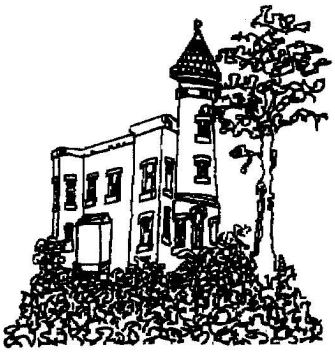


Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.

741 Eighth St. SE / Washington, DC 20003-2802 / (202) 675-9340 / Fax (202) 675-9358

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PROGRAMS

Sasha Bruce House
Zocalo Outreach Program
Consortium for Youth Alternatives
Teen Mothers Program
Independent Living Programs
Project Safe Place
Substance Abuse & AIDS Prevention Programs
Family Preservation Program
YouthBuild

Councilmember Sharon Ambrose
Ward 6
Council of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

DIST
DC
00
NOV 30
AM 9:45

November 29th, 2000

Dear Ms. Ambrose:

I am writing to request that you re-consider your position relative to Sasha Bruce Youthwork's application to the Board of Zoning Adjustment to increase bed space for runaway and homeless youth. First, the need for this service is very great in our city and includes substantial care we provide to young constituents in your ward and their families. Also, once our neighbors concerns were expressed to us, we have responded quickly and I believe fully and have invited neighbors to join a Community Liaison Committee to insure that better communication occurs routinely.

Prior to these last weeks, we believed that we had a very positive relationship in our neighborhood except for some trash problems and occasional times when complaints were brought to us with which we dealt swiftly . Apparently, some of our neighbors have harbored other concerns of which we were not aware. Because it is our goal to contribute to the community and certainly to not present problems for our neighbors, we have taken a number of actions, outlined in the letter we sent to the BZA and which is attached and responds to all the concerns expressed. Importantly, on November 19th, we invited our neighbors to see Sasha Bruce House, hear about the programs we provide, learn about their concerns and invited people to join a Community Liaison Committee. We hosted 15 neighbors that Sunday and 13 wished to join

BZA
Case No. 16622
Exhibit No. 46

A United Way Member Agency

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16622
EXHIBIT NO.46

the Committee. It was in my view a very positive and warm occasion and I think that people's willingness to serve on such a Committee is indicative of their interest in helping us to be a responsible and contributing neighbor. Many of the people who attended spoke of their interest in volunteering in our programs in addition to the community liaising work. Altogether, after a very contentious interchange with the one neighbor who attended the Zoning hearing, this meeting evidenced, we thought, that the larger community was willing to work with us and build ways to insure we are meeting community norms.

I believe that the Community Liaising Committee structure will help to assure our future neighborhood relations are positive and may also help to limit the assignment of blame to Sasha Bruce young people to the times they are in fact responsible for a neighborhood problem. We are skeptical about some of the recent claims of negative behavior on the part of Sasha Bruce House clients but surely, having direct communication about problems as they happen will assure appropriate action is taken at the time.

Because of our efforts and because the need is very great, I hope you are persuaded to support our efforts in behalf of increased service to homeless teenagers. I believe we are running a very strong program there as evidenced by the positive outcomes for so many of the young people we serve and our provision of leadership and training in our methods of counseling in this and other cities around the country. I believe Sasha Bruce House is a well run and supervised program and have taken steps to insure the time the young people spend outside is more carefully supervised to insure our neighbors are comfortable.

On two other matters relative to Sasha Bruce Youthwork, I want to assure you that our building at 745 8th Street ,SE will be used to house 90 students in our new Charter School program, the 6th and 7th grades. During the first two years, we will work to identify and renovate another building for the 9th - 12th grades. Also, I wanted to be sure you know that we plan to renovate the space above the school space to house formerly homeless teenage Mothers and their children. The space includes five apartments which will be a home for five young families. The

program will provide supportive services as well as the housing to help launch these families toward complete self-sufficiency.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters. It was lovely to talk to you today. I hope it will not be so long again. Perhaps we can arrange a tour of our programs. I will call your office in a few weeks to see when your schedule might allow this. Also, you are, of course, welcome to join the Community Liaising Committee or perhaps plan to attend the first meeting which will be just after the new year. Until then, I am

Sincerely,

Deborah Shore

Deborah Shore
Executive Director