

Word on the Street: KidsKare opens 12th campus in Clovis

By Tim Sheehan

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A crane hoists a make-believe school bus into place in the yard as workers put the finishing touches on Kids Kare Owens Ranch in Clovis in this photo from early January. The center opened on Feb. 2 and is the 12th Kids Kare Schools campus that the preschool and child-care company has established in the Fresno/Clovis/Madera areas. SHARON FISHER — KIDS KARE SCHOOLS

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Monday marked the first day of operation for the newest Kids Kare Schools location, a 1.5-acre site in the fast-growing Harlan Ranch area of Clovis.

[Kids Kare Owens Ranch](#) is the 12th campus for the child-care company that Eileen Fisher, the late mother of owner Jim Fisher, started in her home more than 50 years ago. And it's in a neighborhood for which parents at his northeast Fresno site had been clamoring, Fisher said.



"That area was really underserved out there," Fisher said. "One of the big factors is that we had a lot of parents out there bringing their kids to our River Bluff (Chestnut and Behymer avenues) center. Now a lot of those families have transferred to the new location."

“That whole Harlan Ranch area is one of the most rapid-developing places in the area, and it’s the right demographic as far as income,” he added.

Fisher said one of the biggest challenges was finding a good site for the school, which serves kids from 18 months to 12 years old. “You would think it’d be easy to find a lot. I said I just needed an acre and a half, but nobody wanted to sell just an acre and a half,” he said. Ultimately, he got the land he needed on Owens Mountain Parkway near the corner of Temperance and Alluvial avenues, on the north side of Highway 168. “It’s got great access for parents and a lot of traffic flowing by us in different directions.”

From the time he signed a contract for the lot, it took about 14 months to develop the campus and complete the finishing touches before opening last week. Photos on the school’s [Facebook page](#) detail some of the progress — including how workers used a crane to hoist a make-believe school bus over the fence and into its place on a playground last month.

Fisher recalled how his mom started [Kids Kare](#) in 1960 in the family home taking care of 13 children. “She had been a pediatric nurse, but she just got tired of watching sick children die and wanted to refocus her energy into something else,” he said. Fisher began helping out in the family business when he was about 13 years old “and I never left.”

The family-owned business — Fisher’s wife, Sharon, and daughters Kimberly and Sarah also work for the company — now encompasses sites in Fresno, Clovis and Madera, with almost 300 employees and about 2,500 kids in their care. But Fisher has his sights set on an even larger territory. “I would like to expand Kids Kare along the Central Coast,” he said. “We’re eying San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara, and we’ve been talking to people about sites there. I said just as soon as we get this (Owens Ranch) center open, we’ll start looking over there.”

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