August 12, 2002

Dear Chairman Griffis and Members of the Board:

I am writing in support of Barbara Allan's renewal of her special exception permit to continue her wonderful program at Barbara's Montessori School at 2828 Hurst Terrace. (BZA Application # 16915)

My family and I have lived in Palisades for seventeen years. Our two children attended Barbara's Montessori and I have worked there for 16 years. I feel I am in a unique position to offer my support, as I know the Palisades neighborhood well, and I have known Barbara's Montessori as both a parent and a teacher since it's beginning. No one could ask for a more caring, exciting and enthusiastic school environment for their children, as hundreds of our former parents and students can attest. (And hopefully you will hear directly from many of them.)

There is a tremendous need for quality preschools as more young families move into our neighborhood. Barbara's Montessori consistently has many more applicants than it is able to accommodate. This need will only continue to grow with Key School's renovation and expansion, which is why Barbara Allan is hoping to insure the continuation of her program by adding Christine Lonergan's name to the permit application. Christine has lived in Palisades for fifteen years and has taught at Key School for the past ten years. It is important to note that the addition of Christine's name is the only change; the permit is not asking for any increased enrollment, longer hours or any other changes.

Until Key School began it's construction, there had never been any opposition to Barbara's Montessori. Unfortunately, this construction project has put a strain on parking and traffic on Hurst Terrace. In response to her neighbors' concerns, Barbara consulted with Lt. Patrick Burke and implemented several changes to her pick-up and drop-off to minimize traffic problems. Hopefully, when Key School completes it's first phase of construction (expected this fall), and the school's entrance moves to Eskridge Terrace, the impact on Hurst Terrace will lessen dramatically, and the neighbors will realize that Barbara's Montessori School's impact on the block is minimal.

It's unfortunate that the few neighbors opposing the continuation of Barbara's Montessori – several of whom sent their children to Barbara's School, and several of whom moved recently to Hurst Terrace (knowing full well that there was a school on the block) – can't see that Barbara's Montessori is an exceptional benefit to our entire community. I sincerely hope that you approve the special exception for Barbara's Montessori and keep a wonderful program for our children in the Palisades.

Sincerely, Mary Beth Durant

Mary Beth Durant
5427 Carolina Place, NW 20016

BZA
Case No. 16915
Exhibit No. 26

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16915
EXHIBIT NO.26