

Play & Learn Staffers Play the Night Away for 30th Anniversary

Natalia Andia's Play & Learn co-workers gathered around her excitedly as she fed tokens into a video game called Wheel Deal at Dave & Buster's in Plymouth Meeting. For the fifth time in ten minutes, the game lights flashed, bells rang out and a long line of tickets poured out of the machine. Andia's cohorts cheered as she tripled her winnings.

Andia giggled and shook her head in disbelief, grasping the endless supply of tickets in her hands.

"My son plays a game just like this at Chuck E. Cheese," she laughed. "He's not going to believe this."

Andia was one of over 200 Play & Learn employees who gathered at Dave & Buster's on the evening of Jan. 20th to celebrate the 10 Montgomery County childcare centers' 30th anniversary. Play & Learn was founded in 1981 by a team of early educators and psychologists. The non-profit, which began with just one center in Fort Washington, is now ten centers strong, providing high-quality early education to over 1,100 children from six weeks to six years old.

To celebrate this monumental anniversary, Play & Learn teachers, assistant teachers, aides, administrators and office staff took over Dave & Buster's second floor, which was decked out with balloons and handmade childcare-themed centerpieces commemorating the 30-year feat. Each staff member also received a special 30th Anniversary t-shirt. After dinner, cake and other tasty treats, staffers retreated downstairs to the venue's Million Dollar Midway where they played games like Ms. Pac-Man, Skee-ball, Dance Dance Revolution, Carismo and Super Trivia.

With all the game-play, congratulatory hugs and high-fives, the staff's enthusiasm and family atmosphere was obvious.

As for Andia, the game didn't stop there. While she could have cashed in her tickets at the Dave & Buster's Winner's Circle, she had other ideas in mind.

"I'm going to save my winnings for my son," said Andia, whose six-year-old is a Play & Learn alum. She plans to make another trip to the Winner's Circle with her child and redeem her tickets for the Wii game of his choice.

All the Play & Learn centers will continue the 30th anniversary celebration with parties, cake and, of course, some time for play.

Kristi Bryson, Director of the Lansdale Play & Learn displays the Lansdale center's 30th Anniversary centerpiece.

