

# Rural day cares spread out from Langruth hub <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

The planting April 28 of a lilac tree was symbolic for this day-care centre in western Manitoba.

"We're putting down our roots," said Tammy Gingras, the centre's program director.

When the Parkside Children's Centre was first licensed two and half years ago, it was located in rooms rented from a local florist shop. The day care had only one bathroom and was limited to hosting 10 children.

The day care's next stop was the basement of a United Church. That enabled the Parkside Children's Centre to accommodate 20 children.

Last November, the day care moved to its current location, a former laundromat converted into a place where up to 36 children can play and learn.

For parents such as Rhonda Buchanan, the day care is a godsend.

"I went from babysitter to babysitter," said Buchanan, describing the hassles of finding day care for her children before the Parkside Children's Centre was established.

"It was basically anybody I could get who was available."

Many parents in and around McCreary faced similar difficulties. That prompted parents such as Buchanan, a teacher with two pre-school children, to get involved with the effort to establish a rural community day care.

Parents were backed by the advice and experience of the Lakeview Children's Centre at Langruth, Man.

It has embarked on a project to bring quality child care to communities within a 75-kilometre radius of Langruth.

Six communities are now part of that network, with Langruth serving as the hub.

Much of the administration, such as the payment of salaries and monthly bills, is handled through the Langruth centre, minimizing the time and expense of administering child care.

"Without them, we probably wouldn't be here," said Gingras. "They've just been a wonderful support."

Gingras and Buchanan drew special attention to Jane Wilson, a director for the Lakeview Children's Centre and a driving force behind efforts to extend quality child care into rural communities that need it.

"If Jane wasn't around, it would have been a very hard struggle," Buchanan said. "She made our job a lot easier and a lot faster."

Wilson knew what red tape to expect when establishing a day care. She also knew where to find the resources to make it happen. And she helped select the building suited for a permanent day care in McCreary.

Wilson said part of the day care mandate extends into promoting farm safety. That includes providing children with a safe place while their parents work on and off the farm.

"We're not doing nine-to-five child care," Wilson said. "We're trying to meet the farmers' needs, the families' needs."

"My thinking is to build a whole bunch of these in rural Manitoba."

- reprinted from the Western Producer

**Related link:** CRRU ISSUE file: Rural child care in Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

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