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Local Real Estate Firm Fuels \$207K Boost for Glenwood Childcare

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A longstanding Glenwood business has made a pivotal contribution to childcare access in southwest Iowa. Jim Hughes Real Estate has donated \$207,000 to Kids Place Childcare Champions, a group of local parents working to secure a permanent, upgraded facility for area children and families. The donation significantly accelerates the group's progress toward meeting a grant-matching goal, helping to ensure the long-term stability of Glenwood's only childcare center.

The substantial funding was raised through the sale of a recently renovated home in Glenwood. The house was donated by Jim Hughes Real Estate to the Glenwood Community School District, then sold, with all net proceeds directed to Kids Place Childcare Champions. The funds will support renovation costs for the newly named Lakin Foundation Child Development Center, formerly known as Kids Place. Renovations are currently underway at the 103 Building, part of the former Glenwood Resource Center campus.

Grace Clark, a mother and one of the founding members of Kids Place Childcare Champions, praised the donation as a game-changer in their mission. “Fundraising has been exhausting... but Jim and his family did what they did, really honestly saved us in the end,” Clark told KMA News. “Without them, we wouldn’t have been able to raise the Lakin Foundation money, and we wouldn’t be able to do what we’re doing today for Kids Place.”

The group is working to match a \$500,000 grant awarded by the Charles E. Lakin Foundation, a requirement intended to ensure strong local backing for the project. The Hughes family’s donation is one of the most substantial contributions received, joining others like Glenwood State Bank. These community-driven efforts demonstrate the importance of private sector involvement in solving local infrastructure challenges.

Jim Hughes, who had rented the donated house for over 20 years before choosing to renovate and sell it, emphasized the necessity of childcare for retaining families and supporting the local workforce. “Childcare is just so important today because it’s kind of a two-family workforce anymore... You just need to have that available or they’ll move to the next town,” Hughes said.

Earlier this year, the Glenwood School District secured a 25-year lease agreement for the 103 Building with the Glenwood Redevelopment Corporation. The facility, which also houses district offices and special programs such as the THRIVE and Apex Regional programs, is being overhauled thanks in part to a \$1.4 million Child Care Business Incentive (CCBI) grant from the state.

Clark underlined that the current structure was far from ideal for young children. “This building is extremely old, and it is not nice for the kids inside,” she said. Renovations will not only modernize the space but also expand its capacity to serve more children and support additional staff.

As the only childcare center in Glenwood, Kids Place plays a critical role in both early education and community stability. “Not only is childcare needed for parents to go to work, but it’s the beginning foundations for your child’s education,” Clark noted.

The Lakin Foundation Child Development Center is scheduled to open in its new location the weekend of August 16, with operations set to begin August 18.