



Ossining Children's Center plans for new \$16.8 million facility; 27,000 s/f building designed by KG&D Architects

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OSSINING, NY The Ossining Children's Center (OCC) has unveiled plans for the construction of a new 27,000 s/f building that will enable it to consolidate its programs under one roof. The new structure will help secure the 123-year-old, community-based organization's financial future while meeting the growing demand for childcare programs, preschool, educational enrichment and services to families.

Centrally located in downtown at 32 State St., the planned building would replace operations currently housed at two 120-year-old buildings OCC owns on South Highland Ave., as well as space it rents at a nearby church. The organization plans to sell the two properties on South Highland Ave. to help fund the \$16.8 million project.

The new 2.5-acre site, bounded by commercial properties, was acquired for \$1.8 million and donated to OCC by a long-time benefactor. An existing building on the site has been removed. The new building would house all of OCC's current programs while meeting the growing need for infant, toddler, preschool and after-school care in Ossining. The projected enrollment for the new facility is 200-222 children. OCC's current enrollment is 148.

The new building offers numerous benefits to the community. It will make childcare available to all income levels helping enable parents to maintain steady employment. Having the facility downtown will help anchor the State St. neighborhood, bring increased economic activity and create job opportunities for local residents. A new, high-profile childcare center in the village would also help attract parents from the wider community.

Designed by KG&D Architects, the building is designed to contextually fit in with the adjacent "cottage" professional office buildings on State St. The front building includes a wrap-around porch similar to the original building on the site.

The balance of the school is two-stories with a lower level that takes advantage of the sloping property.

"With a larger, fully equipped and centrally located building, we can attract and accommodate a broad range of families from the wider community," said OCC executive director Howard Milbert. "This will not only improve our financial outlook but also strengthen our capabilities and diversity." The three-story building will include nine classrooms, five toddler and infant rooms, four outdoor play

areas, staff and administrative offices, a multi-purpose room, conference room and kitchen. There will be 22 on-site parking spaces for parents, staff and visitors. Additional parking will be secured at a nearby off-site location. OCC is currently working to raise funds for the project and has significant donations already in place.

OCC's decision to develop a new building was prompted by several significant challenges it faces:

Its current facilities are well-worn, obsolete and do not match the high-quality of its programs.

Due to the lack of space, every year OCC turns away dozens of families who are in need of infant care.

A modern facility will attract more families from a wide variety of income levels, allowing children from throughout the community to grow together, and enabling OCC to serve more families in need.

Having a larger and more modern building could make the Center more financially viable, according to a five-year analysis by an independent consultant.

An initial presentation of the plan was made to the Ossining Village Planning Board on August 28, and a public hearing is expected to be scheduled. No special zoning or variances are required.

OCC has been serving the Ossining community since 1895, providing high-quality childcare – from infants through 6th grade – in a safe and nurturing environment where children can learn and grow. An important partner of Ossining's public schools, OCC is one of the few childcare and education centers to receive a four-star rating from Quality Stars NY, a division of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, the official agency that sets standards and evaluates child care programs for New York State.

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