

# Sunflower Childcare Centre

smúkʷaʔxń scəcəmalla  
itskn snmaʔmayaʔtn

Helping Students  
and their Families Bloom





# Answering the Urgent Call for Childcare

By pursuing higher education, parents can transform their lives and the lives of their families.

Once they graduate, they'll have cultivated skillsets that allow them to improve their employment prospects, fill critical skill gaps and make meaningful contributions to communities throughout the North Okanagan.

However, many parents face barriers that prevent them from going back to school. Their educational aspirations are often delayed (or even halted) by the shortage of local childcare options.

Student parents who don't have access to quality care are also more likely to struggle with anxiety and depression, which can lead to poor school performance and higher rates of withdrawal.

What's more, even when offered childcare placements, financial barriers can get in the way. A recent study commissioned by the City of Vernon found that the two leading issues for local parents are lack of childcare availability and cost of care.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, 88% of student parents are living

near or at the poverty line. As a result, the cost of childcare deters many from pursuing postsecondary education.

To address these issues, Okanagan College is building the **Sunflower Childcare Centre / smúkwa?xñ scəcəmalla itskn snma?maya?tn** on our Vernon Campus.

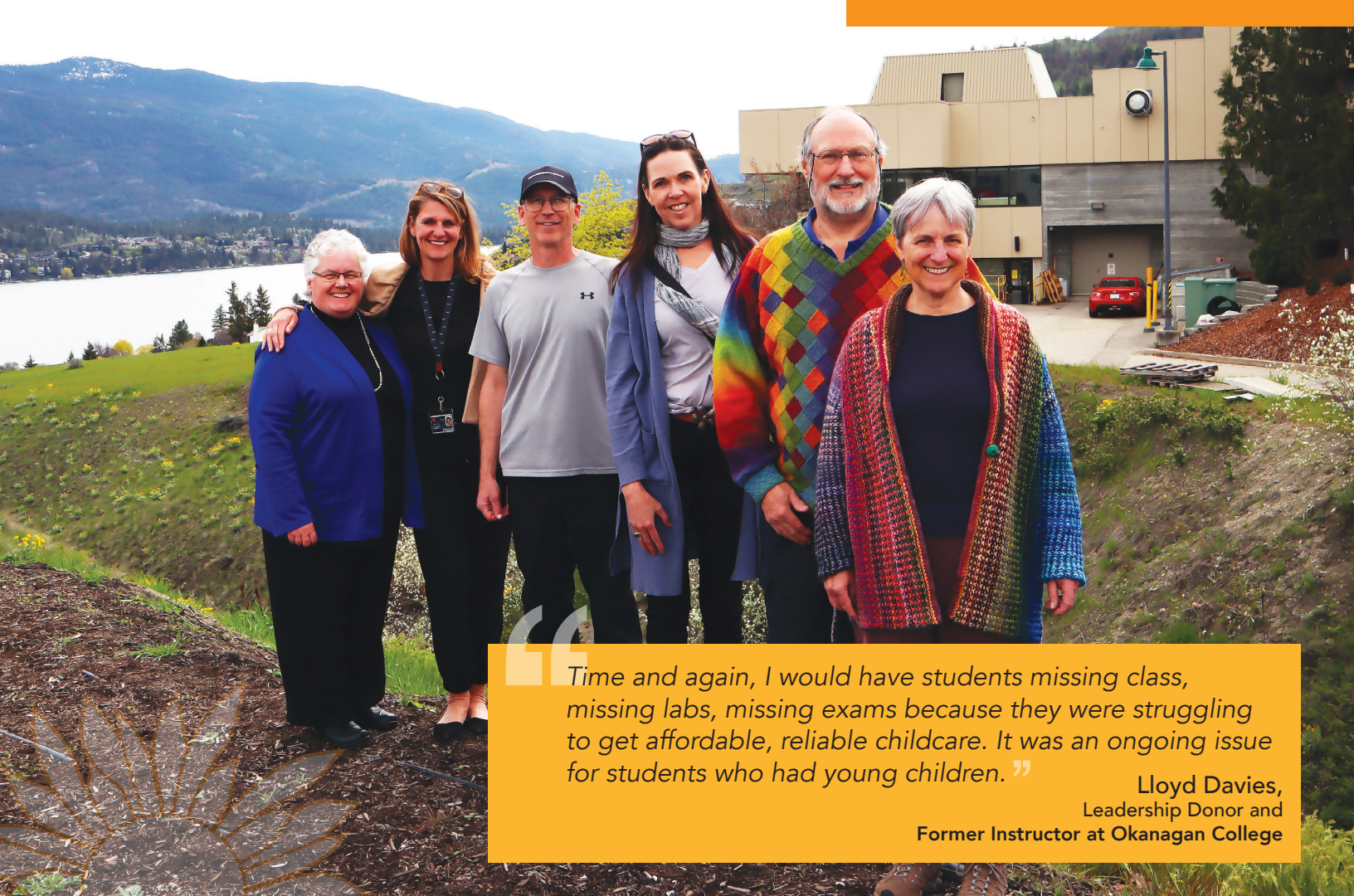
Affordable childcare will be offered through programs like the \$10-a-Day childcare initiative or the Child Care Fee Reduction initiative. It will be operated by Maven Lane, a well-respected non-profit childcare provider whose certified, experienced staff already have 550 local children in their high-quality care.

While the new Centre will prioritize seats for students it will also be open to community, and will increase the total number of spaces available locally.

We need community support to complete and equip this beautiful new 44-seat childcare centre with furnishings, supplies, and a creative outdoor space where the kids can play and learn.







*Time and again, I would have students missing class, missing labs, missing exams because they were struggling to get affordable, reliable childcare. It was an ongoing issue for students who had young children.* ”

**Lloyd Davies,**  
Leadership Donor and  
Former Instructor at Okanagan College

Photo of: Gladys Fraser, Former Chair, Okanagan College Foundation; Helen Jackman, Executive Director, Okanagan College Foundation; Eric Reist, General Manager, Vernon Students' Association at Okanagan College; Athena Grelson, Okanagan College student; Lloyd Davies and Janet Armstrong, Leadership Donors.

## What's in a name?

The Sunflower Childcare Centre / **smúkʷaʔxñ scəcəmalla itskn snmaʔmayaʔtn** was named by leadership donors Lloyd Davies and Janet Armstrong, who were inspired by the symbolism of sunflowers, in particular, the **Okanagan Sunflower** / **smúkʷaʔxn** a vibrant yellow wildflower that dots the hillside on Okanagan College's Vernon Campus. This stunning location overlooks Kalamalka lake, has trails linking to Okanagan College's Indigenous garden, and provides the perfect space for the Centre's curated outdoor play areas.

The Okanagan Sunflower, also known as the Arrowleaf Balsamroot, is a beloved and beautiful marker of spring for many locals. It also carries great significance for Indigenous communities throughout the region. Almost every part of the flower is edible, and its fragrant roots contain anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties that make it a powerful plant medicine. In other words, it carries within its blossoms the power to nourish and within its roots the power to heal.

What better name to give an on-campus childcare centre designed to help students and their families bloom and to support them as they work to cultivate deep roots in communities across the North Okanagan.

Okanagan College respectfully acknowledges that the Sunflower Childcare Centre / **smúkʷaʔxñ scəcəmalla itskn snmaʔmayaʔtn** on our Vernon Campus is on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan people.



## Impact on Students

Access to high-quality childcare will allow parents to improve their lives by pursuing their educational goals.



## Impact on Community

After graduation, student parents will help fill roles in fields facing critical staffing shortages, like the skilled trades and health care.

The Centre will serve as a practicum site, providing opportunities for the North Okanagan's next generation of Early Childhood Educators to receive high-quality, real-world education.

The Centre's 44 seats will increase the total number of spaces available in the community.



## Impact on Children

Providing children with high-quality early childhood learning improves their social and emotional development and physical wellbeing.

51%

of parents are waitlisted for childcare services\*

2 years

average time spent on childcare waitlists\*\*

3x

more likely to graduate with childcare\*\*\*

\*51% - City of Vernon Child Care Space Action Plan

\*\*2 years - City of Vernon Child Care Space Action Plan

\*\*\*3x - Institute for Women's Policy Research



“I signed up for fourteen  
childcare waitlists, and it still  
took years to get my daughter  
into daycare.”

Megean Dahms,  
Student Parent, Okanagan College  
Vernon Campus



“I signed up for as many waitlists  
as I could, but I was only offered  
part-time placements. Not  
having full-time childcare has  
meant that my schooling has  
taken much longer, and I’ve  
struggled in my classes because  
I haven’t had quiet study time.”

Halima Shikh,  
Student Parent, Okanagan College  
Vernon Campus

“I’ve really struggled to find  
good, licensed childcare  
for my daughter. She’s my  
everything. I’d almost rather  
not go to school than go  
and worry she’s not being  
properly cared for.”

Sarina Parsons,  
Student Parent, Okanagan College  
Vernon Campus

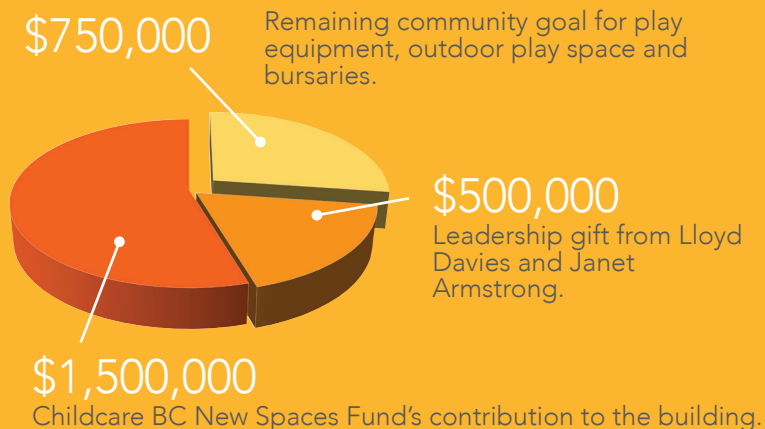






The Sunflower Childcare Centre / smúkwa?xñ scəcəmalla itskn snma?maya?tn is a \$2.75 million project that will be integrated into the new student housing at Okanagan College's Vernon Campus.

With \$500,000 secured towards our \$1.25 million community goal, we need your help to raise the remaining \$750,000 needed to equip and furnish the space, create a vibrant outdoor play space, and provide bursaries for struggling students.







## DONOR RECOGNITION

Gifts of \$100,000 and above	Name one of the four main learning spaces.
Gifts of \$50,000 and above	Recognition in the main corridor.
Gift of \$25,000 and above	Recognition in an indoor or outdoor learning space.
Gifts of \$1,000 and above	Recognition on the donor wall.



We would be pleased to speak with you about how you can support student parents and their children at Okanagan College's Vernon Campus.



**Helen Jackman**  
Executive Director,  
Okanagan College  
Foundation

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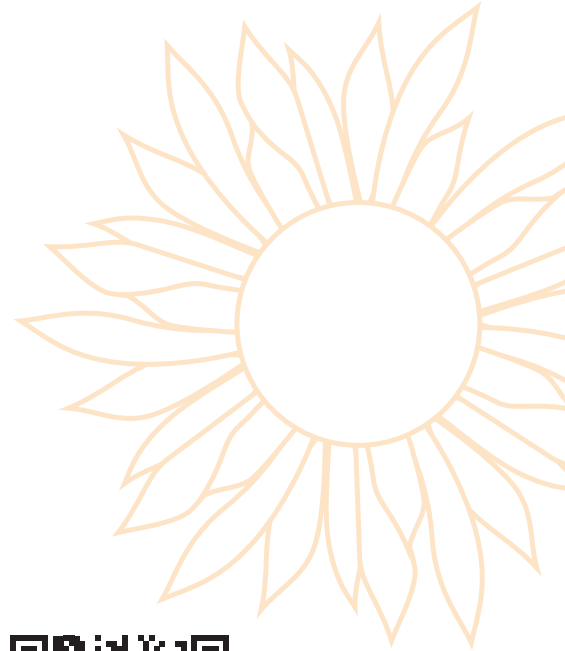
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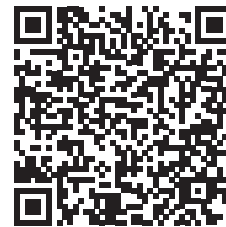
**Michael Tindall**  
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Campaign Fundraising  
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To donate or learn more about how you can help students and their families bloom, please visit:

[okanagan.bc.ca/sunflowercampaign](https://okanagan.bc.ca/sunflowercampaign)



Cheques can be mailed to: Okanagan College Foundation

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