

Gore Bay Child Care celebrates expansion

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The Recorder

GORE BAY—It takes a village to raise a child. That theme was evident as the Gore Bay Child Care Centre celebrated its recent expansion on November 25.

Invitations to the open house were sent to the community at large and there were cake, flowers, and snacks served on-site in the west wing of Charles C. McLean Public School.

The staff of seven, and some families attended the open house. Supervisor Andrea Lewis noted the school's recent parent-teacher night included an open house at the child-care center.

According to Ms. Lewis, the expansion was made possible once the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board approved a grant application submitted by the Gore Bay Child Care Centre last spring. The resulting expansion of service and renovations for age-appropriate



Gore Bay Child Care Centre's staff supervisor, Andrea Lewis, holds a cake celebrating the centre's renovated new space, while staff members Pauline Featherstone, Anne Giffin, Kelly Heffern, Edeana and Adranne Merrylees join the festivities.

photo by Rosanne Olmstead

rooms allowed wait-listed children to be admitted into daycare programs.

These activity programs are for children 6 to 12 years old and operate between 7 am and 6 pm. Also because of this expansion,

there are openings for enrollment of three toddlers, six preschoolers, and three school-aged children. There is also a part-time social program of activities offered for children two-and-a half to four-years-old

on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

The clean, brightly decorated space is inspected annually by health and fire officials and twice annually, unannounced, by the province. Staff is provided

training opportunities at least four times throughout the year, such as the one on autism facilitated by the health unit on November 27, which was attended by staff member Anne Giffin. Three on staff have Early Childhood Education designations and another is an apprentice currently.

Since opening in 2007 and prior to expansion, toddlers and preschoolers shared one room while school-age children used the school's library. Just a couple of years later, two new connected rooms for toddlers and preschoolers exist in the former science classroom, complete with size appropriate washroom facilities for youngsters. Also newly acquired is some much-needed playground equipment.

Now, school-aged children enrolled do their homework or crafts provided in the original daycare room, instead of the library. The school "village" provides some crossover

involvement to the daycare, inviting them to concerts and some other school events, such as the Grade 1 yard sales. C.C. McLean School allows the centre use of designated space in the schoolyard, and during summer, March, and Christmas breaks, of the gymnasium as well.

Ms. Lewis noted that, although temporarily housed in the town community hall during the month-long construction, "things are better now that the space is not cramped," and enrollment has doubled to 25 children.

Members of the Gore Bay Child Care Centre's board of directors (who meet monthly) include: Lee-Ann Bell, Corey Burella, Pam Fogal, Tyson Gilchrist, Jeff Hietkamp, Jill Smith and Barret Wright. Andrea Lewis, supervisor, works with Pauline Featherstone, Anne Giffin, Kelly Heffern, Edeana and Adrienne Merrylees, and Julie Wright.