

Source of pride: Construction of new Abegweit daycare nearing completion ^[1]

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Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 20 Nov 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTED

Abegweit First Nation is getting closer to establishing a stand-alone daycare building in the community.

A brand-new facility is set for completion by the end of the year or in early 2022. Last month, the First Nation announced it got \$1.4 million in federal funding so it could start the project.

For years, the community has been moving its child-care centre from one location to another. Gerard Gould, health director at Abegweit First Nation, says the process to get this started has been going on for decades.

"There was no money for infrastructure, there was no resources," he said. "We took the oldest building in our community and built upon that, and we noticed a need to grow over time, over years.

"We did what we can. We tried so many times to acquire new funding for a structure and it was quite a journey. So we're happy to be where we're at today."

More room

In the last three or four years, the daycare was at the community's Mawio'mi building. Gould said the lack of space there meant they had to move programs such as evening adult education to other places.

He said once the children move to the new location, they can start using the Mawio'mi building for other community programs.

"We can start repurposing the building that we're in," he said. "We're trying to address our mental wellness and health addictions around youth ... come up with ways and figure out what we can do for like a youth drop-in centre."

The new building will have a fenced-in area for a playground, as well as a break room for staff. It will have enough capacity for 32 children, with multiple rooms for different age groups.

Gould said finally getting the building will be a source of pride for the community.

"Our children are the future. Why not invest the best that we have in our future?" he said.

"It goes back to pride again, that we're taking care of our children and that we're trying to invest in them."

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[3]

Tags: indigenous child care ^[4]

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