

Yolo Crisis Nursery earns licensing, thanks donors

By Debbie Davis

From page A9 | May 10, 2015 |

<http://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/yolo-crisis-nursery-earns-licensing-thanks-donors/>

Like a toddler learning to walk, the Yolo Crisis Nursery has taken its first steps toward self-sufficiency by successfully qualifying for nonprofit status, establishing a local board of directors and securing licensing from the state of California.

For 15 years, the Yolo Crisis Nursery has provided emergency care to children from birth through age 5 when their parents or guardians find themselves unable to do so. Located on a quiet residential street in Davis, the crisis nursery served 265 Yolo County children in 2013, providing emergency overnight care, emergency day care, case management for parents by a licensed social worker and more.

Supporters of the nursery — which was on the brink of closure last year after its parent agency, EMQ FamiliesFirst, announced that it was pulling its funding — gathered Thursday evening to celebrate their successes.

Heidy Kellison, outgoing president of the Friends of the Yolo Crisis Nursery, emceed the party held at the home of longtime supporters Liz and Doug Malinoff. Kellison thanked local elected officials for their unflagging support, generous donors for their important gifts, volunteers for their dedicated service and nursery director Heather Sleuter for keeping the program going during uncertain times.

Special honors went to Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza and Deputy Supervisor Gina Daleiden, who said “closure is not an option” when the crisis became apparent last year, Kellison said.

“These are the folks who kept the doors open,” she added, and unveiled a plaque honoring them that will grace the front door of the nursery. The Provenza/Daleiden Front Door joins Laura’s Garden, named in honor of founder Laura Heintz, as the only parts of the nursery that are named.

Steve Fleming, CEO of River City Bank and a representative of the bank’s Kelly Foundation, also was honored for the foundation’s early financial support. Fleming said the foundation uses three criteria in deciding its charitable grants: mission, need and track record. The Yolo Crisis Nursery fit the bill in all three categories, he said.

Kellison also thanked the many donors who dug deep to support the nursery — “children and their lemonade stands, kids who broke their piggy banks, retirees on fixed incomes, families who rearranged their budgets” as well as local government leaders, foundations and businesses.

She also expressed appreciation for EMQ FamiliesFirst for partnering with the nursery as it worked to obtain nonprofit status and state licensing.

Becky Heard was introduced as the new president of the nursery’s board, and Martha Bernauer and Nancy Storm as the co-presidents of the Friends of the Yolo Crisis Nursery.

Kellison herself was the target of much love, as supporters credited her leadership for keeping the nursery afloat.

“She’s Superwoman,” Daleiden said. “No one says no to Heidy.”

But sadly, the nursery’s services remain vitally necessary for families in crisis, Heard said.

“California has the highest incidence of child abuse in the United States,” she said, “and Yolo County’s incidence is high in California. This nursery does critical, critical work.”

The nursery's One Child — One Day fundraising campaign continues through June 21, Father's Day. Donors are asked to give a minimum of \$50, the average cost of providing one day of emergency respite care for one child.

Supporters may visit yolocrisisnursery.org and click on "donate" to make a tax-deductible donation, or checks made payable to "Yolo Crisis Nursery" may be mailed to Vic Bucher, CPA, 1477 Drew Ave., Suite 103, Davis, CA 95618.