

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ECO-FRIENDLY CHILD CARE CENTER SLATED FOR WEST LOOP LOCATION

Children's Academies of America is pleased to announce the pre-opening of its first child care center in Chicago. **Little Green Tree House for Growing and Learning**, will be Chicago's first eco-friendly child care center. **Little Green Tree House** will open its doors at 118 S. Ashland Avenue in mid-2009. A waiting list is already forming.

Parents who desire an eco-friendly, healthy place for children to grow and learn will rest easy at **Little Green Tree House**. The space features green building details such as abundant daylight with UV filters, toxic-free paints and finishes and Energy-Star appliances, the equivalent of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Commercial Interiors standards. Meals will be organic and locally-sourced. The child care center and the catering facility will be peanut-free zones. Special diets, including gluten-free and vegetarian will be accommodated while still allowing all children to participate in family-style meals with their classes. At least 40% of each week's meals will be fully vegetarian and all will be nutrition-packed. Staff will be trained in eco-friendly cleaning practices that meet DCFS sanitation standards, and eco-friendly, non-toxic toys, toiletries, bedding, dishware and equipment will be the standard.

Little Green Tree House anticipates serving 156 infants and children ages six weeks through five years in a space that is over 10,000 square feet and required an investment of over \$1.7 million dollars.

Little Green Tree House's Director of Education, Erin Lyon, is committed to making the child care center a place for growing and learning in a warm, safe and healthy environment with an emphasis on earth-friendly living and positive socialization. Ms. Lyon brings great energy and expertise to the job. Her experience includes a Directorship at the prestigious Tutor Time Childcare/Learning Center in New York City. She holds a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Sacred Heart University.

Ms. Lyon will teach a hybrid curriculum developed specifically for **Little Green Tree House**. The curriculum is based largely on the Creative Curriculum, which is commonly used in most pre-school and kindergarten classes, but also includes some components of a theme-based curriculum. Says Lyon, "My main goal is for our teachers to be hands on and to provide a curriculum that can be easily adapted to different ability levels. The research of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson and Lev Vygotsky, as well as Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences all impact this custom curriculum. We are especially excited to be working towards EDGE (Early Development through Global Education) licensure (www.theedgeeducation.com) which will help us make eco-friendly practices a fully integrated part of our curriculum.

The Director of Business Operations for Children's Academies of America, Elizabeth Geldhof expects **Little Green Tree House** to become the standard for private child care in Chicago. Geldhof, formerly of New York City, has spent her career in professional business management and in producing and conceptualizing events for numerous Fortune 500 companies. She believes in providing customers with only the very best in service

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excellence. She is also a proponent of a total green, yet practical lifestyle experience. "If Chicago is to be our nation's greenest city, we have to start by investing in our children and raising them in the healthiest possible manner. We will have the highest quality teaching staff, the safest standards both in equipment and operations and a daily commitment to providing an energetic earth-centered learning environment for infants, children and their families." Geldhof remarks.

Consulting on the eco-friendly operation of **Little Green Treehouse** is Manda Aufochs Gillespie. Ms. Gillespie has been an expert on green lifestyles and sustainable development for years: writing, consulting, and managing green projects. She is recognized in Chicago as the source of information for green parenting. She has been profiled in the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Magazine, and Chicago Parent among other publications. She has written for such publications as Conscious Choice, Alternet, F News, and the EcoCity Cleveland Journal. She teaches Green Parenting classes at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, the Chicago Public Libraries, and private businesses across Chicago-land. She currently hosts a green parenting blog on the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum website: www.lgpshow.org, and is a regular guest on the Little Green People podcasts.

The facility has been designed by the award-winning national architectural firm of Bauhs Dring Seglin Main Architects and Planners, a Chicago-based architectural firm with expertise in residential, commercial, community and educational architecture. Todd Main, the Senior Principal states, "The interior design will invoke a warm, whimsical and natural outdoor feel. The reception area offers a peek at the 'trunk of a tree' and the mezzanine level play space which offers our 'Little Green Tree House' into which is incorporated our spacious indoor play area. In addition we offer a 1500 square foot private outdoor play space that will include a vegetable garden and play equipment designed to develop gross motor skills and stimulate the imagination. Classrooms will be calm, well-structured spaces designed for creative play, social interaction and educational development and learning.

An initial waiting list is forming for Chicago's first eco-friendly child care center, **Little Green Tree House for Growing and Learning**. Parents should visit www.littlegreentreehouse.com for a pre-application form. Upon receipt of the completed no-obligation form, a confirmation number will be issued that will provide priority placement when the formal application process begins later this winter. No fees are required at this time. Weekly tuition rates are expected to start at approximately \$375. The initial hours of operation are planned to be Monday-Friday from 7am to 6pm.

Employment applications are also being accepted at info@littlegreentreehouse.com. Well-qualified and caring educators are wanted. Experience and quality of care is of the utmost concern at Little Green Tree House. Great teachers who want to be part of something special, please apply!

Grand Opening is expected in Spring 2009.

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