

# The goal is balancing play, learning at Beaverton's Young Learners Preschool

By **CHELA WALLACE**  
For Times Newspapers

One year ago, Young Learners Preschool and Kindergarten in Beaverton opened its doors at a new location but with the economy faltering and unemployment on the rise, owner Cindy Canfield wondered about the timing of it all.

"I was more than a little nervous," Canfield said. "To make it work financially, we needed a few more students. Since preschool is optional, we just weren't sure what kind of enrollment we'd see."

As it turns out, her fears were unfounded: "I'm happy to say, we've reached our goal of 200 students."

"Our school was founded by Elaine Bueffel in 1984, and has always benefitted from word-of-mouth advertising," Canfield said. "We're very grateful for our parents' willingness to recommend Young Learners. Our Web site also brings in a lot of folks."

The school sets itself apart from other schools because it's not tied to one

teaching philosophy, Canfield said.

"That gives us the freedom to pick the best parts and draw on our 25-year history of what works."

"Children today have a greater expectation to be entertained," said Canfield, a mother of two. "Our creative play curriculum challenges that by emphasizing hands-on learning, exploration and using the imagination. We value social and emotional growth, being expressive and interacting with others in positive and fun ways."

And while some schools push early academics, Canfield said it wasn't her school's focus.

"While we develop written and oral language skills and math concepts, we believe that aggressively pushing academics at the preschool level is not age-

appropriate," Canfield said. "We do a good job of balancing the academics piece with learning to play."

Canfield, who had a career at Nike before coming to Young Learners, knows the value of being able to work cooperatively in teams and how essential it is to succeed in today's work environment.

"Our No. 1 goal is for kids to love learning and being at school. Kids have a lot of learning ahead of them; having a positive foundation is essential to later academic success."

In the future, Canfield is considering expanding the school again.

"Right now, there is a demand for pre-K and kindergarten, that's where the expansion would be, if we do it. More people are turning to private kindergarten and parents who come to us appreciate the four-hour day and small class size we offer."

Canfield said she is glad to know that her school has survived and even thrived during the economic downturn.

"I sometimes pinch myself and ask, Is this year a fluke or a trend? Of course, I'm hoping it's a trend. I'm just thankful I took a chance on my dream and everything has turned out so well."

## Getting there

Young Learners is located at 1800 N.W. 169th Place, Suite C-100 in the Twin Oaks Business Center off Northwest Cornell Road, near Dania Furniture in Beaverton).

For more information or to schedule a tour, call 503-645-9292 or visit [www.younglearners.net](http://www.younglearners.net).

**"Our No. 1 goal is for kids to love learning and being at school."**

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Cindy Canfield  
Young Learners Owner

# Woman leaves \$85,000 gift to county animal shelter

The Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter serving Washington County received a bequest of \$85,000 from Beaverton resident Vivian Irene Robbins.

Robbins always had an affinity toward pets, said longtime friend, Wilbur Shehorn of Tualatin.

"Animals had a special place in her heart. She was a very compassionate lady and usually had three or four cats at a time."

"This gift comes at an important time," said Deborah Wood, animal services manager of the shelter. "Our pet adoption rates are increasing and our shelter is saving more and more of the animals' lives. It's gifts like this one from Mrs. Robbins that help us continue making these improvements and successes."

Robbins was born in 1926 in New York City, where she grew up and became an opera singer. She then moved to Beaverton as

a homemaker in 1958 and later worked at Tektronix. Her interests included golf, tennis and football.

Designating a bequest to the shelter not only leaves a legacy in a donor's name, but it also increases the shelter's success in saving animals' lives, Wood said.

"Every dollar donated stays right here in our shelter to help the 7,000 animals we receive each year," she said.

Donations may be designated to a general fund, to pay medical expenses for neglected animals or to pay for future building improvements.

"(Robbins') generous gift will help pay for spaying and neutering pets before adoption," Wood said.

Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter is located at 1901 S.E. 24th Ave., in Hillsboro. For more information, call 503-846-7041 or visit [www.co.washington.or.us/pets](http://www.co.washington.or.us/pets).

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