

Kindertown supporters rally to keep center open



Holly Young

By Kathryn Reed

Parents, children, former students – they took to the streets Saturday to show support for Kindertown and the day care-preschool's owner Maria Barrows-Crist.

The state has told Barrows-Crist she must close the South Lake Tahoe facility Oct. 15.

Her attorney filed for reconsideration on Friday. This is to have the judge overturn the decision to close 36-year-old facility. Barrows-Crist hopes to hear something this coming week.

In the mean time, she is working with her sister, Nina Peterson, to take over the operation that cares for 130 children and employs 20 people. Peterson operates a center out of state.

"We should be able to stay open providing licensing works with us," Barrow-Crist said as she and about 70 supporters marched from the Y, down Highway 50 to the center.

However, Barrows-Crist expects the state funding to not be transferred with the ownership. That \$386,000 would go to the county for it to run a center on the South Shore. The

reduction of funds would affect about 60 percent of Kindertown's kids and likely mean 10 staff positions would have to be eliminated.

Amber Alford was one of the many walking with a child along Highway 50 yesterday. She went to Kindertown and now her 13-month-old goes.

Repeatedly parents talked about how clean Kindertown is, saying this isn't the case at all centers in the area.

"My kids have made a lot of friends there," said Tracy Miller of her three children who attend Kindertown. She said they never cry and look forward to going – which hasn't been the case at other centers.

"They've taught me how to be a better parent," said Steven Witmond Jr. as he and his 3-year-old son walked. "It smells clean when you walk in. There are a lot of things to play with."



Kindertown
supporters
walk along
Highway 50

Saturday.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed