Northwestern Ontario Day Care News

June 1989

DAY CARE NEWS is a forum for the sharing of information between day care groups throughout the region, as well as providing information about what's happening on the federal and provincial scenes, both in terms of governmental policy/legislation and advocacy groups' activities.

We hope that this newsletter will combat some of the isolation that day care workers and advocates feel and that through the sharing of resources, ideas and action plans, we can develop strategies to ensure the growth and strengthening of quality day care in our region.

We welcome submissions to this newsletter from every day care centre and committee throughout Northwestern Ontario. Please send articles, news clippings, letters, etc. to Box 144, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 4V5.

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WEIGHTING FACTOR RESEARCH PROJECT.....

In 1983 the federal government informed the province that what was known as the "indirect subsidy" must cease, and the provincial government informed the municipalities that the indirect subsidy would be eliminated at the end of 1986. This decision created a crisis for many Northwestern Ontario day care centres, which were heavily dependent on the indirect subsidy, and were threatened with closure if the subsidy was removed.

Northwestern Ontario day care officials, parents, workers and advocates mobilized around this issue of the removal of the indirect subsidy and made representation to the Hon. John Sweeney, Minister of Community and Social Services, in order to "save our Northwestern Ontario centres". The Minister responded by providing a transitional grant program to replace the indirect subsidy, which has, temporarily, secured our centres.

It has long been acknowledged that service delivery in the North is more expensive than in the south. The transitional grant has helped to cover some of these additional costs, but only to municipal day care centres. The Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee recognized the need for special funding for all day care centres in the North.

They applied to, and were funded by Ontario Women's Directorate for the "Weighting Factor Research Project". A researcher, Lee Angus, began work on the project April 1, 1989. A committee of the NWORDCC co-ordinates the project.

Other Ministries have developed financial formulas for funding of service delivery in the North. Two of these, the weighting factor,

for the Ministry of Education and the unconditional grants for Municipal Affairs, are being analyzed. These programs are being examined in terms of background, factors that are used to indicate need for additional funding, and how the actual formula for funding is implemented.

Another portion of the research includes gathering examples of the higher cost of service delivery in the North. Every centre must have at least one example of a shipment being delayed and therefore programmes must be changed or of the high cost of finding staff. Please, we would like to hear about your experiences and frustrations. You can contact Lee Angus at 807-345-8803 or write to the NWORDCC at Box 144, Thunder Bay, Ont.P7C 4V5 to help us with this portion of the research.

We anticipate that recommendations for a weighting factor formula for the funding of day care in the North will be ready in the fall of 1989.

REGIONAL NEWS

GERALDTON

Submitted by
The Geraldton Day Care Centre
La Garderie De Geraldton Staff

The staff and children at the Geraldton Day Care Centre have been busy with special events, such as toboganning, a skating program, snow sculptures, a Beach Day, as well as continuing the tours in the community. Special events planned for this summer include a Parent Tea, a picnic/swim, a Fall Fair (booth and craft competitions), hikes, and the introduction of our computer, etc.

Earlier this year we all had fun contributing our ideas and plans towards our proposed extension. The extension will house our rural resource program, integrated program, art room and toy lending library. The clubhouse model, for our 6-9 year olds, will allow more freedom for this group of children. We hope to expand this program to include children up to the age of 12.

Our integrated program has become a full time position, with Nancy Proteau being promoted to this position. Julie Davis will return from maternity leave to become a half time teacher.

We continue experiencing a shortage of qualified Early Childhood Education teachers. At the moment we have three full time positions open.

Recently our centre had a booth at the Kitcheeogamah People Services Fair and we found this to be an excellent opportunity to educate the public in the area of child care services in the area.

A long waiting list, continues to be the norm, especially for the 2 1/2 to 5 year olds.
Have a nice summer!

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Corporation of the Town of Geraldton

Requires

DAY CARE CENTRE TEACHER

$21,500-$24,500 (Under Review)

Responsibilities include participation with children in planned and routine activities and providing a stimulating and nurturing environment one which creates independence and individualism. The Geraldton Day Care Centre/La Garderie de Geraldton is an integrated centre licensed for 49 children which also provides Rural Resource and Toy Library services to the community.

Qualifications: The preferred candidate will possess skills in working with parents and children, as well as an Early Childhood Education college diploma or AECEO equivalency. Bilingualism while not a required qualification would be considered an asset.

Qualified applicants should forward their applications stating personal history, education and experience to:

Miss Diane Sarrazin, Supervisor,
Geraldton Day Care Centre/
La Garderie de Geraldton,
P.O. Box 70
GERALDTON, Ontario
P0T 1M0

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Please share this ad with others. You may help someone find employment, and the Geraldton Day Care Centre, who at the present time are looking for 3 staff people.
Thanks

THUNDER BAY

Submitted by Schoolhouse Playcare Centre

The Schoolhouse Playcare Centre of Thunder Bay has been selected by the Ministry of Education as one of the four Child Care Centres that are located in a school setting to take part in a pilot project. The project will demonstrate aspects of co-ordination that may occur between the child care programs and the classrooms at the school.

The project will begin Sept. 1, 1989 and will end by June 29, 1990. A project co-ordinator will be hired to work closely with the director and staff of the Playcare Centre and the principal and staff of St. James School.

Some of the aims and objectives are:
-to bring a N.W.O. perspective of the needs of children in both sections
-to strengthen the ties between our target school and the existing child care programme in terms of programming, sharing information, and timetabling
-to use community, school, Board, and Playcare resources and staff to strengthen our respective programmes
-to include parents as vital members of our programme, to ensure maximum interaction among child care, school and home
-to keep in mind at all times the needs, interests and abilities of the children involved.

NEW FACILITIES

Submitted by Anita Price

In Thunder Bay at Confederation College we are looking forward to moving into our new facility in September. The spaces we helped to design are taking shape. The steel beams are all in place, the windows are in, and in the next few weeks, the builders will be working on the interior putting up the drywall.

We don't have our start up funding in place for the fall, so we will be moving into our new building with the existing programs.

We are excited about our expansion to infant and toddler care and feel confident that the set up of the new building will facilitate a family atmosphere. Each of our 2 sections will offer care to 3 infants, 5 toddlers and 8 preschoolers.

The other programs we will be offering are Nursery School for 24 children, After Kingergarten Care for 20 children, 10 spaces for After School Care, and 16 spaces for short term part-time care. The present Community Centre playroom will accommodate 24 children.

The playground space is in the process of being designed.

PROJECT CHILD-CARE

Submitted by Barbara Buie, Child Care Co-ordinator, Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital

We are presently working towards establishing a Workplace Child Care Centre to serve employees of the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital and Northwestern Regional Centre. The purpose of the centre is to provide accessible, affordable, and excellent quality child care for the children of employees at these two facilities.

An Awareness Day was held on June 15, in the hospital cafeteria, to promote this project. The main objective was to increase the awareness of our proposed Day Care, as well as the whole aspect of quality child-care in the Community.

We are working with a positive attitude towards the funding of this project and hope to hear from the Ministry by the end of June.

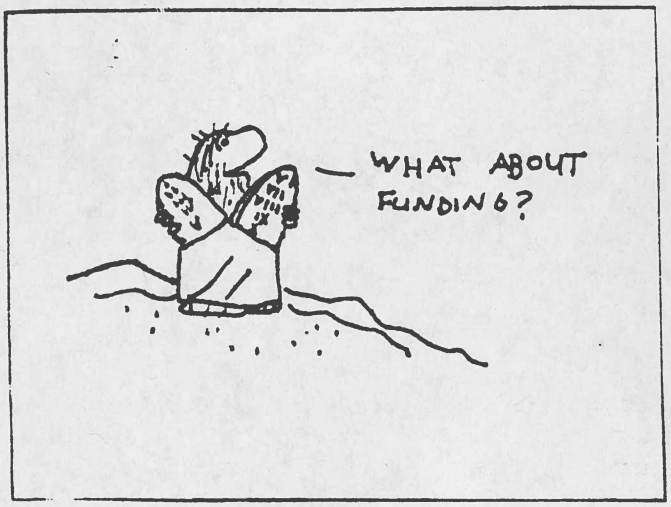
FORT FRANCES

Submitted by
Fort Frances Day Care and Child Development Centre

Both Council and the Ministry have given us approval to go ahead with our new building and we are presently working with architects, Fraser and Browne, on the plans for our new Hub Model Centre. Negotiations are also continuing with the Ministry of Community and Social Services for capital costs. The Hub Model will house 48 children, 4 of these with special needs, aged 18 months to 9 years of age. A Private Home Day Care Office, storage, and a toy lending/resource will also be included.

A meeting was held with M.P.P. Howard Hampton where we expressed our concerns on day care issues. We will be meeting with him again in June. Bob Nault M.P. has agreed to meet with us at a later date. A large cookie poster was sent to Mr. Wilson, asking for the expansion of funds for child care.

We are pleased that approval for a summer student, under the Challenge '89 program, who will work with our school age children was received. Upcoming activities include our Annual Father's Day Luncheon, Day Care Graduation, and entering a float in the July 1st parade.



BUDGET BAD NEWS #1

The provincial budget delivered by Treasurer Robert Nixon on May 17th was a disappointment. There were no new initiatives to address the crisis in spaces/subsidized spaces.

A major initiative in the budget is $194 million for kindergarten programs, with all Boards of Education being mandated to provide half-day Junior and Senior kindergarten, and encouraged to provide full-day Senior kindergarten where space is available. This program begins in the 1990/91 school year.

What impact will this initiative have on child care? The government suggests that "the extension of JK and SK programs should help reduce the pressure for additional child care spaces". However, there does not appear to be plans for complementary before, during lunch, and after-school care. Without appropriate "latch-key' services families will continue to experience child care problems.

As well, in an expanded kindergarten program, consideration must be given to appropriate child-staff ratios and teacher training.

While generally supporting this initiative, these concerns must be raised to ensure comprehensive and quality care for our children.

In response to the report of the Social Assistance Review Committee, the budget also includes initiatives "to encourage economic independence among social assistance recipients", through the Supports to Employment Program (STEP).

Recognizing that "the greatest impediment to single parents working outside the home is the cost of child care" STEP will allow single parents to deduct child care expenses, up to specified limits, from their earned income. (These limits have not yet been set.)

While this initiative will offer relief to the target group, it fails to address the more basic problem of the inadequacy of subsidized spaces in licensed day care programs.

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BUDGET BAD NEWS #2

On April 27, Finance Minister Michael Wilson cancelled plans to proceed with a National Child Care Program in Canada. Pleading poverty, he has broken federal government promises since 1984 to expand and support the child care system.

While we rejoice at the demise of Bill C-144 (the Canada Child Care Act), we find it deplorable that the federal government has not developed appropriate new plans to fund a comprehensive child care system. We are left with the child care tax measures passed last year which favour high income earners and will not build a child care system.

NO MORE BAKE SALES

In protest of the lack of action by the federal government re child care a national BAKE OFF was organized in early June by the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. The theme No More Bake Sales For Us, Mr. Wilson! illustrates the frustration felt by day care parents/workers who for all these years have been forced to hold bake sales (raffles, etc.) to try to balance the day care budget. Perhaps Mr. Wilson should try financing the deficit with bake sales. Day care advocates from across the country participated in the Bake Off and sent baking to Finance Minister Wilson to demonstrate out point.

In Thunder Bay the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee joined with the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council to participate in the Bake Off. Mounds of baking were presented to Thunder Bay-Atikokan M.P. Iain Angus who delivered the baking to Mr. Wilson on our behalf. (We understand Mr. Angus carried the baking to Ottawa in the box that had delivered the budget papers... a further significant gesture!)

The NWORDCC's contribution to the Bake Off was stale cookies, indicative of the length of time Canadian families have waited for the federal government to take action on the child care crisis, and crumbled cookies, representative of the broken promises of the Conservative Government.

GET THE BUDGET BACK ON TRACK

Closely following the Bake Off, we joined another budget protest to "Get the Budget Back on Track". Representatives of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the Pro-Canada Network and the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Workers, travelled coast to coast protesting the federal budget pointing out that:

"Past and present generations of Canadians have developed a unique social contract with their government. Through this social contract, Canadians have claimed their basic democratic rights as citizens to a system of social programs designed to ensure decent employment, education, consumer protection, cultural development, and fair taxation.

The current federal government is now breaking that social contract. The Free Trade Agreement has set the stage for

harmonizing our economy and social programs with the economy and social programs of the United States. The recent Wilson budget serves to accelerate this process. Together, these economic strategies will destroy the investment of past generations in our national and democratic future."

On June 9th, about 150 Thunder Bay people gathered at the CPR station with petitions outlining our NWO concerns for the protesting travellers to take to Ottawa. The Northwestern Ontario protest centred on child care, Via Rail and postal service cuts, Air Canada privitization, regressive sales tax, U.I.C., Old Age Security, Family Allowances and cuts to Secretary of State Women's programs.

Congratulations go to the Northwestern Ontario Women's Decade Council who spearheaded the Thunder Bay event, which was an energyzing rally, complete with protest songs led by the "Raging Grannies". A similar rally was organized in Kenora by Women's Place, Kenora.

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BUDGET BAD NEWS #3

The Conservative Government's lack of commitment to social development was demonstrated by its cuts to Secretary of State programs. Most seriously affected will be Native and Women's programs.

The NWORDCC, which receives our primary funding from Secretary of State Women's Programs, may experience budget cuts of 30-35%. The federal budget is bad news to all of us--collectively and individually.

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THE C-PET PROJECT

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care proposes to set up the Community and Parent Education and Training Project (C-PET) to provide resource materials to parents, staff and community leaders with regard to starting, operating, and strengthening high quality child care.

The rapid expansion of non-profit, parent/community board child care services over the last several years has occurred at a faster rate than the infrastructure to support it. Many of these centres have limited access to information, advice and skills. Many parents often experience guilt and frustration, and find it difficult to sustain consistent involvement.

To aid parents, staff and the

community the project will:
-develop a comprehensive handbook/manual for use by parent/community boards of directors of child care programs,
-develop and distribute manuals in close collaboration with a province-wide Advisory Committee drawn from various sectors and regions of the province,
-and where possible make materials available in French.
This project will develop over an eighteen month period. In future newsletters, we will keep you informed as to when materials will be available for community, board, parent, and staff use.

FORUM 1989

Forum 1989, sponsored by the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee, with the financial support of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, convened in Thunder Bay March 31st, April 1st, 1989. This Regional Day Care Forum brought together over 60 day care parents, workers, administrators and advocates from across Northwestern Ontario.

On Friday evening a Round Table Discussion was held where representatives from Red Lake, Sioux Lookout, Fort Frances, Atikokan, Geraldton and Thunder Bay outlined the major day care concerns in their respective communities, which included: the direct operating grant; expansion of child care programs; expansion of subsidized spaces; quality issues in child care programs; expansion of subsidized spaces; quality issues in child care; relationship of day care and Board/Ministry of Education; recruitment of qualified staff, staff training, and professional development.
Kay Eastham, Director, Child Care Branch, Ministry of Commubnity and Social Services, addressed the Forum, providing a "report card" of the province's New Directions for Child Care - two years later.

Following Ms. Eastham's address, a productive discussion period occurred with dialogue between the participants and Ms. Eastham in respect to key Northwestern Ontario issues.

Federal policy was discussed by a panel - Karen Stotsky, Board Member, Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association; Sue Colley, Executive Co-ordinator, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care; and Anita Price, Council Member, Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee. The issues surrounding the federal child care strategy were reviewed, and an overview of action taken by the NWORDCC in respect to the legislation previously introduced (Bill C-144) was provided.

Strategy sessions to plan local and regional action followed the panel.

A workshop was held to discuss Income Testing. Mr. Bryan Stanish, Manager, Funding

Unit, Child Care Branch, provided an overview of the status of the Ministry's Income Testing project, and identified issues in respect to 'needs testing' and 'income testing'. Participants outlined problems with the current system, and identified Northwestern Ontario issues concerning the move to income testing. Participants indicated the desirability of comprehensive consultation throughout the entire process of moving to income testing.

A workshop on Planning and Organizing for Day Care provided information on various models of day care in Ontario, and initiated discussion on resources needed by day care organizations to ensure effective operations. This workshop is viewed as a first step which requires follow-up to further determine the most appropriate ways to provide training, development and resources to the Northwestern Ontario day care community.

The Forum also provided informal opportunities for networking. As well a Tour of several community day care centres provided valuable information for Forum participants planning new programs.

1989/90 Council Members

The annual business meeting and Council elections of the NWORDCC were held in conjunction with the Regional Forum. Your 1989/90 Council members are:

Barb Buie	Thunder Bay
Paul Capon	Thunder Bay
Mary Ducharme	Fort Frances
Margaret Hajdinjak	Thunder Bay
Phyllis Kellar	Fort Frances
Veronica Kreidl	Marathon
Kelly Massaro-Joblin	Thunder Bay
Bernice Picard	Longlac
Anita Price	Thunder Bay
Holly Rupert	Red Lake
Diane Sarrazin	Geraldton
Eva Shields	Atikokan
Maria Swain	Grassy Narrows
Gina Valente	Thunder Bay
Marilyn Wells	Sioux Lookout

MEMBERSHIP

At the 1988 Forum a membership structure for the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee was approved. Memberships are now available. Membership categories are:

Category A: Municipal Councils/Indian Band Council; Day Care Centres; Professional Organizations; Regional Associations; Labour Unions.
Fee: $50.00

Category B: Parent Groups, Voluntary Community Organizations.
Fee: $25.00

Category C: Individuals.
Fee: $5.00

To join, please complete this application form, detach and return to: N.W.O.R.D.C.C.
P.O. Box 144
Thunder Bay, Ont.
P7C 4V5

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I believe in the purpose of The Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee and I wish to become a member.

_____
Signature

Name:_____

Address:_____

Postal Code:_____

Phone Number:_____Fee Enclosed_____

Category: A____ B_____ C_____

Thank you for your support.

RECIPE FOR CHILDCARE

SERVES: ALL CANADIANS

INGREDIENTS:
-TONS OF HIGH QUALITY
-100% NON-PROFIT
-SUBSIDIES FOR ALL WHO NEED THEM
-GUARANTEED UNIVERSAL ACCESS
-GUARANTEED SPACES
-FLEXIBLE SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES

PREPARATION TIME: OVERDUE

COOKING TIME: A.S.A.P.

METHOD: MIX ALL INGREDIENTS THOROUGHLY IN A LARGE MULTICULTURAL SETTING, THROW IN ADEQUATE GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP AND FUND UNTIL ALL CHILDREN ARE WELL CARED FOR. PLACE IN HIGH PRIORITY FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION.

