

north shore news

Daycare rebuild gets council boost

Jeremy Shepherd / North Shore News

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Lisa Hubbard and Tricia Andrews of North Shore Neighbourhood House stand next to the burnt out remains of the Novaco daycare in Norgate, which went up in flames on Dec. 28. The non-profit organization hopes to rebuild. Photo Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

The District of North Vancouver played Santa Claus for the Novaco daycare in Norgate recently, **issuing a \$44,000 grant** nearly a year after a fire gutted the community hub.

The grant should help North Shore Neighbourhood House, which runs the daycare, get shovels in

the ground to start a rebuild within six months, according to NSNH executive director Lisa Hubbard.

"We've received a lot of donations of toys and equipment, we've got service clubs that have helped us, the community has helped us, now the district's helping us, and at the end we're going to get a beautiful, great daycare," Hubbard said.

At a December meeting, council unanimously supported the one-time grant, which will be held in reserve until NSNH completes raising funds for the new daycare centre. Insurance money was insufficient to pay for a new daycare after a suspicious fire gutted the daycare's three modular buildings on Dec. 28, 2013.

The blaze resulted in a critical loss for a vulnerable community, according to a district staff report. The facility, which also operates as a community gathering place, is crucial in helping provide health and resiliency among people struggling to make ends meet, according to the report.

Despite raising \$110,000 for a rebuild at a North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce gala, NSNH is still short on the cost of a rebuild.

The total budget to rebuild the centre is \$465,000, according to a staff report. After spending some of that money on demolition and security, NSNH needs to pick up another \$257,000 to finish the job, according to district staff.

Hubbard is hopeful they can raise the money through government grants and raising funds in the community.

"I wish the process was a bit quicker than it is," she said.

The daycare has been serving approximately 15 families while operating out of a temporary location at Norgate elementary, but parents are anxious to see a new centre built, according to Hubbard. The news of district funding was very welcome, according to Hubbard. "We're just thrilled. It helps us greatly speed up the process."

While the previous daycare was in a poor state of repair at the time of the fire, the new centre will be purpose-built, according to Hubbard. Novaco daycare had been open since 1973.

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