



Resolution Opposing the Closure of the Gorse Children's Center at Mount Holyoke College

Council Sponsors: Councilor Shalini Bahl-Milne

Community Sponsor: Corey Kurtz, Rabia Ahmed

Whereas, Mount Holyoke College has decided to suspend childcare at the Gorse Children's Center; and

Whereas, the College has reevaluated the plan and extended their current contract through June, 2022; and

Whereas, the lack of a long-term commitment to the Center has severe negative impacts in the community; and

Whereas, the decision to close Gorse came at a time when child care in the Valley has become increasingly scarce; and

Whereas, Gorse is one of the only local programs that provides full-year extended day coverage that includes infant care and it has proved critical to essential workers during the pandemic; and

Whereas, it appears that there are not enough full-time slots at other centers to accommodate the 80+ families that will lose their care; and

Whereas, the Center employs more than two dozen skilled child care providers from our community whose careers will be endangered by the closure; and

Whereas, studies have repeatedly demonstrated that women are disproportionately affected by the closure of daycare, accounting for 80% of the 1.1 million Americans who have dropped out of the workforce since Covid began according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and

Whereas, based on current data, we believe that the consequences of closing Gorse, even another year hence, will have an inordinate impact on women, and therefore constitute an issue of equity that impacts the entire community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Amherst Town Council strongly urges Mount Holyoke College to collaborate with stakeholders in the interim extension year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Amherst Town Council calls on Mount Holyoke College to not remove childcare options from the women and families of the broader community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Amherst Town Council urges Mount Holyoke College to develop a sustainable plan for the Gorse Children's Center beyond June 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Amherst Town Council shall cause a copy of this Resolution to be sent to Governor Charlie Baker, State Senator Joanne Comerford, State Representative Mindy Domb and President of Mount Holyoke College, Sonya Stephens.

Voted this seventeenth day of May, 2021.

On behalf of the Amherst Town Council.

Lynn Griesemer,
Amherst Town Council President