

Chestermere parents scramble to secure childcare following daycare's abrupt closure ^[1]

Author: White, Ryan

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EXCERPTS

A temporary volunteer-run daycare has been created in Chestermere following the unexpected closure of a popular learning centre.

On Thursday morning, parents dropping their children at the Evolve Learning for Life Daycare Centre discovered the business had closed without warning. The centre, one of only two licensed daycare facilities in Chestermere, had announced it would close at the end of November and charged parents a deposit for the remaining weeks.

"It was really emotional," said Jennifer Alaric, a parent of an Evolve Learning Centre student. "The kids were all crying, they were all saying goodbye. They were packing up their bins."

Amber Griffen, the former director of the Evolve Learning Centre, was one of the employees who volunteered their time at the temporary daycare setup at the Chestermere rec centre.

"It was a 'What can I do with all my families that are here?' 'What can I do for my own child that is here?', 'What can I do for my staff?' and so we all just kind of banded together and picked up and moved," said Griffen.

Employees of the centre say they received their last paycheques on October 10 and the company owes them back pay. Latz Jessa, the owner of Evolve Learning for Life Daycare Centre, informed the staff of the closure via Skype stating a change in his financial situation left him unable to continue to operate the facility.

The Evolve Learning website indicates that 'the accounting and refund process has begun and any applicable refunds will be issued by check and in due course' but parents remain pessimistic.

"The type of person that closes the doors without notice doesn't seem like the person who is going to return our money, but let's hope," said parent Sarah Buckingham.

CTV Calgary attempted to contact Latz Jessa but calls and emails were not returned. Staff and parents suspect Jessa has relocated to the United Kingdom.

Several of the parents impacted by the closure have contacted the Chestermere RCMP.

-reprinted from CTV News Calgary

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