



Easter Seals Greater Washington-Baltimore Region
DC Child Development Center Revitalization Project:
A Service Expansion Initiative

2800 13th Street, NW Washington, DC 20009
 (at Girard in the Columbia Heights neighborhood)



BZA #18051

BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT
 District of Columbia
 CASE NO. 18051
 EXHIBIT NO. 24

Easter Seals Greater Washington-Baltimore Region (Easter Seals) has received funding in the amount of \$990,627 from the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development under the Community Development Block Grant program. Funding is supporting renovations of Easter Seals' D.C. Child Development Center located in the Columbia Heights neighborhood to expand the center's capacity to daily serve up to 96 children with and without disabilities and their families. The project was approved by the Advisory Neighborhood Commission in June 2006 – and we greatly appreciate this support. Interior work is nearly completed. However, we are waiting for the new certificate of occupancy that will allow us to serve 16 more children. *Easter Seals respectfully requests the approval for this last component of the expansion initiative.*



Background

When Easter Seals opened the doors of the D.C. Child Development Center in 1959, it was the first program in Washington, D.C. to offer comprehensive educational and therapeutic services for young children with disabilities. Today, Easter Seals is the largest provider of early childhood services for children with disabilities in the District of Columbia.

The center meets all D.C. government licensing requirements and is accredited by the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Additionally, the center holds the highest level of certification (Gold Tier) awarded by the D.C. Early Care and Education Administration. It is the only child development center in the District serving children with special needs that is Gold Tier-certified.

The center provides inclusive early childhood education, intervention services, specialized therapies and full-day childcare for children with special needs in an inclusive environment in which children with disabilities learn alongside their typically developing peers. The center targets underserved populations, including low-income families, families with limited English-language proficiency, single mothers, and children with disabilities in foster care.

The center serves children six weeks to five years of age from throughout the District of Columbia. Approximately 65 percent of the enrollment is children with a *range of disabilities and special needs* and a variety of diagnoses including Down syndrome, spina bifida, Autism Spectrum Disorder, cerebral palsy, Tuberous Sclerosis, global developmental delays, and disorders related to premature birth (30 weeks or less gestation). During the prior year the center served a total of 102 children, of whom more than 90 percent are from minority families of low-income status.

Board of Zoning Adjustment
 District of Columbia
 CASE NO. 18051
 EXHIBIT NO. 24

Revitalization Initiative

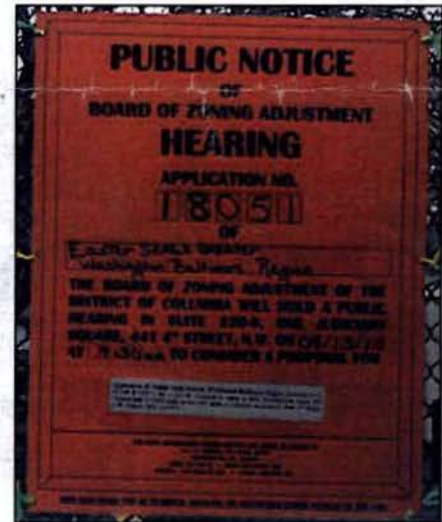
The Easter Seals D.C. Child Development Center is located on the northwest corner of 13th Street and Girard Street, NW, Washington, DC. After many years of serving thousands of children the center was showing its age. In 2003 the Easter Seals/GWBR Board of Directors made a commitment to the D.C. Child Development Center – and to the District of Columbia – and undertook a multi-year revitalization project to propel the center back to the forefront of state-of-the-art care for children with disabilities. *Easter Seals takes pride in being a part of this important community for more than 50 years* and is dedicated to continuing to provide valuable service to the District's residents.

Phase I. An interior renovation was completed in summer 2004 to create a better learning environment and converted offices to two new classrooms; *this first phase of the revitalization project was financed privately*. This enabled the center to increase the number served from 54 to 80 children each day.

Phase II. In late 2005, through a competitive application process, Easter Seals received \$326,000 funding from the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development. This further upgraded the facility and improved security. But the need for inclusive early childhood education continued to be great.

Phase III. At the urging of D.C. government, Easter Seals applied for and received \$990,627 in funding from the D.C. Department of Housing and Community Development to undertake an additional facility renovation. This expansion is converting the lower level of the center to a classroom to serve an additional 16 children each day. **This will increase licensed capacity from 80 to 96 children** and enable the center to serve a projected 120 children and their families each year.





Impact

Through conscientious planning and proactive policies regarding transportation Easter Seals has ensured that there will be no increase in vehicle activity.

Public transportation is highly encouraged for both staff and families. We have 25 current staff and 60% use public transportation or walk and 3 of the staff that drive carpool with 3 other staff members.

Eight out of twelve of the new students we will admit (once we receive our new Certificate of Occupancy) are siblings of current students meaning that they will attend with their families and not increase transportation usage. In addition of 22 our current 79 students have siblings in the program. Out of the 68 families we serve, 60% walk or use public transportation and several of the families that drive carpool. Some of our special needs students are eligible for Medicaid reimbursed transportation and they arrive in very small vans, not buses.

We request all our vendors to deliver products in the smallest trucks possible and during low traffic hours, usually between 10:00 am and 2 pm.

We never have to use any street parking as our parking lot is large enough for our current and future needs; indeed we often allow our neighborhood community partners to use our lot in order to decrease the parking impact on this residential street. We have a well-designed parking lot that includes a pick-up and drop-off area so again, there is no impact on the street traffic. Our children and staff do not arrive at the same time during the day, rather their departure and arrival times are spread from 7am to 6pm.

DC Municipal Regulations Child Development Centers (R-1) 205:

205.1: The Easter Seals Child Development Center (ES CDC) has been at this location since 1959 and meets all zoning requirements

205.2: The Easter Seals DC Child Development Center has successfully renewed the license to operate a child care facility every year since 1959. Attached is the current license which indicates full compliance. We are fully capable of meeting all applicable code and licensing requirements.

205.3: The ES CDC (center) is located and designed to create no objectionable traffic conditions and no unsafe conditions for picking up and dropping off children and all people with disabilities. Attached is a plat of the property which shows that the center has an ample two-way driveway that leads to a designated drop-off zone that has an accessible ramp and a covered entrance to the building.

205.4: The ES CDC (center) has an on site parking lot available for all staff members as well as visiting parents and community partners – The parking lot and drop-off area have been in existence since 1959 and there are currently 26 spaces as well as 2 handicapped spaces - again, please see attached plat.

205.5: The ES CDC (center) has an outdoor play area between the building and parking lot on the property that is located and designed so that there is no objectionable impacts on adjacent or nearby properties due to noise, activity, visual or other objectionable conditions. This playground has been in existence for over 10 years with no complaints – see attached plat.

205.6: No special treatments in the way of design, screening of buildings, planting and parking areas are required for this expansion project – all building improvements have been to the interior area of the building.

205.7: There are no off-site play areas at the ES CDC.

205.8: Easter Seals understands that the Board may approve more than one child/elderly care center within 1,000 ft. of another child/elderly care center however this is not applicable to our center as there are no other child/elderly care centers within 1,000 ft. of our center.

205.9: Easter Seals understands that before taking final action on an application for use as a child care center, the Board shall submit the application to the DC Departments of Transportation and Human Services, the DC Office on Aging and the DC Office of Planning for review and written reports.

205.10: The Easter Seals CDC understands that the referral to the DC Department of Human Services shall request advice as to whether the proposed center can meet all licensing requirements set forth in the applicable laws of the District of Columbia.

Project Outcomes and Benefits

The outcomes of these capital improvements will benefit the District's children and families in a number of ways. The additional classroom increases availability of childcare services for area residents. Parents are able to go to work knowing that their child is being cared for in a safe, dignified, and stimulating environment. With this peace of mind they are better employees and able to make important contributions in their workplace and more fully contribute to the family life.

Contact: Marilyn Ricker, Vice President, Child Development Services
Tel: 301-9320-9741 / Email: mricker@eseal.org

