

Day Care

Support

Sought

By JACKIE BROOKS

Metro Staff Writer

Rallying round the slogan "A day care center is a place that loves little children and keeps them safe while their mothers work," the Columbia Day Care Project, Inc., today launches an information project to solicit support.

The inter-denominational corporation, whose board members are representatives of 27 Columbia area churches, parents and cooperating agencies, was established "to stimulate a program of adequate facilities for day care services" for parents who can't afford other means of child care.

The group has established centers at Hendley Homes and Camp Fornance and is in the process of organizing one at Gonzales Gardens and another at Saxon Homes. The Hendley Homes Care Center is now a part of a large neighborhood child care and development program of the S. C. Department of Public Welfare, with CDCP contributing a small amount of money plus volunteer advice and expertise.

In an effort to inform the public and solicit support for its work, the CDCP declared Nov. 28-Dec. 5 Day Care Week. As part of the program, an open house will be held Dec. 5 at Hendley Homes from 3-5 p.m. in Building 30, 300 S. Bull St.

Members of the CDCP see their role as that of a catalyst—to see the need for day care centers, seek out financial aid, and handle organization and initial operations.

The Gonzales Gardens and Saxon Homes centers, which will care for 100 children each, are under construction and are slated to begin operation by April, 1972.

The CDCP can point with justifiable pride to specific examples of how the centers have helped families. Since the opening of the Camp Fornance Center, four more mothers in the area have been able to accept jobs.

Several women who had been welfare recipients were able to accept jobs and go off welfare, several others accepted better jobs, and others were able to enter training programs and find employment. Parents pay for the care on a sliding scale.

The CDCP has worked closely with the Columbia Housing Authority, which administers low-income public housing projects.

Inspiration for the day care centers came initially from the Housing Authority's social services coordinator, Miss Mary Wallace Johnson, who saw the needs of both children and parents for day care in the housing projects. CHA administrator Dr. John A. Chase was enthusiastic about day care plans and offered a building, utilities, stoves, refrigerators and some janitorial services from the Housing Authority for the initial center at Hendley Homes.

Miss Johnson contacted the Rev. Hugh McClure, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, to ask for a sponsor to bear expenses of personnel and equipment. The Rev. Mr. McClure called together a group of ministers, and five local Presbyterian churches voted to give financial and volunteer assistance. Representatives of Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist and Baptist churches were later invited and an inter-denomination group evolved.

The Columbia Day Care Project, Inc., was chartered in 1969 as an eleemosynary organization "to provide day care centers for lower income families in the metropolitan area of Columbia."

An estimated \$56,000 will be needed in 1972 by the CDCP, which is soliciting help from churches and individuals. Contributions may be sent to the Columbia Day Care Project, Inc., P.O. Box 11666, Columbia.

Officers of the Board of Directors are: Mrs. Archie Hardy III, president; the Rev. Charles Dunn, vice-president; Jack Scoville, treasurer; and Mrs. Douglas Sturkie, secretary.