

Big thanks for childcare workers



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CONSTITUENCY
REPORT

There is a tradition most MLAs follow around this time of year, and that is delivering oranges to their local childcare centres.

I enjoy taking part in this annual tradition because it signals that the holiday season is beginning in earnest, and because it harkens back to a time when finding an orange in your Christmas stocking was considered a real treat. (I suspect a puzzled look would be what I'd likely see from my children if that's what they found in theirs come Christmas morning).

But I also enjoy this tradition because it is an opportunity to deliver my thanks to the directors, assistant directors and especially the early childhood educators who teach and help foster development in the children in their care, two of whom happen to be my own.

The folks providing care at my childcare centre have been part of my children's lives since one was two and the other was just over a year old. They have borne witness to almost as many stages of my children's development as I have. I can assure you there have been times when that familiarity has been a much welcomed resource when trying to figure out how to get through some of those stages gracefully!

I am so pleased that by working with our

childcare centres, there has been an increase in the number of school-aged spaces in the constituency, such as those at Discovery Children's Centre. And as we announced last week, an expansion at Assiniboine Child Care Centre will soon begin, which will increase the number of infant spaces in St. James by 32.

This is extremely exciting for me, not only as the MLA for the area but as a mother who has seen the way early childhood educators have helped to prepare my own children for their first years of school. I also understand the connection between childcare and the ability to access employment opportunities for Manitoba's mothers and fathers.

In our government's recent Throne Speech, we announced that we would invest in our provincial childcare system to meet the needs of 12,000 children and their families hoping to get a safe, affordable childcare space. This means we will continue to grow not only the number of child care spaces, but also the number of ECE graduates who will need to be in place to accommodate for such an increase.

To see this reflected in the opportunities for increased access to child care in St. James is something I greatly look forward to.

To all of the St. James childcare centre directors and early childhood educators, I extend my sincerest thanks to each of you for your work and your advocacy. From my family to yours, I wish you all a very merry Christmas.