



Bowie Blade-News This Week

[Bowie Classifieds](#)
[HometownAnnapolis.com](#)
[Bowie Guidebook](#)

Bowie YMCA now expanding services with grant

By MATT ARMES Staff Writer

The local YMCA will soon be opening its doors a little wider to the community.

The Bowie YMCA at 3501 Moylan Drive is expanding its capacity and is reopening its Infants and Toddlers Program, thanks to a \$229,000 grant from the Maryland Department of Education and the help of the Arc of Prince George's County.

According to Bowie YMCA Director Jessica Bennett, the YMCA child care center is the first of its kind in the county to offer inclusive medical child care to more children within the county as a part of its educational program.

"I am so excited about expanding our program," she said. "Our mission is to include everyone and provide an environment of mutual respect for all, and this expansion matches the mission exactly."

Bennett explained that the Infants and Toddlers Program had been put on hold in August 2006 because of downsizing. The program originally had one room for infants, one for toddlers, one for 2- and 3-year-olds and one for 3- and 4-year-olds. The grant will allow them to now have one room for infants and toddlers.

As a result of the YMCA enlarging its program, more children will have access to its Creative Classroom curriculum in a safe and caring environment.

Bennett said the grant money would go toward staffing positions and supplies as well as nursing care for children, which makes the YMCA the first child care center in the county to offer on-site nursing in an already established educational program for children who may need it.

Through the grant, the YMCA would be able to provide higher than usual caregiver-to-child numbers. Bennett said the ratio of caregivers to children would be 1-3 caregivers for infants

and toddlers, and 1-4 caregivers for children ages 2 and up.

Bennett said the YMCA is eagerly looking forward to its upcoming open house, scheduled for Wednesday, April 16, at 9 a.m. All members of the community are invited to attend.

"There will be a basic tour of our facilities, some of the classrooms, and more information about the new Infant and Toddler Program," said Bennett, who has worked as the YMCA director for two-a-half-years and 10 overall.

The YMCA provides a healthy environment where children enjoy music activities, gym and playground time, dramatic play, field trips, and are also taught literacy, math, science and social skills they need to be ready for kindergarten.

The YMCA operates Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and accepts Medicaid and day-care subsidies.

Published 04/10/08, Copyright © 2008 [The Bowie Blade](#)