

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Look whoooo has entered the Bandera childcare scene

By Grace Toner  
The Bandera Prophet

The Little Barn Owls Learning Center opened its doors just last month, with a mission to “cultivate a nurturing, innovative, and safe environment where every child is empowered to explore, discover, and flourish.”

The learning center, which officially opened Feb. 19, offers care for babies from 6 weeks to 12 years old. Little Barn Owls Learning Center offers a variety of programs, including art classes, music lessons, outdoor play, math readiness, language development and movement activities.

When her local church was no longer able to provide a classroom for her children to be homeschooled, Little Barn Owls Owner Katie Harper, who said she believed Bandera had needed more childcare options, took matters into her own hands.

In early 2023, when Harper and her husband were driving by a church that had closed down, she half-jokingly but half-seriously commented they should purchase it. Shortly thereafter, the couple purchased the property, and renovations began in August 2023.

Harper said she did extensive research prior to beginning the journey of opening the daycare. She said she found that Texas is a “childcare desert” with limited options, especially in the Hill Country. Joking that Bandera parents need to put their names on a daycare list two years prior to getting pregnant, Harper stressed the importance of childcare options, emphasizing how it isn’t just benefitting the direct community, but the bigger economic picture. By opening a childcare facility, she said

parents have the option to go back to work, subsequently affecting employment and poverty rates.

Harper said her favorite part of owning a daycare is “walking into the classroom, seeing [the kids’] excitement and knowing I’m helping provide a place of comfort.”

She said she wants her learning center to be a place where kids are safe and cared for.

“I give a lot of thanks to all the kind words and positive reinforcement [from the community],” Harper said, adding the three little owls in the learning center’s logo represent her children. “It helped me get to where I am.”

Looking ahead, Harper said her future programs include a community garden where children learn how to harvest plants, and chickens on the property. The Little Barn Owls Learning Center will offer summer programs beginning this summer and Harper said she hopes to offer afterschool programs in the future.

For more information about the Little Barn Owls Learning Center, visit [www.littlebarnowlsllc.com](http://www.littlebarnowlsllc.com)