

Child Care Center seeks interim financing to get project started

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By Kent Thompson

In an effort to reach an increasingly urgent timeline, the Board of Directors of the Kiddie Cats Child Care and Learning Center is asking three public entities to partner with them to help get the project off the ground.

Kiddie Cats Child Care and Learning Center Board President Alissa O'Connor said that because time is of the essence, the Board of Directors decided to ask public entities, the Humboldt County Memorial Hospital (\$100,000), city of Humboldt (\$200,000) and Humboldt County (\$200,000) to provide what will be in effect interim financing, so the development may get shovels in the ground this spring for the new facility.

O'Connor said the project is about three-eighths of

the way to its stated goal of fund-raising \$1.4 million for the new center, which would be located north of Mease Elementary School. Allers and Associates, an architectural firm from Fort Dodge, has been working with the board and the Humboldt Community School District on the plans for the 8,000-square foot, eight-room structure that would serve approximately 110 children, ages newborn and older.

"We all have day jobs," O'Connor said of the 13-member board of directors, who have been trying to fund-raise and contact local industries and individuals to solicit support.

"If it takes us till the end of the summer to complete fund-raising, we don't want to wait that long to begin construction, when there is an urgent need right now," O'Connor said.

Humboldt School Superintendent Greg Darling, who sits on the child care board, has reported that the district is losing school-aged children because there is not available child care in the community to serve younger siblings.

"You wouldn't believe the number of calls we have had saying, 'when is the new day care going to be up and running,'" O'Connor reports.

"We also had a meeting

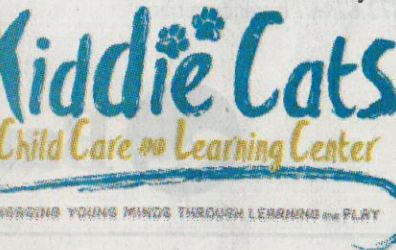
with in-home child care providers in the area and they echoed the same concern.

"Now that we've been do-

are asking them to guarantee the loan payments on the \$500,000, knowing that the day care will support the debt and pay down the \$500,000 before we turn that into permanent financing," O'Connor said.

In addition to fund-raised amounts, O'Connor said cash flow projections for the child care and learning center show that it will be able to make debt service payments on a regular basis while paying for operations and staff salaries.

"Being a newly created non-profit with no credit his-



ing a lot of fund-raising and publicity, the issue is on the top of everyone's minds," O'Connor said.

"The money we fund-raise will be used to pay down this second \$500,000 loan from the three public entities. We

See Kiddie Cats, 5A

* 5A Continued

tory, we can't go in and borrow the money on our own. We have no collateral or history of revenue.

"We have no intention of asking the three public entities to make a loan payment, we are in effect using their name and their good standing in the community as a route to get the project off the ground and built sooner," O'Connor said.

"With this plan in place, we would be able to begin construction in the spring when the frost is out of the ground. Without this support, the project can't get started until we fund-raise another \$500,000," O'Connor said.

The city of Humboldt, city of Dakota City, Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, Humboldt County Memorial

Hospital and the Humboldt Community School District have each agreed to a \$7,000 per year payment toward the debt service on an original \$500,000 loan through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Donations for the child care project and learning center are tax-deductible with capital donations and pledges accepted.

All donors will be recognized with small and large blue or yellow Wildcat paw prints on the Paws of Fame donation wall in the new center.

A Sponsor level is a donation of \$5,000 or more, an Advocate is a donation of \$10,000 or more, a Champion is a donation of \$50,000 or more and donations of \$100,000 or more are recognized as Heroes and

will be honored with name recognition in a room within the Child Care and Learning Center.

"We want to emphasize that this project is not benefiting just one socio-economic group or segment of our population. This center is for working people. It will be open early enough for those who go to work at 7 a.m., and will serve people who commute out-of-town for employment. We also want a center that can accommodate people who don't get off work for weather-related school closings," O'Connor said.

"Workforce issues are a big concern in the area and child care is a big component of that. Having a licensed daycare is a great reason to

live, work and play in Humboldt County. If there is a job opening in a nearby town and they have child care, affordable housing and health care, there is not a great incentive to commute to work. We want to give families in the community reasons to remain in Humboldt County and for people outside the area to consider locating here," O'Connor said.

"We need to provide a solution to this problem and this seems to be the quickest and most financially feasible way," the board president said.

People with questions or businesses or individuals interested in helping with the capital campaign may contact O'Connor at (515) 332-2557, or e-mail her at alissa@humboldtcountyiowa.com.