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## **Daycare Owner Expands to Pulaski and Laurel with SKED's Help**

SOMERSET, Ky. – For Wendy Adams, childcare is more of a calling than a business. She's answered that call for 11 years, as owner of Wendy's Wonderland with two locations in Wayne County, Ky. But the call became even stronger in more recent years when she was diagnosed with, treated for and recovered from breast cancer. Today, both healthy and thankful, Adams has set her sights on expanding her childcare services into Pulaski and Laurel counties.

A veteran daycare owner and mother of four, she may operate her facilities with an open heart and mind, but Adams' degrees in early childhood and business management help her make level-headed decisions and be on the lookout for the best investments and service area.

With expansion in mind, she contacted Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED), a regional economic development organization. SKED provides direct loans designed to help small business owners expand by purchasing land and equipment and provide them the hands-on technical assistance they need to get their business going and keep it on track for success.

SKED is providing financial assistance to help Adams lease a building in Pulaski County for her next Wendy's Wonderland location. That daycare will open later this summer. Adams is renovating the former Bridal World building in Burnside near traffic light 27 in Pulaski County. This center's start-up costs were financed through SKED's SBA Micro Loan Program. The loan



*Wendy Adams owner of Wendy's Wonderland*

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program provides financing and technical assistance in accounting, marketing and a variety of other start-up needs. The Pulaski daycare location will have 67 openings, for ages ranging from birth to 12 years old, for each shift. Adams is also looking into adding weekend shifts.

“Working with SKED has been a great experience. All aspects of the loan process were simple and to the point. Anytime I had questions I would just pick up the phone or email, and I had my answer right back,” she said. “Even though the loan process has many steps, the loan officer and staff helped in so many ways.”

While working on opening the Pulaski location, SKED connected her with the Laurel County Industrial Development Authority about re-opening its state-of-the-art daycare center serving employees of businesses operating in the park and the general public.

Adams was approved for one of SKED’s micro loans, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Business Enterprise Grant program, and is now leasing the 5,000 square-foot building in the Vaughn Ridge Industrial Park, located on Highway 80 in Laurel County. The facility was built in 2007 but had been temporarily closed. The industrial park is home to a number of manufacturing and service facilities including Senture, H&T Warehousing and ServePro. Adams has openings for 87 spots in for each shift in that facility, for ages ranging from birth to 12 years. She will begin with two shifts with the possibility of expanding to three, if needed. She’s currently hiring staff for both facilities.

Charles Pennington, London-Laurel County IDA executive director, said they are proud to partner with Adams to re-open the daycare center that serves parents in the 3,000-member workforce at the park.

“By providing convenient child care to Laurel County’s industrial employees, this project will create benefits for employers and employees as well,” Pennington added. “Employees will be able to provide their children with a safe, consistent place to stay while they work. This venture will help reduce absenteeism, tardiness and turnover among employees.”

Adams said SKED’s loan programs offered some much-needed technical assistance perks to help make her expansion easier and more productive.

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“They have provided needed training for me and my staff. They have helped me purchase a new software program and training on the program for staff. They have given my name to other organizations who have items to donate for upcoming businesses,” Adams added. “I have loved the experience working with the SKED crew and hope that in the future I can continue. Anyone looking for a start- up loan needs to come see the staff they are wonderful and treat you with respect.”

Adams’ two fully operational facilities in Wayne County have earned the second level of the STARS program, a rating system for childcare facilities that not only includes reviews of the facility and its operations but of the curriculum and qualifications of teachers. Her philosophy in her field is simple: Provide quality childcare and learning opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment.

She plans to continue this degree of excellence in childcare at the two new locations. Adams believes professional childcare works hand-in-hand with good parenting.

“The parents are the most important and significant part in a child’s life. They may be here with me for eight hours a day, but we are here to help the parents, too,” Adams explained. “I try to make things fun for the children so they will want to learn but we know the parent is the one who has the major responsibility to raise the child. We just want to love them and help them develop to their best potential.”

“The children in my daycares are my children and their parents are my family,” she added.

Part of Adam’s search for the best information and resources regarding her expansion plans included her completion of small business training through SKED’s Entrepreneurial SMARTS program in April. There, she was given valuable information to help ensure her business’ success.

SKED Executive Director Brett Traver calls Adams a poster child for SKED’s services.

“Wendy has a proven track record as a small business owner, but she knows she can always learn more and how to take advantage of the services already in place to help her grow her business and keep it successful,” Traver said. “The expansion of her daycare centers into

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other regions of our service area will create jobs where they're needed and the valuable, high-quality childcare services will get more people working and the economy growing.”

For more information about any of Wendy's Wonderland locations, contact Adams at the London office at (606) 877-0047.

SKED is a non-profit economic development organization and has been designated a Certified Development Corporation (CDC) by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The organization was formed 29 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky.

Its corporate office is based in Somerset, with satellite locations in Morehead and Whitesburg to serve its 45-county service region. A staff of nine professionals works with business owners, small and large, to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs, and provide them the technical assistance and training they need to succeed.

For more information about SKED, visit our website: [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com) or call (606) 677-6100.

CUTLINE: Wayne County resident and veteran daycare owner Wendy Adams is pictured in one of the classrooms in Wendy's Wonderland at the Vaughn Ridge Industrial Park Daycare in Laurel County.