

Kidcare Daycare answers community needs ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

There was a true community celebration on Friday when the ribbon was cut at the Women's Contact Society's new Kidcare Daycare facility on Western Avenue. Innovative, flexible and reflective of the needs of children and families, Kidcare is unique in the province and is the result of creative partnerships, hard work and vision.

Women's Contact Society executive director Irene Willsie said that the daycare will be open seven days a week from 5 a.m. to midnight for children 0-12.

Willsie attributes the vision behind the new daycare to Women's Contact Society daycare manager Beulah Munson. "Her passion for children and early learning is endless. She worked very closely with Sprucelee Construction designer Julie Hoddinott to design the building," she said.

"Sprucelee was so great to work with, the trades people were very accommodating and everyone was excited to build this daycare in the community."

She said that in 1982 one of the first needs identified by Women's Contact Society in the community was for quality day care.

"It was seen as a crisis. In 1990 the first Kidcare Daycare was opened --an innovation in its time focused on young parents who needed to finish high school," she added.

"That facility is still in operation. That was our first partnership with School District #27, who is still an important partner."

Shandi Warkentin wrote the proposal for the current Kidcare grant - no small task, according to Willsie. "The proposal went in the morning of the deadline February 2014 and in June we learned we'd been successful.

"There were times when we nearly gave up. Sprucelee Construction stepped in partnered with us, providing financing for us in a very generous way. These are the people who made this project possible."

She offered a heartfelt thank-you to Cariboo Chilcotin MLA Donna Barnett for advocating for funding from the B.C. Government.

"I had an easy job. It was such a great application that showed a great need in a great community," Barnett stated.

"This is a huge benefit to Williams Lake. You will be the envy of every community in British Columbia."

Kidcare has created 22 new jobs and is fully-staffed with qualified personnel. Fully up and running, it will service 300 families in the community.

Bryan Neufeld and Daryl Dyck from Sprucelee Construction said that it was a real privilege to work with people who are so passionate to help the community, who put their hearts and souls into serving the needs of children and families.

Willsie said funding and support came from the province for major capital funding, School District for the land, Northern Development Initiative Trust, Cariboo Regional District and the City of Williams Lake. She thanked Tolko, West Fraser, United Concrete, Home Hardware, D and S Electric, Purdy Cabinets, United Floors, O-Netrix, Tell Tale Signs, Williams Lake Rotary Club, Daybreak Rotary Club, as well as many individuals who donated time, items and expertise to the project.

The facility includes four program rooms with age-appropriate toys, with a wide variety of experiences for kids, including climbing walls and lofts. There is a playground outside that includes a tricycle race track.

Each classroom has its own bathrooms, and in the infant toddler rooms there are small toilets and sinks to encourage independence and self-reliance. There is a fully-equipped, fully-licensed commercial kitchen that will provide three meals and three snacks a day for up to 51 children per meal.

Besides accommodating shift workers who need daycare early mornings, evenings and weekends, Kidcare helps prepare children for

Kindergarten -- another thing parents said they wanted.

"What an asset to our community!" said Mayor Walt Cobb. "What's happened here is what typically happens when there's a need in Williams Lake; everybody tends to pull together."

City Coun. Craig Smith, whose granddaughter Lily is attending Kidcare, said that this was a project that was badly needed in Williams Lake. "When Irene first told me about it I told her if there was anything, from the City or from my business that I could do to help, I would," he explained, adding that Tell Tale Signs provided signs during construction, as well as the main Kidcare sign on the building.

"It's a wonderful facility. You have to see it to believe it, that a square building could turn into something holding so much imagination," MLA Barnett said.

"You can see that it was built with love; built to make children feel safe and happy."

-reprinted from the Williams Lake Tribune

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