

PCS finally welcome home
By BOB MUNDAY/Special to the Herald
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After nearly two decades of temporary housing, the Penticton Christian School has finally found a permanent home.

Although the school opened in September for the 2007-08 school year, the doors were officially opened at the independent institution's new location at 102-96 Edmonton Ave. on Saturday afternoon. The school had previously been located at a number of sites throughout the city before finally finding a new home on the property of the adjacent New Beginnings Church.

Acting-Mayor Rory McIvor told the crowd on hand for the ceremony that it has been a long time coming for PCS to finally secure a permanent base. PCS first opened in 1988.

"On behalf of the mayor and council, and the residents of the City of Penticton, I extend our congratulations (to all) who have, over many, many years, arrived at this rather significant day," said McIvor. "This school will certainly add to the mosaic of education within the community of Penticton."

Principal Karl Boehmer told the group the school is fully functional to educate those in kindergarten through grade 12.

Prior to the 2004-05 school year, PCS enrolled students only through grade 8.

"We currently have 91 students, K-12, and we have 11 staff members, including nine teachers and myself," said Boehmer.

The independent school is in the Group 1 category and is funded 50 per cent from the Ministry of Education and the remaining portion from the parents.

Boehmer says the foremost reason students choose his school is to secure a Christian education.

"A Christian education means, in many ways, a more traditional approach to education, more discipline, more clear Christian values and morals - right and wrong," he said. "That is the major distinction between us and the public system. Other than that, we offer all the other programs that the local public elementary, middle and high schools would offer to graduate kids."

Boehmer says that the school does accept non-Christian students but stresses they must be willing to accept a Christian-based education.

Construction of the new \$1.6 million learning center began in April of 2006. A large portion of the funding came from donations and volunteer work.

"There is a bit of a mortgage as well," said Boehmer.

Boehmer says plans are already in the works for a major expansion that would increase the number of classrooms from seven to 12. There would also be a library and a gym.

"Hopefully, we can start building at the end of this school year," said Boehmer. "The plans are in place for a school that will serve 200 kids."