



News Release

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New American Family Starts Unique Business

Fargo, N.D. (Jan. 25, 2017) – Jasmin Child Care is not a typical child care center. The Fargo child care center opened in January 2015 and is owned and operated by a family of immigrants. It provides unique early childhood development and preschool programming for all children and offers children of New Americans culturally-appropriate care, with an emphasis on helping children and parents prepare for kindergarten.

Rhoda Elmi learned of the shortage of childcare in the community while visiting a friend. She conducted extensive research and moved to Fargo to fulfill her dream of opening a child care center. Despite the obstacles, Elmi didn't give up. Jasmin Child Care now has 39 children enrolled and has a waiting list for infant spots.

Jasmin Child Care employs five people outside of their family and all of them are New Americans. Elmi says she's tough when it comes to hiring, and emphasizes everyone in her facility, including the cleaning staff, meet state licensure standards and adhere to strict requirements. "I ask the questions the parents would ask. I remember leaving my children in child care, how I worried. I do that work now, so parents don't have to worry," Elmi says.

The educational structure offers two distinct programs, Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training (SMART) and North Dakota Reading Corps. SMART focuses on stimulation of the brain stem verses the brain cortex by combining movement with learning. Reading Corps uses the latest research on reading intervention strategies and guidance. Reading Corps provides literacy rich instruction to all children in the classroom. This combination of programming is beneficial for children all along the learning continuum. Children who speak English as their first language benefit from exposure to other languages – Elmi's family can speak at least four languages – and students learning English benefit from hearing the fluency of their peers.

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The programming and small class sizes result in each student getting individual attention. Teachers at Jasmin Child Care work directly with children learning English to increase proficiency and address cultural differences before starting kindergarten.

“It’s not all about the money. It’s all about the community. We came here to help people,” Elmi says. Jasmin’s commitment to community doesn’t just end with early childhood development. They offer an afterschool program and are open seven days a week. Additionally, when the child care assistance program made cutbacks, they began offering financial assistance to those who qualify.

“When people can’t afford child care, it perpetuates the cycle of poverty. They came to us and asked for help. We couldn’t turn them away,” stated Mohamed Hussein, assistant director and Elmi’s son. In fact, Elmi and her family have become unofficial community ambassadors. If someone needs help understanding a letter from the county, meeting with their child’s school or navigating the health care system, Elmi and her family are there.

“We’re here, paying our taxes, helping our community, and we are just so grateful for all the community support we’ve received,” said Elmi. Elmi and her family are not alone in their entrepreneurial dreams. New Americans are responsible for starting 30 to 40 businesses in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Opening new businesses and identifying gaps in services for all people are just part of the positive impact New Americans have on our community.

The Fargo Human Relations Commission works to promote acceptance and respect for diversity and discourages all forms of discrimination. The Human Relations Commission meets on the third Thursday of every month at noon in the City Commission Room, City Hall, 200 3rd St. N. A public comment period is provided at the meetings. For more information, visit the Human Relations Commission’s page on the City of Fargo’s website: cityoffargo.com/humanrelations.

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