

History of Community Day Nursery/Community Preschool **1942- Present**

Community Preschool began life on December 8, 1942 as part of the Child Care Committee, a local sponsoring agency for the Lanham Act War Nurseries of Pinellas County, created by Governor Spessard Holland. The Pinellas County School Board administered federal funds. Nursery care was restricted to the children of mothers employed in war work and war-allied work.

In August 1945, war nurseries were dropped from the Federal budget; however, it was evident that a nursery program was still needed. October 15, 1945, Community Day Nursery North was opened in the Defense Building. Community Day Nursery North shared "squatter's rights" with the Red Cross in the Defense Building, sanctioned by City Hall. Funds were secured from many private local sources, with the School Board loaning equipment from the closed War Nurseries. Community Chest was petitioned and monies were granted to insure operation of one North Center and one South Center.

In 1949 it became necessary to find a new home for Community Day North, as the Defense Building was to be torn down to make room for the new County Building. The First Methodist Church offered the use of their recreational hall as a temporary home until a new building was completed on the approach to the Pier. The property was provided by the City of St. Petersburg for a one-dollar lease. The Junior League and other private donations provided the funds for the construction of the new building. 1949 was also the year that the Child Care Committee was legally incorporated as a non-profit agency.

In 1963 the City of St. Petersburg informed the Child Care Committee that the Nursery would have to be moved to make room for the Waterfront Development. After a three-year search, a suitable site was located through a contact with St. Bede's Episcopal Church. With approval by the Bishop of the Diocese of South Florida's, a plot of land adjoining the Church was reasonably sold for the site of the new Nursery Building, and additional land was leased at \$1.00 per year for use as the Nursery Playground. Monies for construction were obtained through sale of the building on the Pier, and through many community donations. The Opening Dedication took place on June 15, 1968.

During the following years the Agency continued to address the needs of the children of the Community. Funding sources were expanded to include United Way, USDA Child Care Food Program, HRS Subsidized child care programs, Refugee Program, Project Independence, City of St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, JWB Capital Purchase Grants, and numerous fund raisers to supplement. In 1981, the name of the agency was changed to Community PreSchool, and the corporate name became PreSchool Experience, Inc.

Community PreSchool continues to develop, grow and change, and today we are proud of the quality of both our facility and program. Community Preschool has 60 years of caring for the children of this Community. With the continued support of our dedicated Board of Directors and Staff, we anticipate 60 more years of dedicated service to the families and children of St. Petersburg.