

Tunney's daycare receives rent freeze from Feds until 2019 ^[1]

Author: Mccooley, Paula

Source: Ottawa Sun

Format: Article

Publication Date: 11 Jul 2016

AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Tunney's Pasture daycare that was at risk of closing after its federal funding was revoked has received a lifeline from the Liberal government.

In June, Postmedia reported that Garderie Tunney's Daycare, which operates out of the Statistics Canada building on Parkdale Avenue, faced possible closure due to an almost 100-per-cent rent increase.

The non-profit daycare used by federal workers was initially set up in 1988 to foster a family friendly workplace environment and promote gender equality. Until 2014, a government subsidy allowed the daycare to operate rent free. But that changed under the federal Conservatives when they pulled the subsidy and the daycare's board of directors felt they had no choice but to sign a five-year lease at \$82,000 a year. That rental cost was expected to almost double to \$150,000 on July 1 to keep in line with "market value".

The parent-run board made pleas to the government and the media for help, and also drafted an e-petition to the Treasury Board for some leniency. On June 28, it received a letter confirming the existing rental rate will be maintained for another three years.

"It's good, it's good news," said Olivier Marois, president of the Garderie Tunney's board of directors, who has two children who use the daycare. "It allows us to be stable until March 31, 2019 and we'll be able try to implement some programming change to increase revenue. It gives us that flexibility."

On Monday, the department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the lead department on the file, issued a statement through its spokesperson Sabrina Foran. "The Government has come up with a measure to provide financial support to Garderie Tunney's Daycare. This measure is expected to help the daycare until March 2019. The Government is committed to supporting working parents."

Garderie now cares for 49 children and employs 15 full-time and three part-time workers, many of them early childhood educators. Going from zero to market rent in 2014 meant it immediately had to increase daycare fees by about 15 per cent and lay off a few workers.

To keep up with rising costs, the daycare asked for time to redesign the space to accommodate more children. An initial request to freeze the rent until an expansion was made possible was denied. Marois says having a three-year window before the next market increase is helpful and he's hopeful for the future.

"I think partially (the rent freeze) is because the Liberals made a commitment to gender equality and to child care," Marois said. "So I think they are somewhat bound by these commitments. And who knows, maybe by the time their term is up there will be additional funding and (they'll) revisit some of their (rent) policies for their daycares."

-reprinted from the Ottawa Sun

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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