

## New day-care facility opens Friday in Liberal

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This is one of the rooms of the day-care facility at First Presbyterian Church. The church will welcome children to its new child care facility starting Monday morning. The church is hosting an open house Friday evening to let community members get a look inside the facility. L&T photo/Robert Pierce

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Leader & Times

Monday morning, some local children will be walking into Liberal's newest child care facility, and on Friday, workers at the center at First Presbyterian Church are inviting the community to come look at what has been done to get the building ready for kids.

FPC's Tammy Sutherland-Abbott said the new facility is "approved and ready to go," and the

church will be hosting an open house and enrollment from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday.

Part of the approval process, Sutherland-Abbott said, was an inspection from the state fire marshal who approved the building for the use of 100 children. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment, however, later lowered that number.

“When KDHE comes in, you have to look at how much room you have for them to lay down and all that kind of stuff,” she said. “Their numbers changed a little bit. It’s also based on how many bathrooms you have in your facility. That dictates it also. That number is 75 officially.”

Sutherland-Abbott said everyone in the community, including Liberal city commissioners, Seward County commissioners and USD No. 480 Board of Education members, are invited to Friday’s event.

“We want this to be perceived as a project for our community,” she said.

In addition to making the First Presbyterian building compliant, staff for the child care facility had to be looked at as well. Sutherland-Abbott said state officials gave both the building and staff great marks.

The staff was probably 98 percent compliant,” she said. “Every little nook and cranny had to be perfect. It was from the ground up that we had established our facility. Special thanks for the church’s support in this mission of taking care of our community’s children.”

Becky Pfenninger, the director for the facility, said everyone involved with the project had worked hard during the last two months to make FPC ready.

“Everybody is jumping with joy that we’ve finally made it to our goal and it’s going to be opening,” she said.

Pfenninger described some of the work volunteers had to do to get the church ready.

“The first weekend that we came in, we cleared out three rooms I believe and cleaned from top to bottom, dust, shampoo carpets,” she said. “We painted in three rooms, and since then, we’ve had to move furniture around to get ready for the classrooms. We’ve moved toys from the other day care that closed over here, moved them over, put them into classrooms and just set up the rooms so we could actually have children and work with them like we need to.”

Parents of children who will be using FPC’s new facility also made donations of items to help out with the process.

“Some of the church members have brought games, puzzles, toys that their children used to use,” Pfenninger said. “We just had a lot of people that have pitched in for this to work.”

In addition to other services, preschool will be offered, though both Sutherland-Abbott and Pfenninger said they are not sure when that will begin. Transportation for afterschool kids in need of care will likewise be provided.

## **To those who made it possible**

For all the efforts both of time, labor and financially giving to make this happen for our children, many thanks and much appreciation must go out to the following:

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AADI – Gary McCutchen; Windtree Management – Gary Dunnam; Flooring America – Mickey Mills; Mead Lumber – Gary Andrews and staff; J&T Electric – Jason Wood; Weatherford – Ron Steers and staff; First Southern Baptist Church; and Nazarene Church

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The appreciation for Cody with the LFD, Kory with Liberal zoning and especially to Wanda and Linda with the KDHE is immeasurable for their assistance with this project. Also for the references given in our aid, thank you.

And finally to THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH – the session and the congregation, God bless you – for without your acceptance this wouldn't have been able to happen for our children – Our deepest thank you.

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