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February 28, 2000

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District of Columbia
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street NW - Suite 220
Washington DC 20001

Re: BZA Application #16556
Application of Jewish Primary Day School
for a special exception to establish a private school

Dear Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment:

An application has been filed by Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital (the "School") for a special exception to establish a private school for 215 students and 32 teachers and staff in a residential neighborhood. The School proposes to locate its school at two synagogues on Sixteenth Street NW — Ohev Sholom at 7712 Sixteenth Street NW (zoned R-1-A) and Tifereth Israel at 7701 Sixteenth Street NW (zoned R-1-B). My wife and I, co-signers of this letter, are property owners within 200 feet of Tifereth Israel.

By means of this letter, we wish to oppose the application to permit operation of the School.

Our opposition is based on the following considerations:

- *Traffic.* As I understand the plans for dropping off and picking up students from the proposed School, parents and buses are planning to use both Jonquil Street and Juniper Streets, as well as using the alleyways that lie behind each synagogue.

Our street, Jonquil Street, already is heavily affected seven days a week by traffic, much of which occurs at the beginning and the end of each school day. Our local public elementary school, Shepherd Elementary School, is located at the corner of Jonquil Street and Fourteenth Street NW. Every school day, there is already an enormous traffic jam of parents, teachers, children and staff going into and out of Shepherd School. During this morning and evening "school rush hour," we often have to wait several minutes before we can find a clear space to drive up our own block. We are deeply concerned with the

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proposed addition of another set of parents of school-age children who will be trying to use the same space at the same time each day to discharge and pick up additional children.

Not only does the existing Shepherd Elementary School provide heavy traffic use on Jonquil Street, but Sixteenth Street NW is one of the major commuter thoroughfares into and out of the downtown area for people living in Montgomery and northern Prince George's Counties. When Sixteenth Street NW becomes backed up in the morning and in the evening, dozens of commuter cars take a short-cut through our neighborhood, using Jonquil and Juniper Streets to avoid delays.

We moved into our current home nearly 28 years ago, pleased to be near a public school. We understood the reality that a certain number of parents would be using their automobiles to take their children to and from school. In the 28 years we have lived here, we have seen the automobile traffic generated by the public school, together with the commuters using our streets as shortcuts, grow beyond any reasonable expectation.

The addition of the proposed School to our neighborhood would strain the resources of our residential streets and dramatically increase the probability that one or more young children will be maimed or killed by a someone trying to navigate our already overloaded residential streets.

- *Parking.* Parking on Jonquil and Juniper Streets is already at a premium. A visual inspection of our streets on any of the seven days of the week shows that there are few if any free spaces available. Without the Zone 4 Residential Parking stickers that serve to keep the workers at the Walter Reed facility from parking on our street and walking the few blocks to work (as used to happen), we would not be able to find parking anyplace close to where we live. My wife and I are both entering our senior citizen years and it will be an increasing burden to have to carry groceries and packages long distances simply because we cannot find parking near our own home. We all know that schools of all types have events that attract parents and relatives to visit for short times during the school day. Whether it is for parent/teacher conferences, school performances, or other events, the proposed School will inevitably bring many more cars to park on the streets for periods of time from a few hours to all day.

We also question whether the proposed parking for staff and teachers (which seems not to take into account parent volunteers, visitors, and other people coming on a semi-regular basis to the proposed School) seems inadequate and too optimistically dependent on carpooling and other strategies that have little demonstrated success elsewhere in the Washington DC area.

Finally, we note that the Montgomery Soccer Incorporated program is a heavy user of the so-called "Lower Field" (operated by the DC Department of Recreation). MSI holds weekday practices, often every weeknight, all during the Spring and Fall seasons. During these practice sessions, frequently every single parking space for blocks around is filled already. We can't imagine how our neighborhood would accommodate the additional burdens on parking that the proposed School would impose.

- *Use of the Alleyways* . We understand that the proposed School has suggested that at least some of the loading and unloading of students will take place on the alleys that lie behind each synagogue closest to and parallel to Sixteenth Street NW. Unfortunately, these alleys are narrow, designed to be used to pick up trash and to provide access to our garages and back yards. They do not allow two cars to pass. Use of the alleys by the proposed School would provide a substantial impediment to free access to our own properties.

- *Unfulfilled Promises.* Unfortunately, the neighborhood has already had an unhappy experience with an educational program run by Tiffereth Israel at its facility. When its child development program began several years ago, we neighbors were given a number of promises concerning traffic patterns, parking, and neighborhood liaison. Sadly, these promises have not been honored according to either their letter or their spirit by the program at the synagogue. We believe that past experience with an applicant in fulfilling promises gives some indication concerning whether they will carry out any promises they make in the current application.

My wife and I are strong supporters of education. We live in a neighborhood that has three educational institutions within a few blocks of our house (Shepherd Park Elementary School, the Ethical Society School, and Lowell School - which recently replaced Galludet's operations on Kalmia Road). Moreover, we are strong supporters of religiously-directed education. Both of our children attended at one time or another Quaker schools and I chaired the board of a leading Quaker school in this area. Thus, our objections are not based on any antipathy towards educational institutions or those associated with religious institutions.

But based on the traffic, parking, access, and public safety considerations outlined in this letter, we both urgently request that the Board of Zoning Adjustment deny BZA Application #16556.

Yours very truly,

Grant P. Thompson Sharon R. Thompson