

Local



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Although Dave Dodson led a campaign against the opening of A Child's Touch Day Care Center in Thorn-

ton, he has since changed his mind about the place and now helps out with the landscaping.

Child center proves itself

Protesters do an about-face

By **TILLIE FONG**
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THORNTON — Seven months ago, neighbors were up in arms over a proposed day-care center they feared would add to traffic and noise.

Today, they're helping landscape the property and sending their children to A Child's Touch Day Care Center.

"There's no man who is perfect," said Dave Dodson, 64, who had circulated petitions against the center at 9141 Poze Blvd. "If you make a mistake, then you should face it like a man."

Neighbors submitted a petition with 230 signatures against the center to the city council on Feb. 27, but the council ap-

proved the permit on April 10.

Dodson said the property the center bought had become rundown when it was used as a church. Neighbors feared a lot of kids romping around wouldn't help.

"The landscaping was in pretty bad shape and they let it go to pot," he said of the former occupants. "The dirt was constantly blowing across the street and my grass picks it up."

But since center owners Mike and Debi Grillo have renovated the place, Dodson has nothing but praise for it. He has even helped lay sod on the property and watered plants for the center.

"It's the biggest asset that this neighborhood has ever had," he said. "The people went to work and turned it completely around. If I can help them out, all they need to do is holler."

Dodson said that the teachers have kept the children well behaved and traffic hasn't been a problem at all.

The center has a staff of 20, and can take up to 101 children. It offers programs for children ages 1 to 14.

Don Kindig, 32, also signed the petition against it, but now sends his 8-year-old son, Chris, to the center.

"I think the people who were opposing it were giving parents misleading information about the traffic and the impact (the center) would have," he said.

Kindig said he decided to send his son there after he found that the center had certified teachers.

"It's much better than where he was," Kindig said.

The Grillos are pleased with the new attitude.

"I think the people just didn't know us and they had their minds made up because they were afraid of the unknown," said Debi Grillo.

"All we ask is that we are given a chance."