

‘Cause to celebrate’

By **Karen Blackledge**
The Danville News

February 03, 2009 02:32 pm

— DANVILLE — A state official praised the Danville Child Development Center for its quality, accountability and leadership during the kickoff of a week-long 35th anniversary celebration. The address Monday morning by Harriet Dichter, deputy secretary of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning in Harrisburg, was interrupted by the fainting of a center staff member. The young woman passed out while standing with the audience in the warm dining room area. The woman came to quickly and then sat in a chair. A Danville ambulance and medic responded.

Dichter resumed, saying the center had humble beginnings with a six-month lease in a church and six children.

“Your work has been pace-setting the rest of the state,” she said of the nationally accredited center, that has received high state honors as well. “You have good cause to celebrate,” she said.

The center, which now serves nearly 600 children a year, has been extremely well-focused on accountability, she said.

As for leadership, she praised Executive Director Diana Dixon for representing the child care community well and having a good relationship with state officials.

“There’s a lot of leadership here,” she said, calling it an “abundance of quality representation.”

Kathleen Mulligan said she and Nancy Vella each borrowed \$2,000 to start the center. “And here we are today,” said Mulligan, who served as center director 11 years. She thanked the center board and staff members for an outstanding program.

Dixon said the center is the only nationally accredited child care program and the only four-star state rated program in Montour and Northumberland counties.

E-mail comments to kblackledge@thedanvillenews.com.

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Photos



Kathleen Mulligan, one of the founders of the Danville Child Development Center, speaks during a 35th anniversary celebration for the facility Monday. Center executive director Diana Dixon is at left.



Harriet Dichter, deputy secretary of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning in Harrisburg, praises the Danville Child Development Center during its 35th anniversary celebration Monday.