PERSONAL FINANCE



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Higher pay will benefit all of U.S.

Third in a series

A recent population report from the Census Bureau revealed the enormous increase in the elderly population coming our way.

■ By 2030, immigration is expected to be the biggest source of U.S. population growth, not births.

■ The old will soon outnumber the young. The shift is projected to occur in 2034.

■ Today there are 74 million people 18 years or younger, and 56.1 million who are at least 65.

■ But not long after 2030, the numbers will reverse so that we have 80.8 million seniors by 2040 but only 77.1 million youngsters.

■ By 2060, the number of seniors (94.7 million) will exceed the number of youngsters (80.1 million) by a whopping 14.6 million.

■ The very old will grow in number even more rapidly. Today, the number of

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DENTON COUNTY

Adults with autism have 29 Acres to call 'home'

Nonprofit is designed to provide programs, space for independent living

By **MORGAN GONZALES**
Staff writer

Jodi Bartek still tears up when she describes her realization 22 years ago that her then 18-month-old son Ryan was showing signs of autism.

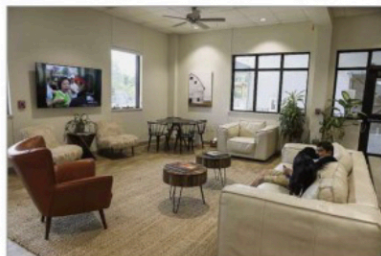
"I always get that feeling in the gut with that memory," Bartek said. "We always thought Ryan would live with us until we're old and gray."

For Ryan and 31 other adults with autism or other developmental

disabilities, a nonprofit organization called 29 Acres is giving them a chance to live independently with as much, or as little, support as needed.

Situated in Cross Roads, a small town on a major growth corridor in Denton County, 29 Acres consists of eight autism-friendly homes designed to create a communal living environment. It's bolstered by therapeutic support, partnerships with community organizations, employment resources and recreational activities.

So named for the acreage the complex is built on, the residential community opened to residents a year ago in the early months of the



Lola Gomez/Staff Photographer

Brandon Shoemaker, a resident of 29 Acres, visits with Penny, the community dog, at the Denton County facility designed to offer independent housing for people with autism.

COVID-19 pandemic.

The grounds include a pool, hot tub, walking trail and community center, as well as an area for goats,

alpacas and chickens that also call 29 Acres home. Residents and other

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