

College child-care facility now in private hands ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

It was a bitter sweet day for staff at the Niagara College Child Care Centre.

Several parents and their children waved goodbye to its early childhood education workers as doors were closed for the last time.

Rosemary Horvat worked at the day care for 31 years, and was one of 19 workers who got into a limo Tuesday and capped off the end of an era with a meal and a chance for everyone to say goodbye.

"It's sad, but we decided to make lemonade out of the lemons," she said.

News that the day care would close was announced last year, allowing time for staff to seek other employment opportunities. The college then cited increasing costs of operation as a prime reason for closing.

The province's implementation of full-day kindergarten has put further financial pressures on licensed child care providers, including the college.

A private owner, Child's World, has taken over the college day care and staff were let go.

Lou Kelly, who worked at the day care for 36 years, said Tuesday was a sad day for everyone. All of the staff are Niagara College graduates from the early childhood education program.

The day-care centre ran in the community for 44 years. A number of employees, like Kelly, have worked there for more than 30 years.

Anna Sweiss has been bringing her kids to the day-care centre for the past eight years. The mother of three said she is always concerned about finding child-care providers who will treat her children as if they were her own.

"These women are not typical day-care workers. They are a family. They have experience and that's what I like about them," she said.

"They (the staff) were always understanding and my kids love them. My kids come because they want to, not because they have to."

-reprinted from the Tribune

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