

April 30, 2012 CKP Press release:

Rain couldn't dampen the spirits of Coastal Kids Preschool's supporters as they gathered recently to celebrate the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony of the Damariscotta preschool's major expansion. The expansion nearly tripled the Jackie's Trail facility's footprint, increasing the available slots to 52 children each day. The preschool is now in its 17th year of operation.

Rob Flory served as Master of Ceremonies and began the festivities by introducing representatives of Senators Snowe's and Collins's offices, who read letters of congratulation; the letters praised the school's mission of providing an inclusive, developmentally appropriate education to Lincoln County preschool children, regardless of income or ability. Rep. Chellie Pingree sent a copy of the letter she read into the congressional record of the House of Representatives in Washington that same day. It expressed support for the school's mission and acknowledged the tremendous efforts the Board of Directors, staff and community made to achieve the expansion.

The ribbon cutting ceremony, forced inside by the rain, was relocated to the preschool's spacious new Studio space and took place amid much anticipation. Children representing the four Coastal Kids classes gathered to cut the ribbon along with Coastal Kids' Director, Priscilla Congdon.

Former Board of Director president Martha Lynch credited Priscilla Congdon's passionate commitment to the school's mission with maintaining the preschool and its program through four moves in the first ten years. When a community board was established in 2006, Kathleen Flory readily joined. Flory, previously a regular volunteer with special needs students, realized the facility was inadequate but had a vision of what it could become. Their combined dedication led to formation of The Critical Step capital campaign in 2009 to construct and renovate the preschool.

Lynch presented plaques of appreciation to the three major financial funders supporting the project. Mike Jenkins, Area Specialist of USDA Rural Development, John Marsh, Vice President of Bath Savings Institution and Bill Floyd, Executive Director of the Genesis Community Loan Fund accepted the awards on behalf of their agencies.

Building Committee Chair Kathleen Flory expressed thanks to the capital campaign's corporate sponsors, and plaques were presented to The First Bancorp, Damariscotta Bank and Trust, RBC Wealth Management, King Eider's Pub, Murder Mystery USA, Bath Savings Institution, Damariscotta Hardware, Lynch Newman LLC, Flory Investments and H.M. Payson. Contributing foundations receiving plaques were The Davis Family Foundation, The Marjorie Bailey Charitable Foundation, and Reny's Charitable Foundation.

Plaques of appreciation were also presented Architect Richard K. Reed of Reed and Associates, Portland, who designed the new facility and to Catalano's Construction, Inc. of Thomaston, contractors for the project. Local sub-contractors included Hagar Enterprises, Inc and TempControl, both of Damariscotta.

Rob Flory stressed the importance of strategic partners in building a coalition of vital community resources to complete the process. This community should be justly proud of the support accorded Coastal Kids Preschool, he stated.

Kathleen Flory introduced accomplished local artist, Daisy Greene, sharing that she had created a piece she titled “World of Joy”, to honor Coastal Kids’ expansion. Greene unveiled the commemorative plaque with her original work incorporated, which honored all of the Capital Campaign supporters, the Board of Directors, Building Committee and numerous Donors. Director Congdon unveiled a similar plaque honoring all staff members present since the capital campaign began in 2009. Both plaques will hang in the preschool’s foyer. A print of Greene’s work was on each plaque presented to the various supporters.

Carole Hanson designed and executed a huge *bas relief* sculpture of two dolphins in honor of the names given to older classes – the Blue and Gray Dolphins. The granite was excavated from the site early during construction. It is the center piece of Joanna’s Sculpture Garden. Two benches and sitting stones sit invitingly near the preschool entrance and complete the garden.

Sharing memories of her grandson’s experience at Coastal Kids Preschool was Suzanne Rankin, grandmother of a former CKP student with special needs. Her moving account highlighted her grandson’s early life, his prognosis and the incredibly positive experience of his time at Coastal Kids. He has progressed beyond their expectations and is doing very well in school now, which she credited with the appropriate care and assistance provided by Congdon and her staff.

Lydia Templeton, a graduate of one of the early CKP classes in 1998, spoke of her positive experience at the school. Unbeknownst to Lydia, one of her early drawings is now part of the composite design of the preschool’s logo. She was presented with a new Coastal Kids tee shirt sporting the logo.

The celebration concluded with an array of goodies and fresh healthy refreshments, followed by tours of the new classrooms. The brightly colored walls were resplendent with artwork from all the children. Each classroom has several carpeted and tiled play areas. Newly purchased chairs completed the furnishing. Springtime experiments were in abundance. The shared supply and kitchenette area shared by two classrooms has special glass which affords one-way viewing for observation by staff and parents. The original building was renovated to include administrative and meeting spaces. Individual therapy also takes place here.

While the weather prevented outside tours of the playground, the newly installed swing set was visible and nearly complete. A special dedication will be planned later.

Director Congdon is now accepting enrollment applications for the summer camp and fall 2012 programs for ages 2 through 7 years. The Studio space is available for rent and is appropriate for dance or yoga classes. For more information on either enrollment or rental or to arrange a tour call 563-5335, or visit the school’s website:

www.coastalkidsme.com