

# Child development center changes lives one family at a time\_62804

June 25, 2004

Posted: 6/25/04

Buckner Child Development Center at Ryan's Crossing in Marshall has enrolled more than 50 children.
--

## Child development center changes lives one family at a time

**By Russ Dilday**

*Buckner News Service*

Child development centers can change not only the lives of youngsters enrolled in them, but also the lives of parents-and sometimes even a community, says Michelle Dickeson, director of the Buckner Child Development Center at Ryan's Crossing in Marshall.

The center, which opened in December, already has enrolled more than 50 children, Dickeson said.

Many of the families live in Ryan's Crossing, a gated community made up of what Dickeson described as “quality townhomes for everyone from professionals to low-income working families.”



The center is licensed to care for up to 136 children.

The center represents a new opportunity for families from Buckner Children and Family Services of Northeast Texas, said Administrator Greg Eubanks. It serves children from birth to 12 years old from the community and is licensed to care for up to 136 children.

“Ryan's Crossing is a new direction for us, but one we were more than willing to take,” said Eubanks. “The potential to better serve our neighbors by providing care for their children and services to them through the (center) already has proved itself.”

Dickeson said the story of how the child development center came under Buckner operation is a credit to the Buckner reputation in Northeast Texas.

“To meet tax credit requirements, the owner group of Ryan's Crossing needed to provide a facility of this type. They came to Buckner Children and Family Services and asked us to take it and run it in a Buckner

fashion.”

The “Buckner fashion,” she said, is the 125-year tradition of providing exceptional quality care for children.

“We have a long history of caring for children, and we are able to provide our families with Buckner counseling services, referral services, adoption services and the collaborations we've established with our parent-education program.”

In return, the Ryan's Crossing partnership provided “an excellent facility. When the staff came into the facility for the first time, they were amazed with what we've been provided. Those of us who have worked in child care said, 'This is what we've always hoped for.' It's a tremendous support,” Dickeson said.

The partnership between the Ryan's Crossing owner group and Buckner also has spawned possible future collaboration between the two, said Eubanks, who noted other Buckner-managed child development centers might be formed soon in the area.

The partnership already has changed the lives of participating families. When Jackie Robinson enrolled her son, she shared with Dickeson that she was working for minimum wage at what she called “a dead-end job. ... I was at rock-bottom. I didn't know how I was going to make it. I used to cry all the time.”

“She told me about her job and what she wanted for her son,” Dickeson recalled.

Now she works at the center and plans to start college in the fall. The result has been life-changing, Robinson reflected. “I have a job I love doing, and I'm going to go to school. My attitude has changed.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.