

Millville center lives to work out another day

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MILLVILLE - It has been a remarkable turnaround for the Holly City Family Center.

Less than a year ago, Millville Housing Authority Executive Director Paul Dice said he could not rationalize keeping it open. The center was hemorrhaging money and needed too much financial help to survive. A closing date was set.

On Monday, however, Dice talked about expansion.

The center has turned to its members and staffs - and they were determined.

"A member advisory committee was formed to provide us with input," Dice said. "We open up our books to them, and they see exactly what we spend. They know what we're up against. There is also a staff that, many times, is working for free. They've come together. They knew that they had a chance to save it."

While not there yet, Dice said, the center is in a position to succeed.

The center was operating at a loss. It needed funding from several sources just to tread water last summer. When Millville's City Commission and the school district decided to pull more than \$100,000 in funding because of budgetary constraints last year, the center seemed destined to fail.

Dice said even if the center received funding, it probably was only delaying the inevitable.

Money from the Cumberland County Improvement Authority, as well as the city and school district, coupled with strong support from the public, changed his tune. The center could go on, he thought, but things needed to change.

After early reports of the center's closing, many members backed away, fearing it would not be there at some point down the road. Since then, time and energy have been spent trying to get them - and others - to come back.