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Merriewood Children's Center Founder Retires



Merriewood Children's Center founder Diane Kisner
Photo Kristin Kisner

After 31 years as one of the pioneers of school-aged child care in the local community, Lafayette's Merriewood Children's Center founder Diane Kisner retired today, June 6. Kisner founded Merriewood with partner Gretchen Johnsonbaugh in 1981, opening its doors to children ages 2 to 12. Kisner began by teaching and directing, but as time went on she spent more time doing administrative duties, said long-time Merriewood teacher and school-age director Bonnie Sivesind, who has worked with Kisner since the Center opened. "She's done a great service to the community. She's a very forward-thinking person and likes change," she said. "She has always looked to see what will work better."

Located near Burton Valley Elementary School, Merriewood Children's Center has seen thousands of children walk through its doors over the years - whether in its nursery school or its before- and after-school program. "We're now servicing the second generation of graduates," said Sivesind, who noted that several of her 10 grandchildren attended the Center. "Kids that went here are sending their kids here, and some even work here. Many of Diane's grandchildren went through the Center as well."

Kisner sold Merriewood to long-time teachers Kevin Meany and Mim Bazzell, but continued to work at the Center alongside the children afterward. "She has such a heart for kids," Sivesind said. "That's what we'll miss most." J. Wake

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