

Gloria Hayes, Executive Director
Good Shepherd and East Shore Child Development Centers
Milford, Connecticut.

**TESTIMONY FOR THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 27, 2007**

Senator Harris, Representative Villano, and Members of the Human Services Committee:

I am Gloria Hayes, Executive Director of Good Shepherd and East Shore Child Development centers in Milford. We have been providing early care and education services since 1969. We are a non-profit corporation, receiving partial funding from the Department of Social Services through a Purchase of Service Contract. Seventy-five percent of our families earn less than seventy-five percent of the State Median Income. Forty-five percent of our children are being raised in single-parent households. Our Good Shepherd Center was asked to relocate in June of 2003. This is the second time in the history of that center that they have had to relocate. We looked at spaces to renovate, but could not find a suitable building. Therefore, we began to search for land on which we could build a new center.

We have now purchased land, gone through all the approval processes the City of Milford requires, and our building permits are being issued as we speak. In addition, we applied for and received a three-million dollar loan from CHEFA (Ct. Health and Education Authorities), received approval for \$500,000 in Department of Social Services Bond Funds, received grants from private foundations, and started a Capital Campaign which is on-going.

Good Shepherd Child Development Center currently serves twenty-four infants and toddlers and twenty-nine preschool children. In our new center we will add thirty-two more infants and toddler spaces and seven more preschool spaces. We currently have forty-eight infants and toddlers on our waiting list. As you may be aware, in our state there is a lack of sufficient good quality care available for children under the age of three.

Our new center has been designed to create a healthy and safe place for the children, as well as to enhance the learning environment. The center will be built to meet LEED certifications (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). The U.S. Green Building Council has developed a rating system, and in its literature states, "Green Design not only makes a positive impact on public health and the environment, it also reduces operating costs ..." We certainly want to have a positive impact on the health of the ninety-two children that will attend our new center. As a nonprofit corporation, lower operating costs will definitely be important. But this healthier and cost effective environment comes at a price. Obtaining LEED Certification will cost at least \$80,000. When the center is completed, it will be the first "green" building in Milford, and the first "green" childcare center in the state.

I have given you copies of the design of the building. You will notice that for improved safety and supervision, all classrooms have direct access to the outdoors, and bathrooms in the classrooms. In addition, there is a large open area in the center of the building which will allow us to have an increased focus on large muscle activities, regardless of the weather. Our building will also include an energy efficient heating and air conditioning system. We are really looking forward to having a cooling system.

Our request for the 2007 Bond Funds is for \$350,000. We plan to use that money in following ways:

1. To complete construction
2. To cover the cost of LEED Certification and architectural oversight
3. For furniture, fixtures, and equipment

Thank you for considering this request.