

(3) Establishment Of The Campsie Child Care Centre

Originally, the Government's funding to the Society for FDCDS was for a pilot project of three years' duration. A review was scheduled to determine if the funding was to continue or modification is needed at the end of the pilot period. Following the receipt of funding and the employment of a paid staff by the Society, the project proceeded very smoothly and received extremely favourable reactions from the community to the extent that one staff was unable to cope with the demand. At the end of 1983, the Society reflected the difficulties encountered to the Government. Under very exceptional circumstances, the Government approved extra funding to enable the Society to employ two extra staff for FDCDS before the review of the project at the end of the pilot period. Mrs. Susie Chu and Mrs. Christine Cheng made contributions to the development of FDCDS during this stage.

The success of FDCDS built up the confidence of the Government on the ability of our Society to manage and administer other publicly funded projects. In June 1984, the Federal Government's Office of Child Care contacted our Society to inquire if we were willing to establish and operate child care centres in areas outside Surry Hills. The Board of Directors deliberated the matter and resolved that location was not a key factor. It would be more important to begin the provision of services to the community as early as possible.

September to December 1984

Assisted by the Federal Government, the Society entered into negotiations with the then private owner of the Campsie Kindergarten (44 Sixth Avenue, Campsie). The Government was willing to provide a grant of \$250,000 for the purchase of the child care centre. However, at that time, the owner, who also owned the adjoining property No. 48, stipulated that the Society must purchase that property as well (valued at \$40,000). Otherwise he would not sell any one of the properties. The Government had expressed clearly that no funding would be provided for the purchase of properties unrelated to the child care centre.

At that time, the Society did not have any fund to purchase the property at No. 48. As the Society had no operating history with revenue generation, no banks or financial institutions were willing to provide loans. In order for the project to proceed, some directors of the Board and their partner were willing to make financial commitment using their personal properties. A request was made to the vendor to delay the settlement of the property's sale at No. 48 for one year. This would enable the Society to have time to carry out activities to raise funds. Luckily the owner accepted this proposal, which allowed the purchasing of the property at No. 44 to proceed. Four persons who provided financial assurance using their personal assets were: Dr. Leng Tan, Dr. Tony Goh, Dr. Cecilia Fong and Mr. Henry Pan.

29 January 1985

Campsie Child Care Centre commenced operation formally, providing long day care, before and after school care and vacation care.

December 1985

In order to purchase the property at No. 48, a fundraising fete was organised for the first time. It managed to raise enough fund to pay for the 10% deposit and the legal fees connected with the purchase of that property. The then Treasurer, Dr Leng Tan, made significant contributions during this period. In addition, a bank had agreed to

provide a loan to the Society for the purchase of the property at No 48, but with an interest rate of 21%.

February to December 1986

At the time when the Society took charge of the Campsie Child Care Centre from the private owner, the state of condition of the Centre and its equipment were very poor. To improve the quality and service standard, the Society carried out major renovation work. On the other hand, as it was the first time that the Society managed a child care centre, the lack of in-depth understanding of operations and personnel matters led to quite a number of mistakes, some led to industrial disputes.

29 March 1987

The renovation work of Campsie Child Care Centre was completed satisfactorily. The then Federal Minister, Hon. Tom Uren officially opened the Centre on this day at a ceremony.

End of 1987

After two years of tireless efforts, the bank loan for the purchasing of the property No. 48 was finally paid off. Intermittent fundraising activities continued until 1990 in order to raise fund for the construction of an activity centre at the premises.