

FNA Day Care Center Uncertain

Faces Funding Dilemma--

As of this week nobody in Fairbanks seems to know what will happen to the Fairbanks Native Association Day Care Center, formerly scheduled to open this week.

Director Bertha Lowe reported to the TUNDRA TIMES Tuesday morning that she had met with the FNA Board Monday night and they will support her morally in her search for \$6,000 in funds—three months operating expenses.

Any government grants will

probably take at least that long, she said, before they come through.

Mrs. Lowe said Monday that Fairbanks Native Community Center (FNCC) director Sam Kito had given her one week to find \$17,000 in additional funding necessary to operate the center and pay the expenses of renovating its building at 1550 Gillam Way in South Fairbanks.

The center has already completed some renovation in the

formerly surplus building which was once occupied by the Fairbanks Head Start program.

"Kito seemed to believe we could run a shoestring operation depending on volunteer help," Mrs. Lowe reported. "However, setting up a day care center requires a good trained staff. It is very difficult during a Fairbanks winter for volunteers, no matter how motivated, to be dependable. We can't set this up for nothing."

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Day Care...

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State regulations require one adult to be present at all times for each five children. The Day Care facility hopes to accommodate 14 children between the ages of three and five.

Mrs. Lowe reported on Monday that she was directed by Sam Kito to cancel out on any children who had registered for day care last Friday, when the center had announced it would be open for business Monday morning.

"We need an operating license first and we haven't passed our building inspection," she said.

"A day care center is badly needed in Fairbanks," said Mrs. Lowe who has almost single-handedly worked to put the center in business. "We have to get funding before anything can happen. The only people who are fully giving us support are the people on the board." The impromptu Day Care Center board is mainly composed of representatives of social service agencies and experts in the child development field.

Among the members of the advisory board are Laura Jenkinson, of the State Division of Child Welfare, UA Cooperative Extension Day Care Consultant Margaret Connet, Mary Cary of the Public Health Service and Head Start Project Director Betty Wescott.

Mrs. Wescott wrote the original day care proposal as a graduate school class project two years ago.

Since its inception, as part of the Fairbanks Native Community Center Model Urban Center plan, the day care center has suffered from inadequate financing and support from the FNCC staff. Unless Mrs. Lowe finds her own sources of financing the entire idea may be scrubbed for this year.

On Monday, Mrs. Lowe met with Dr. Niilo Koponen of the North Star Borough School System seeking help in her search for financial support.

"We're fortunate in Fairbanks in trying to start a day care center in that there are various experienced agencies to turn to for help—the university, social services agencies, etc. Also, there is a great deal of interest in the project. Eventually, we hope education for three to five year olds could be added to the borough education system. However, that is far in the future," said Mrs. Lowe.

The day care center hopes to serve mothers of pre-school children who work or are participating in job training or other programs. Ideally, the center will serve low income families. Charges are estimated at \$6 per day for the first child, \$2 for each additional child on a sliding scale based on family income. The Welfare Department will pick up charges for mothers eligible for help.

The original day care center proposal provided for two full time teachers, one part time teacher assisted by Work Experience Program trainees and unpaid volunteers.



DAY CARE DILEMMA—FNA Day Care Center head Bertha Lowe is trying to find funds so she can open a facility for 14 children ages three to five.

The center, at 1550 Giliam Way in Fairbanks, was originally scheduled to open this week but postponed indefinitely due to lack of funds.