3430 34th Place N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016
202-537-3536

September 15, 2003

Geoffrey Griffis, Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street N.W., Suite 210
Washington, D.C., 20001

Re: Case No. 16970 (NCRC Application)

Dear Mr. Griffis:

We write as residents of Cleveland Park who live west of 34th Street to ask the Board of Zoning Adjustment to reject the application by the National Child Research Center to expand its facilities and to add students and staff, a change that would adversely affect us.

The NCRC application threatens tranquility of our neighborhood and the balance that we and our neighbors have taken great pains to maintain, over the years, between the residential, commercial and non-profit uses of this neighborhood. The school is trying to leave behind its character as a neighborhood institution of modest size, with a largely local enrollment, and convert itself into an elite institution with region-wide enrollment. We are told that today less than 10 percent of the students live within a mile – walking distance –of NCRC and that around 40 percent come from Maryland or Virginia. We join our neighbors in believing this change, with its attendant traffic, has already been highly detrimental to the school's immediate neighbors and to the character and tranquility of the entire neighborhood. To approve the NCRC application would give the city's blessing to this change. It would make a bad situation worse, and preclude sensible steps that might restore balance.

Over the years, NCRC has gradually increased enrollment and staff, and brought more traffic into the neighborhood. Just five years ago, we understood the school's enrollment to be 120, according to their representations to the BZA when they sought a technical change in their permitted occupancy level. Now, we understand, actual enrollment is nearly 50 percent larger! Similar obfuscation attends the numbers of staff and visitors at the school. Surely the BZA would have faced a different response from neighbors at that time if the actual situation had been made clear. Five years ago we understood the school, in defense of the occupancy change it sought from BZA, to have assured the BZA and the neighbors that it contemplated no further physical changes or expansion! Surely this history should be taken into account by the BZA in reviewing the current application.

Now the school's activities have risen to a level that has brought the traffic situation on Ordway, Highland Place, and adjacent streets to a dangerous situation. The streets that give access to NCRC are not designed for the hundreds of added car trips a day that the

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school's activities create. Any additional traffic will only make an already intolerable and unsafe situation worse.
We live a few hundred feet from the intersection of Newark and 34th St., which has become one of the most dangerous intersections in the city. The traffic to and from NCRC contributes disproportionately to traffic at this intersection. NCRC has promised in the past to mitigate traffic problems on Highland Place, but its measures have not reduced the hazards on that street. NCRC has not at all addressed the problems created on neighboring streets and intersections by hundreds of daily trips to and from its premises.

The daily flow of traffic to and from NCRC should be reduced to restore safety at Newark and 34th St. and on Highland Place and Ordway. Because NCRC has been unsuccessful in mitigating traffic problems, reducing the size of the school is the only reliable way of achieving this safety goal. We are confident that the school can as readily achieve its desired smaller classroom size, and improve the quality of its educational services, by reducing enrollment as by expanding physically – and for considerably less capital expenditure.

We and out neighbors request the BZA to reject the NCRC application and instruct the school to reduce its students, staff, and traffic impacts, and to restore its character as a modestly sized institution appropriate to a residential neighborhood with narrow streets.

Yours truly

Andrew Hamilton Andrew Hamilton

Eliza Hamilton Eliza Hamilton

FAX
Cover Sheet

To: Mr. Geoffrey Griffis
Chairperson, Board of Zoning Adjustment

Fax 202 727-6072

From: Andrew and Eliza Hamilton
3430 34th Place N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

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