

Kiddie Cats construction continues; funds needed for equipment and materials

By Kent Thompson

The Kiddie Cat Child Care and Learning Center is taking advance registrations beginning this Friday, Dec. 1.

Parents/guardians are asked to contact Board President Alissa O'Connor at (515) 332-2557, or stop by her office at Humboldt City Hall, 29 5th St. S., between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to obtain an early registration form.

There is a registration fee of \$50 per child at the time of early registration.

O'Connor reports that the 8,000 square foot single-level center that is expected to serve approximately 110 children and their families in the area, is being constructed in Dakota City at the intersection of 3rd Street and 1st Avenue North, directly north of Mease Elementary School.

Sande Construction of Humboldt is the general contractor for the project. Allers Associates Architects, PC, of Fort Dodge, is the design firm.

"The construction is going awesome. We are very pleased with how that is going and everything seems to be progressing smoothly," O'Connor said.

"Some people think it is a little further along than it is. But the exterior has been

sealed up for winter and workers are now working on the interior construction."

There will be a winged animal and insect theme to the interior rooms. Birds, bees and butterflies will be among the flying creatures adorning the walls.

"We are still looking at a completion date of July," O'Connor said, with the child care and learning center expected to open in mid-August, tentatively.

"We would like to coordinate with the start of the school year," O'Connor said.

She said that a director will not be hired until closer to the opening of the center.

"The Humboldt County Development Association has done most of the licensing, which has been an eye-opener for our organization," O'Connor, who is also the Humboldt County director of Economic Development.

"Our goal is to get equipment ordered and all the licensing completed by the end of July," O'Connor said.

She said the community non-profit has shifted its fundraising focus from the corporate and business community to individuals within the county.

The organization recently mailed out a slick informational piece to solicit funds.

"What we are trying to do now is equip the building and we are focused on trying to raise \$300,000 to do that. Any amount raised above that will go toward paying down the debt on the second \$500,000 loan we received," O'Connor said.

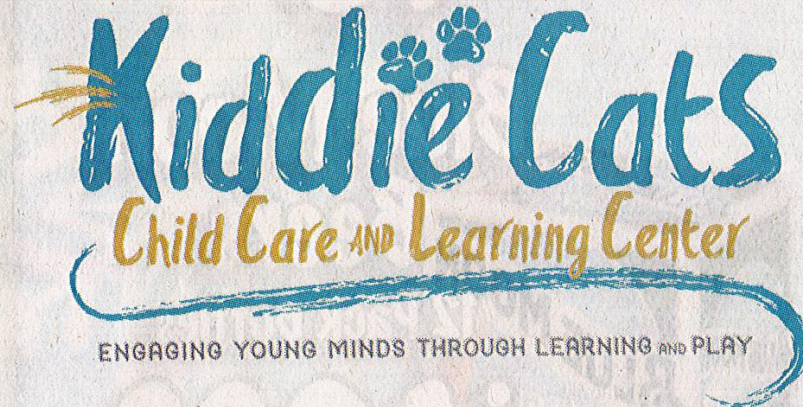
The Day Care Board has been meeting twice a month and has been working to apply to local individuals to help the cause.

"We would like to have cash or check donations," O'Connor said.

Donations for the child care project and learning center are tax-deductible.

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. Donors are reminded of the following Paws of Fame donor levels.

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 day care is a great reason to live, work and play in Humboldt County," she said.

"A \$5,000 donation would pay for all of the cribs needed in the new center. We are hopeful that individuals will see the need and step up and contribute," O'Connor said.

Because the effort has been coordinated between many community leaders and government entities, O'Connor is confident that the project will be successful.

"We have confidence that the child care and learning center will be successful not only from a financial stand-

point, but from an educational and child welfare standpoint as well.

"Right now, we need equipment and materials to open the doors," O'Connor said.

"We appreciate all of the public's support so far and ask those who haven't contributed to consider a donation for the future of our community."

People interested may contact O'Connor at the address above, go to the Kiddie Cats Child Care & Learning Center page on Facebook or go to kiddiecatschildcare.com on the web.