

College Hill Daycare starts its third year off positively

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THE BRUNSWICKAN

The College Hill Daycare is beginning the new academic year on several optimistic notes.

The three year old facility on Montgomery Street hopes to fill ninety percent of its sixty spaces this year and has a waiting list in all but one category.

The operating budget is forecast to break even this year as it did in 1995-96 and various improvements to the playground are slowly taking shape.

This fall, the Daycare centre still has several openings in the pre-school three and four year old category. All other categories have a waiting list including the infant program and the after school program.

"People are welcome to apply for any opening in the Daycare and then as children leave at mid-year

or whatever, we would take names off our waiting list to fill the open spaces," emphasized Wendi Lunney, Administrator at College Hill Daycare.

Fifty percent of the enrollment last year was from the children of students and that is not expected to change this year, according to Lunney. The remainder of enrollment comes from faculty and staff, while just seven percent is from the general community.

Enrollment is truly international. "Last year children in our Daycare spoke seventeen different languages at various points," said Lunney. "It is

amazing how children can communicate to each other and not know what each other is saying; the common language is play."

"The only problem in communication appears to be with the adults who have to work with them."

The Daycare employs ten staff, six of whom have full-time year-



round employment. Four hourly staff work full-time during the academic year but work reduced hours during the summer when enrollment drops to about thirty children.

The Daycare is run as a co-op venture with a ten person Board of Directors.

Each September at the annual General Meeting members of the Board are elected to serve for one year. Any parent with a child in the Daycare is eligible to run for a board position and each family with a child in the facility has one vote.

The Board of Directors meets once a month and sets both policy and an operating budget.

The Board also sets rates for Daycare. The monthly fee this year, which is unchanged from last year, is \$390 for full time pre-schoolers, \$435 for full time infant care and \$230 per month for the after school program.

The Board and its staff must meet provincial government requirements which are set down for all Daycare facilities.

The facility is inspected by the government at least once a year. The inspectors look at health, safety, nutrition, equipment, materials, registration requirements, staff, insurance, funding, laundry and garbage facilities and the number of washrooms.

The Daycare has been the recipient of many donations and acts of assistance since it began two years ago.

"We have received excellent support from the UNB Administration and were quite flattered that the new President Elizabeth Parr-Johnston came for a visit," said Lunney.

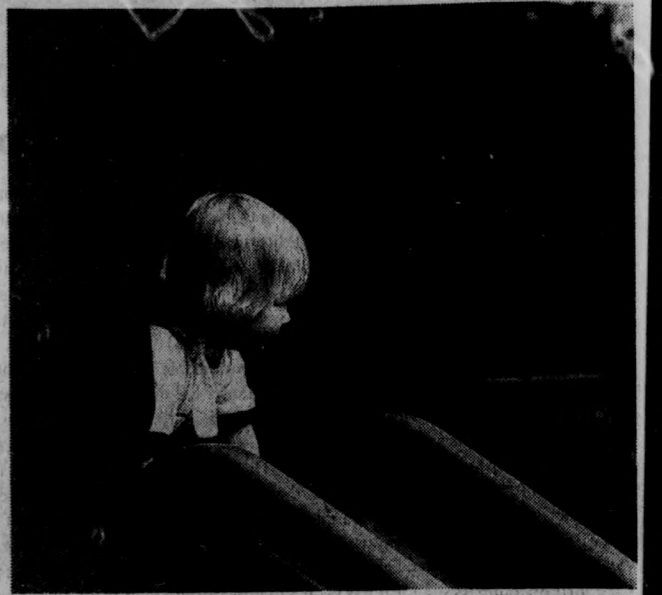
"In addition both CAMPUS (mature and part-time students) and the Student Union have been very generous in continuing to contribute as well."

CAMPUS contributes \$2,000 a year while the UNB SU has contributed \$3,000 and will hopefully do so for another year.

Both grants will be used to subsidize the cost of student spaces over the summer months, according to Lunney.

"That in turn guarantees that these spaces will be available to students this fall."

"Rather than students paying the full holding fee cost, the fee is considerably



less because of the CAMPUS donation and the expected UNB SU grants," Lunney emphasized.

Despite the many generous contributions to date, Lunney has no shortage of projects that need to be completed at the Daycare in the next couple of years.

Due to the generosity of parents, work is underway in the playground of the facility. One tower with a slide attached to it with a ladder up the back was constructed last summer. Two towers still need to be constructed and a climbing structure needs to be added.

Swing sets and sand boxes are still needed and fifteen hundred dollars has been set aside from the operating

budget to accomplish this task, according to Lunney.

The Daycare is still in need of about \$3,000 to complete the playground project.

In addition the front yard is in need of landscaping and Lunney would like to find money to pave the driveway.

The Daycare is also looking for some new equipment.

"When we began we purchased equipment from a Daycare that had ceased business," said Lunney.

"We have not bought much in terms of equipment for two years. Our enrollment is up to ninety percent of our sixty spaces but we still have the equipment we had when we had thirty children," she continued. "We are in need of more tables and chairs for the kids."

Lunney would also like to find a donor who would provide a computer for the children. As well, the centre is in need of large curtains that would fit over the tall, cathedral-like windows.

In the future, the Daycare centre would like to install air conditioning.

"But that would cost ten thousand dollars," said Lunney, emphasizing that the Daycare certainly has not got that kind of money after just two years of operation.

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