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Barb Hutzal is going to miss teaching the young students at Little Cherub Nursery School. The school is closing indefinitely today and Hutzal is retiring after 38 years as the school's supervisor. Hutzal is shown here with some of her students from left, Abigail Short, Samantha Mann, Courtney Weatherall, Sarah Hachey, Nicholas Sallay and Sarah Maxwell.
Photo by Ted Brown

Nursery school supervisor bids farewell after 38 years

LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

"To teach is to touch a life forever," says Barb Hutzal. Over the past 38 years Hutzal has "touched" thousands of lives in her role as supervisor of Little Cherub Nursery School in Georgetown.

is often greeted by former students who are now all grown up and remember her fondly. When Hutzal started the nursery school in 1969 she had only about a dozen students and the school was located in a portable behind the Maple Ave. Baptist Church.

Hutzal is retiring and the school is closing indefinitely today (Friday). Losing their positions in the closure will be staff members Rita Phillips, assistant supervisor at the school who has been there eight years, Carol Ashton, a para-professional there for 12 years, and Linda Pringle, a part-time supply teacher for approximately 10 years.

Today Hutzal and her staff have two classes of 24 students each day, and the school is now located in an addition at the church, which it moved into in 1974. Before Junior Kindergarten was introduced, they had 72 students each day.

"I just want to pay tribute to the very capable, dedicated staff that have worked with me over the years," says Hutzal. "They have been great team players who have supported and encouraged me in every way. Without them, the school would not be the success it has been."

"I love it. Every day is different. It's just fun coming to school," says Hutzal. She says when she first began in the preschool education field there wasn't a lot of curriculum available, so she wrote her own, including songs to go along with it.

Hutzal, who has four children and six grandchildren, says the decision to retire was a tough one to make.

"Kids are kids. They love to sing, play and dance, listen to stories, create and build." Over the years she has continued to develop her own curriculum throughout the summers eagerly throwing herself into researching different topics of interest to kids. She found that she, too, was fascinated with the material she was uncovering.

"It was a very, very difficult, very emotional decision," says Hutzal. "I will certainly miss the kids. I will certainly miss the parents. I have met so many wonderful families."

Technology has changed a lot since she first began at Little Cherub. She not so fondly remembers mimeograph machines and trying to get the film started in projectors.

Parents of children who attend the school were saddened by the news of the closure.

She says kids have changed also. "Kids are very much more independent."

"I'm sad to see it go," says Trista Donnelly, whose son Hayden is a current student and daughter Ciara a former student. "I'm glad my two got in there because they're excellent with the kids."

She also says with the much shorter attention spans of kids today "everything has to be fast moving".

She said the school is clean, bright, the pupil teacher ratio is very good and its evident the staff really care about the children.

Hutzal views teaching nursery school-aged children as an honour and a very important job.

"They're awesome," says Lucy Ravalico, whose son Michael attends Little Cherub. "He's had so much fun. He's loved it."

"We're the first people teaching these little beings," says Hutzal.

Paul Detoro, whose son attends the school, praised the teachers at Little Cherub.

She loves seeing the children develop self-confidence and watching them "blossom."

"They make you feel like part of the family every morning, like you are dropping your kids off with a relative," says Detoro. "We don't worry one bit while our children are there."

"It has been an awesome privilege to teach in this community. Thank you Georgetown for a wonderful career," says Hutzal.

Hutzal has been teaching at Little Cherub for so long now she has several second-generation students— children of previous students of the school. And when she goes out in town she

In recognition of the school's many years in the community everyone is invited to drop by the fellowship area of Maple Avenue Baptist Church from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday (June 24) to reminisce, visit with Little Cherub staff members and look at old pictures from the school.

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