

Toddle Towne named small business of the month



EAST ALTON — If you live in the Alton area, chances are you or someone you know attended a Toddle Towne Learning Center as a child.

That reason, among others, was at the heart of the RiverBend Growth Association’s decision to recognize Toddle Towne as its Small Business of the Month Friday.

Toddle Towne started as a child care center run out of a renovated house on Whitelaw Avenue in East Alton. It quickly grew to the point that the business moved to a church and parsonage down the street from one another. When attendance continued to grow, the owners connected the church and parsonage and sold the house.

Even that didn’t prove to be enough. Owners opened a second location in Alton in 1998 and, four years later, a third location in Granite City. Four years ago the business bought and renovated a former elementary school building on North Shamrock Avenue, where the East Alton location currently resides.

Today, the centers have a total license capacity of over 300 kids with 33 staff members employed. That history in the community is one of the things the business prides itself on, executive director Susan Berry said.

“I think one of the things that makes us stand out is our longevity,” Berry said. “We have the same three people who have owned and operated Toddle Towne since 1967, and all three have been involved in both business and education in the community their whole lives. So they really know the community, and they know education.”

RiverBend Growth Association director of member services Joell Aguirre echoed Berry’s sentiment.

“One of the most significant reasons why Toddle Towne Learning Centers was chosen for the month of January is their commitment to the community — their years of service, the generations of families that

they have serviced. That just shows their commitment to what they do,” Aguirre said. “Secondly, it would be their programs that they offer. It’s not just day care, it is absolutely day care and an educational center.”

The learning centers offer child care for kids from six weeks old up to 12 years of age. Along with day care, the centers also have a summer camp program and are open in the event of unforeseen circumstances such as snow days.

Looking ahead, the centers will continue to do what earned them recognition in the first place — serving the community, one family at a time.

“I went here when I was a child. My kids came to Toddle Towne. We have families who, they’re on the grandkids of kids that came to Toddle Towne coming. We have staff who came as kids and they bring their kids,” Berry said. “You cannot throw a rock in this town without hitting a Toddle Towne family.”

For more information on Toddle Towne Learning Centers, call the executive offices at 618-258-0333 or visit their website at www.toddletowne.com.

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