

Despite complaints, Fanshawe College says it can't afford to maintain its day care [CA-ON] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Parents opposing the closing next month of the Fanshawe College day-care centre stepped up their fight with a fax and e-mail blitz. Brenda Tortola, whose son attends the day care, said supporters were urged to do the blitz Friday, "all in one day, so it'll have more impact."

She hopes the pressure will persuade decision-makers to find a way to keep the centre open.

Fanshawe president Howard Rundle said the campaign won't change the college's plan to close the day care June 30.

Fanshawe announced the day-care centre's closing in March. Rundle said the college had no choice because the Ontario and municipal governments don't provide enough funding.

Rundle said the college originally opened a day care because it was fully subsidized by the provincial government.

Provincial funding has since been eliminated and a subsidy program with the City of London is ending this year, Rundle said.

But parents say the closing will make Fanshawe "the only (college) of its size that doesn't offer this" for students, staff and college neighbours, Tortola said.

The irony is Fanshawe promotes early childhood education as one of its student programs and its ECE students use the centre as part of their training, she said.

Rundle said it's difficult to compare college day-care facilities because it's a municipal responsibility and each city decides on its own how to spend money on day care.

The centre has eight staff, who have now been offered job training for other positions at the college, and 55 children.

Rundle said closing the centre for good was a tough decision based on budget constraints.

Margaret Hoff, a longtime early childhood education teacher at Fanshawe and child-care advocate, said the province needs to recognize the importance of providing child care, rather than allowing it to be a casualty of local college budget deliberations.

- reprinted from London Free Press

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