

Presenting

THE HISTORY OF CPE VANIER

From 1971 into 2021 and beyond...

We are happy to present the history of CPE Vanier starting in 1971. This story will give you some insight of the unity between the Vanier College and families and staff of CPE Vanier. With the support of our families and staff from the beginning, our CPE has been recognized on many levels for its quality of care.

1971-1972

1971

The original founder of Vanier College Childcare Center, Greta Hoffman Nemiroff, was approached by two nursing students with an urgent concern. Their concern was that they would need to drop out of the nursing program because they couldn't find adequate childcare. The thought of these two moms dropping out haunted Greta and she dedicated herself to the opening of a childcare center at Vanier College along with Allana Stalker, both teachers at Vanier College.

These were years when more and more women were beginning to join the labor force and continue their studies. Private childcare was unaffordable for many and working on this project would support women to continue their studies or return to work at Vanier College.

Please see letter from Greta Hoffman Neminoff ¹

1972

With Greta and Allana's determination, energy, vision and support from many members of the Vanier College community, the Vanier Childcare Center was opened in the summer of 1972. *In its early years the Vanier College Day Care Centre was a fairly informal organization run by staff and parents receiving a small group of children.*²

1979 - 2010

1979

Vanier Childcare Center becomes incorporated and receives an operational permit from the government for 30 children between 18 months and 5 years old.

1996-1997

The Quebec government adopts new corporations regulations for non-profit childcare Centers and Vanier Childcare Center becomes Centre de la petite enfance (CPE) Vanier.

2002-2003

Vanier College and CPE Vanier work in collaboration to find a new space for the daycare because the College needs the daycare space within the College. The needs for childcare increase within the Vanier Community, the chairs and administrators of CPE Vanier recognize the needs of the community and apply for additional spaces. They receive a daycare permit to receive 60 children between 18 months and 5 years old for the new location behind the football field.

¹ Letter from Greta Hoffman Nemiroff, November 2019, Annex 1

² Letter from Greta Hoffman Nemiroff, November 2019, Annex

2004

CPE Vanier new facility opens in early Fall of 2004 to receive 60 children.

2009

The maternity leave program offered by the Quebec government allows for parents to have a one year leave. Moms were contacting the CPE to ask if there was any possibility if they could begin to have access to childcare when their maternity leaves ended usually when their babies were 1 years old. The spaces were limited and childcare demands were more than the spaces we had. Parents of the Vanier community did not always receive a space. They often would take extended leaves which would in turn affect their return to work and studies calendars.

With the important need the CPE applied for an additional 20 childcare spaces from the Family Minister and is accepted.

2010

With the vision, mission, energy, effort and partnership of the Vanier College community CPE Vanier opens an additional 20 childcare spaces, 10 of them accepting infants beginning at 9 months of age.

2018 - 2020

2018

The CPE Vanier childcare waiting list increases to approximately 664 families. Daily telephone calls, emails and on-location visits at the front door from families wanting a quality childcare for their child come to CPE Vanier. Recognizing the long waiting lists and demands of quality childcare from families, the Family Minister announces that they will be accepting applications to open new subsidized childcare Centers.

CPE Vanier's Board of Directors support the vision to apply for a second installation to meet some of the needs of the waiting list and the need for quality childcare to more families. At the same time, CPE Vanier continues to be recognized by Vanier College, namely the Early Childhood Education department, Ville St-Laurent and many other organizations and families around Montreal for its standard of quality childcare.

Vanier College was also in the process of waiting to receive approval from the Education Minister to increase the College capacity to receive 2000 more students due to the demand. After meeting with the chairs and director of the College, they are supportive of opening a second CPE Vanier. The idea at that time was to allocate space on the football field behind the N building or space in the Vanier College parking lot.

2020

Out of 2500 spaces allocated to new daycare spaces in the province of Quebec, **only four (4) CPE's** are accepted in Montreal to open new 80 space childcare centers. CPE VANIER is one of them and is the only one who serves a majority of the English community with the condition that the CPE develops the spaces within 24 months.

In late October Vanier College informs CPE Vanier that they will not be able to allocate space on the football field or the parking lot due to their delays in their project of developing their new facility.

With the vision of the Board of Directors the CPE changes its plans and looks at their current land to build the new CPE. The current bike path is the space which would bring the two Centers together. The new facility would be on two floors with part of the current bike path becoming a new play space which would be a designed to enhance the children's outdoor play with a play structure and a path around it to use tricycles and other mobility toys. The college also is looking at areas that could be designated to be used for outdoor play given the increase in children. With the support of Vanier College, Ville St-Laurent and the Family Minister they begin the plans and are officially accepted for funding from the Family Minister for a brand new daycare facility to be opened for March 31st, 2022.

COVID 19 Pandemic

Covid19 brought many challenges to the Early childhood education field. The paths of many early childhood educators changed, the demands of the field increased and there has been a great shortage of educators interested in continuing in this field. Recognizing this year has been exceptional and that childcare is an essential service during this pandemic, CPE Vanier was affected as many other CPE's in Montreal and throughout the province of Quebec. New safety measures, new working procedures for staff, ensuring continued quality childcare to name a few... Given these difficult and challenging times, our CPE has faced a turnover within its staff. It has been through its challenges, however we are proud to welcome new Educators and new staff to the our CPE who continue to have a love and passion for Early childhood Education and wish to continue their careers in this field. We are committed to our mission and will continue to provide a caring, nurturing and kind environment where children, parents and staff can learn and thrive. Wellness, safety and quality care for all continues to be the vision and mission of CPE Vanier.

A message from Grace Edeh,

Practicum Coordinator/Instructor
Department of Early Childhood Education

2021-01-15

Hi Athena,

By chance, now that parents are allowed back inside the daycare, it was great to chat with you, a little bit quickly, about the upcoming 2nd installation. I felt it important as a follow-to our conversation to send you this message.

As a former daycare director, I know that there are a lot of details, bureaucracy, and difficult decisions that you and the board will have to make over the next several months. In large part my message is to encourage you and the board, no matter what you may be facing, to pursue and complete a 2nd installation for its certain benefit for the next 80+ children and their families.

The gold standard of childcare in Montreal and arguably throughout the province, IS CPE Vanier. Essentially doubling these childcare services will be immeasurable in terms of providing more children with a quality educational and social early childhood experience. As you know, our department is continually looking to provide student training in high standard childcare environments and (selfishly) we as a department are thrilled at the prospect of a 2nd installation.

The lasting impact of the services provided by CPE Vanier (and a future 2nd installation) for the children and their families, is and will continue to be a testimony to the dedication of you and your staff and the board of directors who have had foresight and been visionary in your approach to providing quality childcare to the Vanier community.

Wishing you much success!

Grace N. Edeh

Practicum Coordinator/Instructor
Department of Early Childhood Education

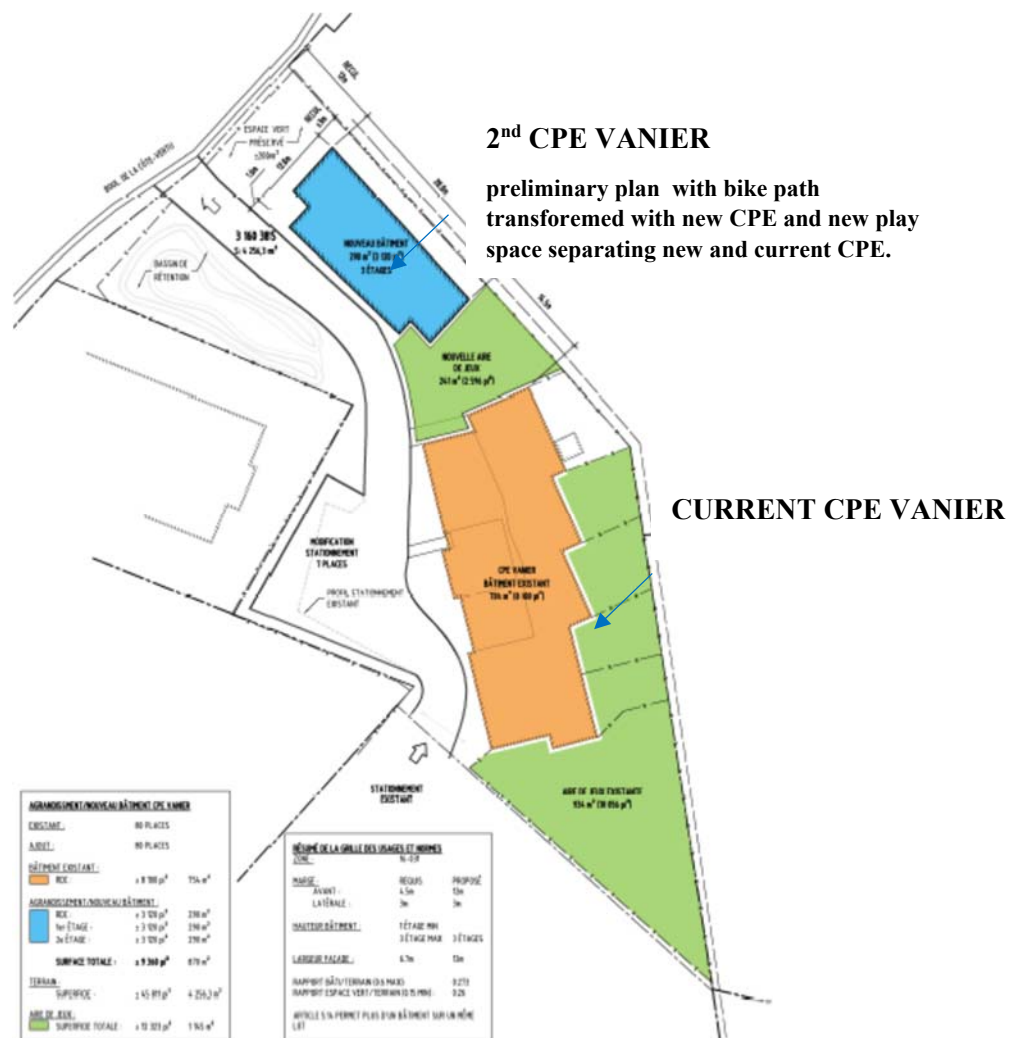
<https://www.vaniercollege.gc.ca/early-childhood-education/>

Vanier College |

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022 - 50 YEARS LATER!

What a celebration it will be 50 years after the original opening of the Vanier Childcare Center.

With great energy, dedication, and a vision for the growth of the Vanier College and Ville St-Laurent community we will be able to receive an additional 80 children, 10 infants and 70 children between 18 months and 5 years old.



ANNEX 1

THE ORIGINS OF CPE VANIER COLLEGE

Greta Hofmann Nemiroff, November, 2019.

The 1970's, a period of great social change, were a wonderful time to set up the colleges in Quebec. The team that set up Vanier College that year was enthusiastic and fairly young. Most of us were in our thirties or early forties. We were very idealistic, hopeful for the colleges and determined to "do it right," to make our college friendlier, less formal, and more flexible and dynamic than the institutions we ourselves had attended. We wanted to design exciting and relevant curriculum and to create a student-centered environment. It was the time and the place in which to think of innovation, such as setting up a day care centre in the college.

At that time, following the 1970 *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada*, women's issues were very much part of public discourse. Women's education and work were focal points in the research and subsequent *Report*. Many women with children needed the income from work, but it did not pay to work when child care costs would consume most of their earnings. Over the past half century an increasing number of women have joined the labour force in Canada, bringing their participation rate up from 37.1% in 1976 to 47.7% in 2018.

Currently women comprise 61.3% of the entire labour force in Canada with 64% of all women with children under the age of

three and 72% of women with children under the age of 16 working. From the 1970s on, as more women entered the labour force, women in Quebec started lobbying for a system of subsidized day care. It took 26 years to achieve this goal; the first subsidized day care centres in Quebec, the CPE's, opened in 1996-97.

While I was a member of the founding team of Vanier College, I was also co-teaching the first women's studies course to be taught in a Canadian University at Sir George Williams University, later to become part of Concordia University. By 1971, I was also teaching Women's Studies at Vanier. The presence of women's studies in academic institutions stimulated local interest in women's issues.

That might be why two young mothers enrolled in the Nursing Program at Vanier College chose to come to my office in the fall of 1971 to explain to me that they would have to drop out of the nursing program because they did not have adequate child care. Why didn't Vanier College have a day care centre, they wanted to know. I raised this subject at a meeting of department Chairs, who were sympathetic but saw no way of getting such a centre established.

In my view this was an urgent issue, especially for women who needed to further their education and employment opportunities while raising children. As working mothers, I and my colleagues had to pay for expensive baby sitting and private nursery school education for our children. Although my two- salaried family

could manage private care, many parents could not. Haunted by the situation of these young women, I spoke to Alanna Stalker, a colleague in the Creative Arts Department. We decided to pursue the project of setting up a day care centre in the college.³

We urgently needed to find a space for the day care centre. The St-Laurent municipal by-laws were not very rigorous: we had to find a space close to an adequate and safe bath room, an exit, a safe outdoor space and of course an appropriate indoor space as well. There was one sunny large room ideally suited for this purpose on the north side of the building. However, other groups also had their eyes on it, and some teachers thought it should be turned into a faculty lounge. Years later it wound up in the music department. By this time, the college had evolved from a loosely structured school based on the generally shared values of the original founders to an institution where the responsibilities of various sectors within the college required clearer definition. Although the college was not yet unionized, the teachers previously had had a short strike whose presenting reasons I cannot recall, nor can some other teachers from that time whom I have asked.¹ Whether this was connected to the strike or not, the administration did not want that room to be turned into a faculty

³These events took place almost a half century ago, and I do not know how accurate my memory is, although I have been able to check my recollections with Alanna and our colleague Judith Crawley.

lounge. It was a cantankerous issue that seemed to be irresolvable to everyone's satisfaction. As it turned out, assigning the room to a day care centre would be a solution acceptable to all involved, and so we were able to convince both sides to agree to this.

Once we had established a room, we then needed to furnish and equip the space. Fortunately, by this time we were approaching the end of the fiscal year, and numerous departments had budget surpluses. Having successfully asked departments to contribute to the day care centre from their surpluses, we opened a bank account for the day care centre and deposited the cheques we received. Clearly this was a rather "irregular" way to get financing, but no one complained about it; since no one else had considered doing this, there were no rules against it. In a new institution within a new system, administrative processes were still in flux. Later, we were informed, however, that this was a "once only" initiative. Further financing would be arranged with Student Services.

What would we put in the room? We appealed to the college maintenance staff who volunteered to help us. Mostly with odds and ends of lumber they already had, they created beautiful brightly coloured small tables and benches for the centre. We bought other equipment in second hand stores, and various people in the Vanier community contributed other needed articles.

By the end of Spring, 1972, the Vanier Day Care Centre was ready to go, except we needed someone to run it, and financing was arranged with Vanier's Student Services. We interviewed some applicants and settled on an excellent candidate who was to develop and remain at the Day Care Centre for a few years.

The Vanier College Day Care Centre opened in the summer of 1972. From the outset, parents were interested in participating in the governance of the center, and a coordinating committee was formed...later to become the "Supervisory Board."

In its early years the Vanier College Day Care Centre was a fairly informal organization run by staff and parents. The Centre was incorporated in 1979. At some point the current beautifully designed building was provided on the college grounds; the Centre de Petit Enfance Vanier (CPE) was established in 2004. In 2010 it received permission to expand to its current size.

In working with the Early Childhood Education Program at Vanier, the CPE Vanier provides students with the opportunity to gain invaluable experience with young children. Currently, the employment opportunities for graduates of the program are excellent with 94% being employed in the field.

The Vanier College Day Care Centre was founded in response to needs expressed by Vanier students. It took imagination, determination and collaboration from many parts of the college to get it going. Because many initiatives in the CEGEPs have originated in a similar manner, one lesson for current CEGEP

visionaries may be that it pays to work together strategically to realize their dreams.

To be fully appreciated, the CPE Vanier has to be seen. I have enjoyed this opportunity because two little boys very dear to my heart have been going there. It is not possible to do justice to the pride and gratitude I feel whenever I accompany their mother to retrieve them at the end of the day. It is a joy to see the Day Care Centre filled with busy and happy children in its own well equipped building, to chat with well -trained and enthusiastic staff members, and to see Vanier students receiving excellent hands-on training there. The CPE Vanier has long surpassed our original modest vision of 1971.