



Winter 2009 - 2010 Newsletter

A Note from the Director

Dear Friends of KFRC,

In the last few months I have had the pleasure of having one meeting chaired by a 3 year old, another meeting with kids and adults having dinner while planning out the next phase of **The Tree House**, and a few meetings where nap time was a blessing and the lack of naptimewell let's just say those meetings ended early.

There have been spouses who have taken more then their share of turns at bedtime while late night planning and emails were completed; and those families who, despite the H1N1, still managed to

pull off an awesome silent auction. The most wonderful thing about working with and around young children is stopping to play – to pass the wooden pizza, color the

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papers and make the letter "M" eleven times – in the midst of all the planning. The fact is that kids help you never to lose sight of the brass ring, and they also

remind you that running after that ring can be fun and rewarding in and of itself.

This Holiday season I would like to dedicate this newsletter to all of the wonderful volunteers and their families who have been working and playing on this project. Along with the KFRC staff and community supporters who are making my job easier, and the KFRC Board whose enthusiasm and approval of this endeavor made way for it to become reality, I wish you and your loved ones all of the joys and delights this special season brings.

Happy Holidays!

Catherine Benda

HATS OFF TO AN AWESOME COMMUNITY!

KFRC is most grateful for the generosity of the many community businesses and individuals who donated items for our silent auction as well as those who came out to bid on the 90 baskets. Specifically, we give thanks to the following donors: Emily Lancour-Tastefully Simple products, The Bike Shop, Chris Alquist and the Portage Lake District Library, Angela Poulos, Kay O'Connor-Hairsmiths, Copper Country Chiropractic, Julie Markham, Sounds and Motion, Good Times Music, Pilgrim River Steak House, Framed by Kathy, Joey's Seafood, Silver Rae Studio, 5th & Elm Coffee House, Ronda Bogan, Susan Donnelly, Sew Irresistible, Rhythm Skate Shop, Down Wind Sports, Cross Country Sports, Joe Kirkish, Geri Merkey, and Angela Campioni. THANK YOU! For all those still shopping for presents, please SHOP LOCALLY!



Portage Health Donates \$25,000 to KFRC's Tree House



Portage Health President and CEO Jim Bogan, third from left, donates \$25,000 to Tree House Design Committee Chair Monica Aho during a ceremony held December 7th at the Tree House Indoor Playground in Houghton. Also present are, from left, industrial engineer Renata Sommerville, Portage Health Pediatric Occupational Therapist Jonathan Packham, KFRC Executive Director Cathy Benda, and sitting with the children, Tree House Project Chair Jessica DellaValla.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT

The Tree House



What is The Tree House Project?

The Tree House will be the KFRC's physical location, an indoor playground and exploration space, where children ages 0 through 4 and their parents or caregivers will enjoy open play as well as a series of parent/child activities devoted to the physical, emotional, and social development of children. In addition to providing open play, the Keweenaw Family Resource Center will collaborate with other local providers to host a myriad of formal programs including, but not limited to, music and movement classes, Mommy Daddy and Me Playgroups, interactive literacy activities, Kid Fit, and other creative play.

How is The Tree House Different from Preschool or Daycare?

There exists excellent daycare and preschool programs in the Copper Country but all, by definition, require that the adult caregiver leave the child with a teacher or other trained employee. The Tree House will provide a place for a parent and a child to play together in a warm, clean, stimulating environment.

Where will it be located and what will it include?

The physical space will be approximately 3,000 square feet, located in Red Ridge Plaza on Sharon Avenue in Houghton, MI. Of that space, approximately 2,500 square feet will be dedicated to the public, and 500 will be reserved for KFRC offices. In addition to the general play areas, there will be a designated section for infants as well as a place for breastfeeding mothers. The design of the space and planning of play areas is overseen by a committee chaired by Monica Aho, a pediatric physical therapist who is certified as a clinical specialist in pediatric physical therapy from the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties. All play areas will be designed to enhance developmental milestones.

Why did the KFRC decide to open an indoor playground?

There are nearly 3,000 children aged 0 to 5 in our region and over 400 new babies are born here every year. Given the area's average annual snowfall of about 250 inches, along with the fact that 22 percent of our preschoolers are overweight compared to 14 percent of 2-5 year olds nationally, it is clear that an indoor playground is not a luxury, but a necessity in our community. There is, at present, no place for preschool children to go with their parents and other family members during the six or seven months of heavy winter that this area experiences. The closest indoor facility is 2 hours away and it is targeted toward children older than 5. Simply put, The Tree House is opening because it is so badly needed!

Not only will an indoor playground provide a safe, clean place for preschool children to get much needed exercise as well as to work on social skills on even the snowiest of days, it will also provide a comfortable environment for parents to relax and/or talk with other parents while knowing that their adventuresome children are having fun in a positive way. The Tree House, thus, has the potential to become a hub of wellness for families in our community.

When will the playground open and when will it be open?

We are hoping to open the doors to the playground sometime in January 2010 for 25 hours per week, with the goal of doubling the amount of time over the next two years.

Who is paying for the playground?

Funding will be provided by grants, donations, and a membership fee per family. Memberships, scholarships, and sponsorships will help offset the cost of the playground. We are very busy working with a team of community volunteers to raise money to support the playground.

For those who can afford it, admission options to The Tree House for all on-site playgroups and open hours will be as follows:

One Year Family Membership: \$200
Academic Year Family Membership: \$150
Fall OR Winter Semester Family Membership: \$80
Summer Semester Family Membership: \$50
Monthly Family Membership: \$20
Daily Family Fee: \$5

* Family admission to off-site playgroups for non-members: \$3/day

Special classes and events may incur an additional fee. Rental opportunities will be available for businesses, community organizations, and individuals.

What if I cannot afford the fees?

This is a community playground and no one will be turned away. All are welcome! Scholarships and income-based memberships are available. Contact KFRC Director, Cathy Benda for more information.

What will happen to the KFRC playgroups?

Playgroups will continue at a variety of locations including the indoor playground. Each year a new schedule is developed depending on funding and available space.

What kinds of things will happen at The Tree House?

In addition to our playgroups, the KFRC will host visitors for unstructured, open play which will afford families an opportunity to play and learn together. There are also plans to have other providers as well as community members host programs and events at the site.

What can I do to help?

Local donations play a crucial role in the success of this project and to all of KFRC programs. Not only are they essential in maintaining programming as state and federal dollars increasingly dwindle, but they also provide a valuable "cash match," which is essential when applying for most grants. No amount is too small and every bit helps!

Gift Giving Levels

Friend of the Playground: \$25-\$499
Community Partner: \$500-\$999
Playground Donor: \$1000-\$4999
Playground Patron: \$5000 and up

You can also help by purchasing a "Picket For Playground" with a donation of \$100. Each picket may be inscribed with up to 17 characters and will be permanently displayed throughout The Tree House Indoor Playground. There are only 200 pickets for sale so don't wait to purchase yours!

Call now to find out how you can donate or simply use the enclosed envelope to send a donation. Please make checks payable to: **Keweenaw Family Resource Center.**



KFRC Serving The Community

From 10/01/08 through 09/30/09, the Keweenaw Family Resource Center:

- Visited 328 new mothers who delivered at both area hospitals providing "Welcome Baby" bags containing information on community resources.
- Mailed an average of 270 "Parenting the First Year" newsletters each month to families with newborns in the tri-county area.
- Provided 5 playgroups and 1 story hour at 5 locations each week. The number of child visits from playgroups and story hour totaled 1262!
- Provided 367 home visits to 37 children 3 years of age and under.
- Hosted 18 "Playtime in the Park" outings throughout the summer months at a variety of local parks with the number of child visits totaling 521.
- Provided 41 area families with needed items from the Baby & Maternity Closet.

January - May 2010 Center-Based Schedule

Mommy, Daddy & Me

MO: Trinity Episcopal Church (Houghton) 9:30am - 12:00pm
 WE: Trinity Episcopal Church (Houghton) 9:30am - 12:00pm *
 TH: Lake Linden High School (Lake Linden) 9:30am - 12:00pm
 FR: Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (Hancock) 9:30am - 12:00pm

Sleepy-Time Story Hour

Daniell Heights Community Center (MTU) 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm on some Mondays. **Dates vary.** Call KFRC for more info.

COMING SOON!

- ✓ A new Mommy, Daddy & Me playgroup located in Keweenaw County will be starting up in January 2010! Check our website often for starting date!
 - ✓ Great progress is being made on the Tree House Indoor Playground! Watch for emails and notices or check our website for the announcement of its opening date!
- * Upon the opening of the Tree House Indoor Playground, the Wednesday MDM Playgroup currently held at Trinity Episcopal Church will relocate to the new site in the Red Ridge Plaza, 850 West Sharon Avenue in Houghton.

Benefit From Michigan's Tax Credit...

Contribute to the KFRC's Endowment Fund! Doing so helps to maintain our programs during times of economic uncertainty. The Michigan Tax Credit allows individuals to give up to \$200 to Michigan Community Foundations, and half of that gift amount is credited against your Michigan income taxes. Contributions to the KFRC Endowment Fund are locally controlled and professionally managed through the Keweenaw Community Foundation. For information on donating to KFRC's Endowment Fund please contact the Keweenaw Community Foundation at (906) 482-9673 or KFRC at (906) 482-9363.

The impact of Michigan's Tax Credit when gifting to the KFRC Endowment Fund is as follows:

Amount of Annual Gift	\$200
MI State Tax Credit	\$100
Federal Tax Rate	36%
Federal Tax Savings	\$72
Total Tax Savings	\$172
Actual Cost of Gift	\$28

COMMUNITY PARTNERS . . . Helping KFRC Help Local Families



Erik & Molly Hayenga
 Kirk & Kristen Lufkin
 Thomas & Renee McConnon
 Psychology Associates
 of the Keweenaw
 Rice Memorial Foundation
 Margaret Sottile
 Michael Wilder



The Community Partners listed are as of November 30, 2009



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The mission of the Keweenaw Family Resource Center is to support, enrich and strengthen family life in the Keweenaw Peninsula by providing a variety of programs which focus on families with children from birth through 4 years. KFRC is a 501© 3 non-profit organization.

KFRC's NEW location will be in the Red Ridge Plaza,
850 West Sharon Avenue , Suite 5-6, Houghton, Michigan.
= Office Hours: Mon—Thurs, 9am-4pm; Fridays by appointment
Phone: (906) 482-9363 Fax: (906) 482-9353
Email: info@kfrckids.org Website: www.kfrckids.org
For program schedules check our website or call us at 482-9363.



KFRC is supported by the Michigan Department of Education, BHK Child Development Board, Copper Country Intermediate School District, Michigan Children's Trust Fund, Canterbury House/Episcopal Association for College Work, Copper Country United Way, Trinity Episcopal Church, Superior Child Abuse Prevention Council, Portage Health, Kiwanis of the Copper Country, The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan, local businesses, service organizations, and individual donations.

KFRC STAFF
Cathy Benda, *Director*
Lori Bradley, *Administrator*
Laura Nakkula, *Home Visitor/*
Early On Services Coordinator
Pam Sheridan, *Home Visitor*
Kathy Williams, *Center-Based Coordinator*
Andra Ziemnick, *Program Assistant*

KFRC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
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