

Official opening of the David and Ruth Asper Early Learning Centre

By **BERNIE BELLAN**

Although the David and Ruth Asper Early Learning Centre has been in operation for over four months now, it wasn't until Tuesday, November 15 that it actually had an official opening.

With representatives from the Rady JCC, the Government of Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg, along with several donors who had contributed to the building of the day care centre on hand, remarks were kept brief but shockingly, no refreshments were served. (What kind of Jewish event was that?)

I also asked Rady JCC Gayle Waxman why there was no official ribbon cutting? She answered quickly that "sharp objects (such as scissors) were not allowed!"

In her own remarks Waxman singled out the contributions of three individuals in particular to the development of the day care: Danny Stoller, former president of the Rady JCC who, Waxman said, was instrumental in putting the deal together to purchase the former fire hall on Grosvenor Avenue. "His vision and passion was key to this success," she said.

As well, Waxman paid tribute to Elliot Garfinkel, current president of the Rady JCC,



(l-r): **JOHN ORLIKOW**, City Councillor for River Heights; **Hon SCOTT FIELDING**, Manitoba Minister of Families; **GAYLE WAXMAN**, Executive Director, Rady JCC; **ELLIOT GARFINKEL**, President, Rady JCC; **DAVID and RUTH ASPER**

who was tireless in taking over from Stoller, Waxman said; and Elonora Caparolini, Child Care Director for both the new day care and the existing Kaufman Child Care Centre at the Asper Campus, who also played a leading roll in designing the new day care.

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into new child care spaces"...describing that as "public good for public good".

Fielding paid tribute to his former colleague at City Hall, Councillor John Orlikow, who was also in attendance, and who, Fielding remarked, had also played a pivotal role in seeing the former vacant fire hall at 1710 Grosvenor Avenue put to good use. "The fire hall sat empty," Fielding noted. "The building has now been transformed into an incredible beacon for the neighbourhood."

David Asper picked up on that theme of neighbourhood revitalization. He told the story of running into someone who remarked to Asper: "You won't remember me, but I just want to tell you that I live near the new day care and I want to let you know what a great addition it is to the neighbourhood."

Then, after Asper told the fellow he appreciated his remarks, he asked him who he was. The fellow said that he used to be the attendant at the Remand Centre who would let Asper in to see his clients who were in the lock-up - back when Asper was a young lawyer specializing in criminal law.

With the addition of the 48 new spaces at the David and Ruth Asper Early Learning Centre, the total number of day care spaces now licensed to the Rady JCC now comes to over 150.

In addition, the Rady JCC provides before and after care for children in kindergarten - Grade 6 at the Gray Academy, Brock Corydon School students.

Scott Fielding, Minister of Families in the provincial government noted that the government is "putting \$163 million