



LOVING SUPPORTED BY  **Bethel** SINCE 1986
Pentecostal Church

PARK SAFETY CONCERNS



Sonbeam Christian Daycare

In September of 1986 Bethel Pentecostal Church (then Bethel Temple) established a non-profit incorporation 'Sonbeam Christian Daycare'





Our Service to Tillsonburg Families

Since 2001 we have cared for the children of over 300 families from Tillsonburg and surrounding areas.

We are a licensed childcare centre, operating at full capacity; 10 Toddlers and 40 Preschoolers

We have 58 children enrolled with us currently.



As of October 11th, 2023 our wait list consists of 308 children



Large Part of our Community



Visiting 'Grandmas & Grandpas' at Maple Manor, Woodingford Lodge, Tillsonburg Retirement Center & VON



Nature Walks and Community Walks



Remembrance Day Ceremony



Swim Lessons

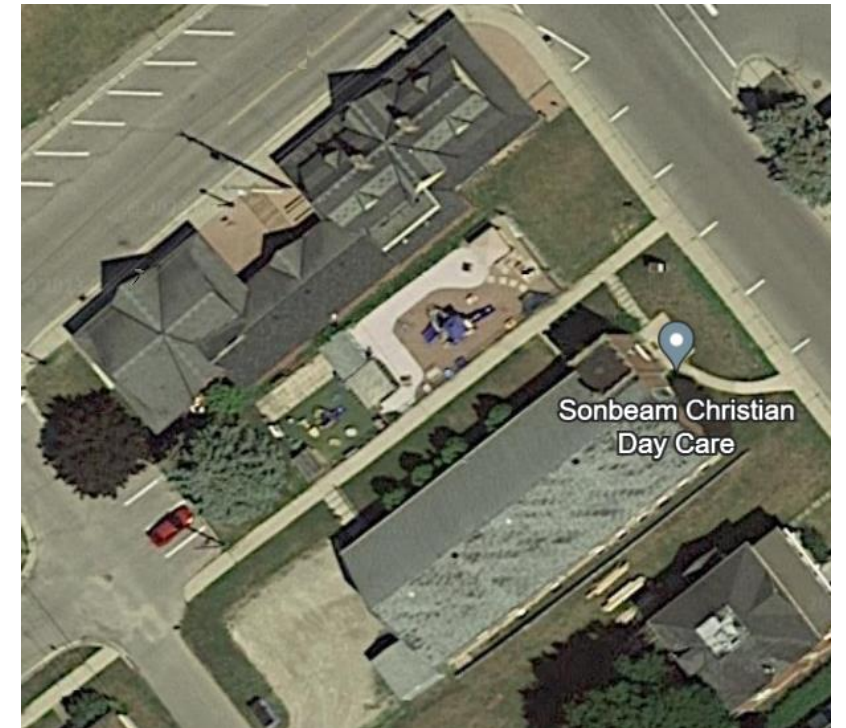


Sonbeam and the Park

Sonbeam is located at 119 Bidwell St and we have had an agreement with the town to use the space beside it for our childcare center since October 1986.



Grand Opening Ceremony January 1987





The Use of the Park

We use the park for the children to have their outdoor time (2 hours a day) in a safe area that meets the requirements of the Ministry of Education.

We are appreciative of the use of this space as it is crucial to our center, without it we would not be permitted to operate and we would have to close.



We have found that most families assume that it is not a public park and we see very little use of it from the community.



Sonbeam's Investment into the Park

Over the years we have covered the costs for the following;

- new play structures/equipment
- yearly park inspections
- repairs and maintenance

Total amount invested since 2001: \$79,700





Thank You!

Having the park to use for the last 37 years has been a blessing for us.



We are truly appreciative of the park and have had little concerns until recently.



Our Concerns

The most important thing for us is the safety of the children and staff. Due to the following there is an increased risk:

- Several homeless using the park after hours
- Numerous needles and drug paraphernalia left in the park





Our Current Approach

Conducting daily checks of the park and green space between our building and the park. This includes the following:

- Raking through the sand, wood chips, and grass
- Collect any garbage
- Checking under, on/in, and around the play structures
- Disinfecting suspected areas that homeless individual may have used

Even with being diligent in our efforts to keep everyone safe, it is still possible that traces of drugs (ex fentanyl) can be left behind or that our staff could get stuck with a needle while cleaning up the park.



Our Current Approach

We have experienced a large increase in the above concerns, so we reached out to Public Health, and Parks & Recreation to get guidance on how to deal with homelessness and drug issues. Parks and Rec was willingly able to help us understand their protocol for disinfecting our local parks.

We have spoken with the town of Tillsonburg to share our concerns. In those conversations we have learned that all people have the right to be in public spaces at all times.



Solutions

We are doing everything we can to keep the children in our care safe; however, we can't be sure of their safety when individuals are using drugs and residing in the park.

We require the use of a park to operate our licensed child care program. We have continued to invest in this park and would like to begin conversation towards the possibility of obtaining this property.

Making the park private would allow us to take further action for the safety of our children and staff.



Questions?

