



JIM GRANT Tahoe Daily Tribune

at Heavenly Mountain Resort in now is expected to fall there this ay be in the mid-60s to low 70s.

## rs, starts wildfire

man John Miller said the agency was not releasing the identity of the adult male camper.

The camper, who was about a mile from where he started when he set the signal fire, had planned to join four other campers, who had set up camp before sundown after hiking up a drainage area in the forest.

"Federal criminal charges are pending review," Miller said.

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Stacks of papers and boxes hindered the battle against the blaze as well as the search to determine if others were in the Brentwood home.

By STUART SILVERSTEIN  
Times Staff Writer

A 68-year-old woman died in a fast-moving fire that destroyed a Brentwood home and, authorities said Wednesday, she was the only person inside at the time of the blaze.

Officials identified the victim as Ellen Pine Sengelmann.

They had been worried when the blaze broke out shortly before 8:30 p.m. Tuesday that her husband, semi-retired plastic surgeon Robert Sengelmann, might also be trapped in the house, based on information that had been provided by neighbors.

About 90 firefighters battled the blaze in the 2,400-square-foot, single-family house and searched for hours to determine if anyone else was inside.

By the time firefighters ended their search, no other person was discovered, although the badly charred remains of a dog were found.

Early Wednesday, a relative told authorities that the husband was out of town at the time of the blaze.

The firefighting and search efforts were complicated by the stacks and boxes of documents, believed to be patients' medical records, that were crammed into the garage and elsewhere around the 36-year-old, two-story home.

A relative said Robert Sengelmann was in the midst of moving to a new office and was temporarily storing his records at home.

Ellen Sengelmann, a nurse, had worked as an office manager in her husband's medical practice.

Brian Humphrey, a Los Angeles Fire Department spokesman, said there was no indication of foul play in Sengelmann's death, but an investigation led by fire officials is continuing.

As of late Wednesday, authorities had not determined

whether Sengelmann died in the fire or had succumbed earlier, and no conclusion was made regarding the cause of the blaze.

Damage to the house and its contents was estimated at \$700,000.

The fire was brought under control in about 30 minutes.

To keep the fire from spreading to nearby homes in the hilly neighborhood, 11 Los Angeles fire companies, with five ambulances, a helicopter and other personnel were dispatched to the scene.

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## Better mental health services are ordered for foster children

A federal judge tells L.A. County it must improve care and move faster on previous reforms.

By SUSANNAH ROSENBLATT  
Times Staff Writer

A federal judge has ordered Los Angeles County to improve mental health services for children in its foster care system and move faster to comply with reforms agreed upon in a past federal agreement.

The court finding, filed this week, validates the conclusions of an independent panel of experts that determined in August 2005 that the county wasn't offering adequate mental health services to foster children still living with their families and did not have a comprehensive plan to help them.

Panel members monitor the county's 2003 federal settlement to improve mental health services for foster children.

"It's an important case for the kids of Los Angeles County," said Kimberly Lewis, an attorney with the Western Center on Law and Poverty, who has been closely involved with the case. It is "not a small number of children that would be impacted by this."

The order this week will require county officials to screen all kids in the foster system, including those who still live at home; of the county's 40,000 foster chil-

dren, 23,000 live in foster homes.

It's important to treat children with mental health problems at home or in a homelike environment to keep them out of the foster system, Lewis said.

The settlement sprang from a class-action lawsuit by representatives of five children who said they received substandard care.

County officials say they are making progress.

The major point of contention is "the speed with which it's reasonable to proceed in the expansion of the specialized services," said Marvin Southard, director of the mental health department.

"In general, I think we have agreed with the panel that foster care kids need a wide array of support," Southard said. "We've come a long way in developing a plan that actually delivers these services. . . . We're trying to go as fast as we can."

Over the last few years, "the department has worked with the department of mental health to further improve its mental health service to children," said Louise Grasmehr, spokeswoman for the county Department of Children and Family Services.

Grasmehr cited the establishment of close to 10 hubs throughout the county that medically and psychologically evaluate children entering foster care.

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