



Little Lakers Child Care Center

Caring for our Future.

Mission: To foster age-appropriate learning and provide exceptional child-care in a safe, nurturing environment.

Description

Located in Lake Crystal MN, Little Lakers Child Care Center is organized as a nonprofit tax-exempt nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization. The organization will be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide child-care services to children ages six-weeks through pre-kindergarten.

Purpose: The purpose of the organization is

- To offer services, programs, and learning opportunities that enhance each child's emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development,
- To provide services in a safe, nurturing environment, and
- To provide quality care for children away from their homes that enables parents and caregivers to be gainfully employed.

Population: Little Lakers Childcare Center will be licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to provide services to 84 children ages 6 weeks to pre-kindergarten including 16 Infants, 28 Toddlers, and 40 Pre-School children.

Governing Body: The Little Lakers Board of Directors is composed of members of the Lake Crystal community including the LCWM School Superintendent, two LCWM schoolteachers, the executive director from the Lake Crystal Area Recreation Center, an Insurance representative, the executive director of the Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation (RCEF), a contractor, a banker, a farmer, and an executive director for a residential program serving people with disabilities. The board brings a wealth of knowledge in providing oversight to the organization through in the areas of business acumen and early childhood experience. In addition, the early childhood director consults with the organization.

Location: The Little Lakers Child Care Center board of directors entered into a contract to purchase the former Crystal Valley Cooperative central office. The building provides more than 14,000 square feet of space. The initial plan is to renovate the main floor to provide childcare services.

Need: Within the Lake Crystal area, there are several family childcare providers, but no center-based program. First Children's Finance conducted a survey of the need for childcare in the Lake Crystal area. The report indicated that there was a gap of approximately 90 – 100 slots for childcare within the area. Since the report was completed, there have been family childcare providers who have retired. The Little Lakers board of directors has worked with the family childcare providers to ensure that services are coordinated within the area.

Current Status

The licensing application has been submitted to DHS to start the licensing process. The board has hired a director for the services. The board is seeking funds to complete the renovations required to open the center. The board has applied for several grants and loans; however, with the rising costs of renovations, the board still needs to raise approximately \$200,000 to complete the renovations.

Economic Impact

1. The center will provide an option for parents in the Lake Crystal and surrounding communities to access quality childcare services. Currently, some parents are having to take their children to different providers, sometimes in different cities.
2. The center will provide approximately 20 new jobs in Lake Crystal.
3. The center board of directors has the support of the Lake Crystal Economic Development Authority.
4. The project will allow a building in the community to be repurposed and provide jobs and stability for community members.