Gentex and ODC Network Break Ground on Innovative Preschool

May 5, 2023

ZEELAND, Mich., May 05, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Dozens of representatives from educational institutions, community organizations, economic development groups, and state and local government gathered today in Zeeland, Michigan, as Gentex Corporation (NASDAQ: GNTX) and the ODC Network (ODC) broke ground on the Gentex Discovery Preschool, an on-site daycare center and preschool designed to provide quality, subsidized childcare for the children of Gentex employees.

“Improving access to affordable, quality childcare is a goal shared by all the groups represented here today,” said Gentex President and CEO Steve Downing. “Finding and paying for childcare has increasingly become a burden for far too many in our community. It’s a barrier to employment that also negatively affects child development, household financial stability, and overall economic growth. We trust this facility will become a meaningful benefit for Gentex employees, allow individuals to reenter the workforce, and create childcare openings throughout the community.”

The Gentex Discovery Preschool: An ODC Network Early Childcare Center, will consist of a 43,000-square-foot facility to be built on Gentex’s corporate campus in Zeeland. It will include 12 daycare rooms, three infant rooms, office and common space, a food preparation area, and indoor play center. There will also be many outdoor nature-based playscapes and a fishing pond.

The facility will be owned by Gentex and operated by the ODC Preschools division of the ODC Network. ODC Preschools provides nature-based childcare and early childhood education programming. Children spend time outdoors each day, learning through active play and exploration.

“Employer-based childcare centers are strategically important to the continued growth of West Michigan,” said ODC’s CEO Travis Williams. “They benefit the employer by helping attract and retain talent, the economy by expanding the workforce, and children by reducing the achievement gap and improving health and educational outcomes.”

The Gentex Discovery Preschool will be the first of its kind in the area, due in part to its extended hours of operation, which will accommodate the children of both first- and second-shift workers, with a capacity target of up to 250 children per shift. Gentex plans to offer discounted childcare rates as a benefit of employment.

Over the past couple years, Gentex has been systematically addressing some of the region’s most significant barriers to employment. In 2021, the company launched Spanish-speaking assembly lines to expand employment opportunities for West Michigan’s growing Hispanic community. Today, over 200 Spanish-speaking employees work on various production lines throughout the company.

Later this month, the company plans to open a satellite production facility in the Madison Square neighborhood of Grand Rapids. By expanding its manufacturing footprint, Gentex plans to boost its employee base and provide greater access to well-paying jobs for those unlikely to commute to Zeeland due to rising transportation costs.

ODC Preschools' mission is to provide quality, nature-based, early childhood experiences that prepare young children to be active, independent learners with a lifelong connection to the natural world. ODC Preschools is one of ODC Network's nine divisions.

Founded in 1974, Gentex Corporation (NASDAQ: GNTX) is a supplier of automatic-dimming rearview mirrors and electronics to the automotive industry, dimmable aircraft windows for aviation markets, and fire protection products to the fire protection market. Visit the company website at www.gentex.com.

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Photos accompanying this announcement are available at:

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GENTEX CORPORATION

Gentex Breaks Ground on Gentex Discovery Preschool



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Future Home of the Gentex Discovery Preschool



Gentex and ODC broke ground today on the Gentex Discovery Preschool in Zeeland, Michigan. The facility will become a meaningful benefit for Gentex employees, allow individuals to reenter the workforce, and create childcare openings throughout the community.

Gentex CEO Steve Downing



Gentex President & CEO speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Gentex Discovery Preschool, an on-site daycare center and preschool designed to provide quality, subsidized childcare for the children of Gentex employees.

ODC Network CEO Travis Williams



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Source: Gentex Corporation