

MEDIA RELEASE

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Children's Beach House Announces Plans for a New Preschool in Celebration of its 75th Anniversary

Lewes, Delaware – May 22, 2012 –In observance of the 75th anniversary of its founding, and in response to the needs of the community it was established to serve, the Children's Beach House recently announced plans to open a new child development center in its Lewes facility on the Delaware Bay. The decision is seen as the inevitable next step in an ongoing program expansion that has helped the agency meet the needs of the children it serves.

“As I've worked with trustees over the years, a clear, strong consensus has emerged,” says Richard Garrett, Executive Director of the Children's Beach House. “They want long-term relationships with children, to serve entire families, and to measure results. In 2005 we adopted a new program design expanding our summer camps by adding case management, as well as weekend camping. Suddenly, we became partners with parents and had the ability to respond to the individual needs of the children.” explains Garrett. “One of the questions that we continually ask ourselves is how can we do better? About two years ago, we adopted a strategic plan that called for yet another expansion of our services. This time, it was to identify children with special needs at an earlier age and one of the most effective ways we can provide that early intervention is by starting a child development center which will include a preschool and extended day enrichment programs for students who are enrolled.”

“It is exciting to take what we do well at CBH and to see it expand into new directions,” says Dr. J. Thomas Sturgis, a long-time trustee, past President, and chair of the child development center task force. “The creation of a preschool will allow us to identify and respond to challenges earlier. A language-rich environment will exert a tremendous influence upon those children. We are committed to developmentally appropriate practices. In addition, we desire to meet the criteria of the Delaware STARS program and the standards of the National Institute for Early Education Research and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. These steps will ensure that we provide a high quality service to our children and their families.”

Trustee and Program Committee chair, Lisa Ratliff, who is co-owner of the Little School at Kids' Cottage is excited by the opportunities of the program. “The Children's Beach House serves children with speech, language, and hearing challenges, but our programs extend far beyond those specific needs. We look at a child's total needs and most closely at the social and emotional domains. We ask the following questions to assess our participants' needs. Do they have good friendships with their peers? Do they have enough competent, caring adults around them? Are

they in safe environments? These aren't just warm and fuzzy thoughts. These are actually the assets that foster good communication skills and positive youth development. It's supported by research."

The center will serve approximately 16 three year-olds in the first year and as they move to a four year-old program the following year, 16 more three year-olds will be added. The school is being built and licensed for a capacity of 60. CBH hopes to open for the first class in September 2013.

Approximately \$250,000 has been raised to make changes to the facility in Lewes to meet the requirements for licensing in the State of Delaware. These changes include the construction of a new age-appropriate playground, the construction of new bathrooms with child-sized fixtures, the installation of panic hardware on all exterior doors, and the replacement of 12 passenger vans with vehicles approved by the Department of Childcare Licensing.

In addition, the board is in the midst of a campaign to raise an additional \$2,000,000 to create an endowment that will help cover the operating costs of the preschool.

"This is a thoughtful approach to make sure we can serve those who most need our services without regard for ability to pay. When the endowment is fully funded, it will mean the preschool is a part of our program and our community forever," says Garrett.

Lydia Chichester duPont founded CBH in 1936 as a place where she could bring children with orthopedic challenges to experience the same healing qualities she herself had discovered on Lewes Beach. Over the years, the focus of the programs has changed. At one point CBH served children with polio, and at another time its function was to meet the needs of kids with rheumatic fever. Once there was a dental program which helped give rise to the dental clinics in Delaware. Then and now the board of trustees constantly work to identify the most pressing needs of children and to build responsive programs.

In the 1970s CBH collaborated with the University of Delaware to build what was considered a state-of-the-art program based on behaviorist theory. This effort led to the creation of the Consortium which was started as a partnership between CBH and the Cape Henlopen School District. In the early 2000s, the board adopted an updated program model based on the Positive Youth Development Theory.

MEDIA: Please call Amanda Ryan, Director of Development (302) 645-9184 for more information or to schedule a follow-up interview or filming.