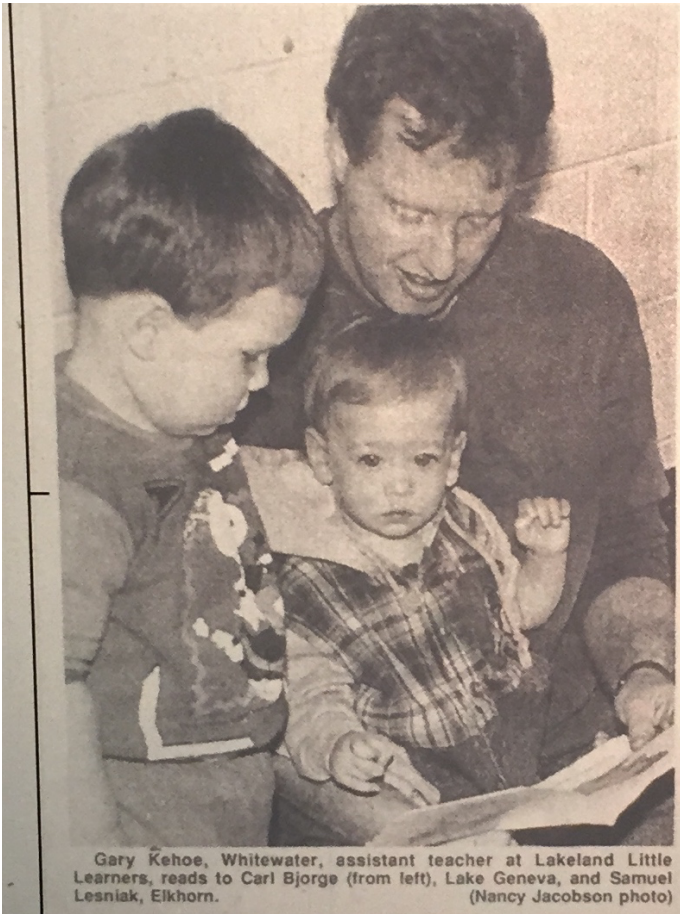


De Lazzer, Sarah (1994). Day care center planned for Elkhorn Business Park. *Elkhorn Independent*.



Gary Kehoe, Whitewater, assistant teacher at Lakeland Little Learners, reads to Carl Bjorge (from left), Lake Geneva, and Samuel Lesniak, Elkhorn. (Nancy Jacobson photo)



Mary Wolf and Lacy Weaver (right), both Elkhorn, presented a concentrated effort on their cutting abilities. The children are part of Lakeland Little Learners day care center. Plans are under way to relocate in the Elkhorn Business Park. (Nancy Jacobson photo)

anned for Elkhorn Business Park

By Sarah De Lazzer

After years of research, the Elkhorn Day Care Committee has announced its recommendation of a childcare provider for the new day care center planned for the Elkhorn Business Park.

President Larry Geisler announced Lakeland Little Learners as the childcare provider at a recent luncheon held by the Elkhorn Chamber of Commerce.

Lakeland Little Learners, a non-profit corporation, currently operates out of Lakeland Nursing Home. It opened over 8 years ago to furnish childcare for nursing home employees and then began taking enrollment from the general public.

In looking for a provider, the committee weighed several factors. Lakeland Little Learners is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs and is one of only 38 such centers in Wisconsin.

It has a high ratio of degreed instructors that have been at the center from 3 to 5 years, administrator Tami Adams said.

Adams noted that only 24 percent of the current childcare needs in the Elkhorn area is being met. She also gave the specifics as to how the "numbers will work."

The new facility will accommodate 135 full-time positions, and will break even by filling 95. Little Learners can deliver 70 full-time children and 65 would be available to the community.

There has also been discussion of increased hours of operation. Current hours are from 6:15 a.m. until 8 p.m. "There is always the possibility of opening for second and third shift needs if financially feasible."

John Zinzow, a parent volunteer on the board of Little Learners, highlighted the organization's merits.

"Lakeland Little Learners has a proven track record," Zinzow said. "Its profits are reinvested in children and staff to provide a higher level of

care and development." It is also a growing concern, with a waiting list of over 70 children. "The need for expansion is apparent," Zinzow added.

Plans for the new day care center were presented by the Elkhorn Day Care Committee during the luncheon.

Preliminary elevations and floor plans were presented showing a 7000-square-foot building capable of caring for 150 full-time children with room for expansion.

Committee member Dawn Kist advised that, "Various sites throughout the area had been thoroughly investigated but they were either inappropriate or unavailable." Currently two sites within the Elkhorn Business/Industrial Park are being considered. The total project cost estimate is \$350,000.

The boards of Little Learners and the Elkhorn Day Care Committee have been working together to com-

plete the project financing and development.

Little Learners has a positive response for a \$250,000 mortgage loan and will also have a \$15,000 expansion grant if the financing is in place by April 1.

They will bring \$30,000 in working capital, teaching supplies, and playground equipment to the project. Local lenders and the daycare committee have set the required equity for the project at \$100,000. The required equity could be lowered if alternative government programs become available.

Rick Genske, president of IAI Industries, flew in from Florida in order to spearhead the effort to get funding necessary for the venture. Efforts to provide childcare began in the early 1980s and Genske was a member of the original committee.

He counseled members, "The need (for day care) has been proven. It's going to be done. The only question is

"how soon" and that depends on us.

Mayor Ormson has also endorsed the project. "I fully support the Day Care committee and their efforts to help provide additional quality day care for the entire Elkhorn community," he said. "Another day-care facility is an extremely merited and worthwhile pursuit on the part of the city council, Economic Development Company, Gateway Technical College, Chamber of Commerce and the community."

The importance of pursuing the project was summed up by Zinzow with his concluding remarks. "Elkhorn has proven itself to be a progressive community. This center will attract local business, be an asset to the area and is definitely a step in the "right" direction."



Mary Wolf and Lacy Weaver (right), both Elkhorn, presented a concentrated effort on their cutting abilities. The children are part of Lakeland Little Learners day care center. Plans are under way to relocate in the Elkhorn Business Park. (Nancy Jacobson photo)

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