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Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

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Re: BZA Application No. 16852
St. Patrick's School – 4925 MacArthur Boulevard, NW

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

I am writing to offer my support for St. Patrick's School application to place its middle school at 4925 MacArthur Boulevard. As providing educational opportunities for students has been a clearly addressed goal within the District of Columbia, I am applauding St. Patrick's efforts to offer a continued program for their students.

As the demand for independent education grows, the opportunities narrow, particularly at the juncture of middle school, where the number of institutions available unfortunately does not meet the demand of the number of students hoping for a position. St. Patrick's reversed a decision that had been made several years ago, when the Board of Trustees voted not to expand to the 7th and 8th, because of the sense of crisis that emerged when four of our students could not find a place within the independent school system upon graduation from the 6th grade. Using that experience as a call to action resulted in research, which showed, very clearly, that the growth of private school students could not be met within the existing number of private school institutions. Our sense of responsibility to our students, both as a community and as an institution, could not just accept that every year, 12-year-old children and their parents would have to confront a reality that they would not be accepted at any independent school within the Washington area. Rejection has a devastating impact on any individual, but most particularly, on a child in the 6th grade. Our middle school program thus was formed from very real need.

I have attended several of the meetings regarding the issue of placing our middle school program on MacArthur Boulevard and have been impressed with St. Patrick's continued demonstration of good faith and willingness to respond to the myriad of issues that concern the Palisades neighborhood. From working with traffic consultants to create a workable carpool situation, using the existing school on Whitehaven Parkway, to restricting usage of the school to school year only, eliminating the possibility of a summer school program, to imposing a covenant to limit enrollment to 60 students , all clearly designed to let the Palisades community understand that we are determined to be good neighbors and an asset to this area.. We are a community of faith, and as such, answer to a high standard of accountability and responsibility. We take very seriously the vows we make and we are determined to both serve our students and serve the community we will reside in.

Many of our families have made a choice to live in the District of Columbia, and as such, expect to be able to educate our children within its borders. As a resident myself, I submit this letter respectfully in the hopes that our proposal will be successful.

Sincerely,

Mary Zeiler Haft

BZA
Case No. 16852
Exhibit No. 243

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16852
EXHIBIT NO.243