

## One Kids Place — \$2.2M away from goal

Updated 28 mins ago

One Kids Place is hitting up area municipalities for contributions to its capital fundraising campaign as it prepares to open the doors to its new facility this summer.

Jason Corbett, development and community relations manager at the children's treatment centre, has been visiting municipal councils over the past few months asking for financial support to help cover \$2.2 million that's still needed to pay for the construction of the \$15.5-million building at the corner of McKeown Avenue and Gormanville Road. Approximately \$4.3 million of the \$6.5-million community goal has been raised.

Although communities are under no obligation to make a contribution, Corbett said One Kids Place hopes municipal politicians will recognize the important services the agency provides to their residents.

"We present to each municipality the number of children in their community who access our services," said Corbett, who has already visited about half of the 26 municipalities within the treatment centre's catchment area, which includes Nipissing, Parry Sound and Muskoka.

One Kids Place provides rehabilitation services to children and youths as old as 19 who have communication, developmental and physical disabilities. The centre provided services last year to more than 1,600 kids and it's expected to serve more than 3,000 annually once it moves in to the new 3,780-square-metre building.

So far, North Bay is the only municipality to have contributed to the campaign, donating \$1.5 million several years ago, long before the fundraising got off the ground.

Corbett said other municipalities are being asked to give \$26 per capita based on North Bay's contribution. But he said that's only a benchmark and municipalities can give as much as they can afford over a number of years.

East Ferris Mayor Bill Vrebosch said his council believes in the project, but is having a tough time coming up with a donation.

"We don't know where we're going to find the money . . . these are tough times," said Vrebosch.

He said East Ferris is looking at a tax levy increase this year of approximately 2.5%. And Vrebosch said the municipality has already made a hefty commitment of \$750,000 over 10 years toward the North Bay Regional Health Centre.

He said some councillors were also under the impression that the hospital contribution would benefit the treatment centre because the two facilities were initially supposed to be housed in the same building.

Bonfield Mayor Narry McCarthy said council has discussed how it can make a contribution with the crunch on money" every municipality faces.

We realize the importance of this facility . . . we do support it," McCarthy said, adding they have an idea to bounce off One Kids Place representatives before making a decision.

Corbett said the doors to the new treatment centre facility will open this summer regardless of whether or not the outstanding community share of the capital costs is raised. But he said the facility will have to enter into debt financing for whatever amount it falls short of raising.

Having a debt is not ideal," said Corbett, noting that would divert funding from programs and services.

The new facility will house several organizations and programs including pediatricians, Nipissing Association for Disabled Youth and the Best Start and Ontario Early Years programs.

gyoung@nugget.ca

---

Copyright © 2009 The North Bay Nugget