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October 24, 2004

Mr. Felix Sanchez
3610 Idaho Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Mr. Sanchez,

The late comedienne, Gilda Radner, played a character on the television show Saturday Night Live, named Rosanna Sanadana, in which she'd rant about something or someone that upset her. The comic part was that invariably, she'd gotten her facts wrong and upon learning what the facts *were*, would say in a quiet voice, "Never mind." At the last BZA hearing in which you accused NCRC's neighbors of being against the school's proposed expansion because we "don't want people of color coming into our neighborhood", you reminded me of Gilda Radner's character, but without any of the comic relief.

The facts are that my husband and I own an upscale Mexican restaurant. And I am a member of the Board of Directors of Big Brothers Big Sisters, the premier mentoring organization in the country, aimed at strengthening single parent families. For months, we've been planning a gala at our restaurant to raise much needed money for the Hermanas y Hermanos Latino outreach initiative of Big Brothers Big Sisters. But you couldn't have known that because you don't know our family. We've never met.

When you made your inflammatory comments, I guess you weren't aware that I was the NCRC parent that volunteered to work with Katy Bauer, NCRC's Admissions Director, only a few years ago, to revamp the Black Student Fund presentation, so that NCRC could attract and recruit more families of color at the Black Student Fund fair each year.

I guess you were also unaware of Dickson Carroll, our neighbor on Ashley Terrace, who for each of the last 12 years, spearheads a program that brings low income kids of color from Adams Morgan to the Cleveland Park Club, which abuts NCRC, so every summer, the kids can learn to swim.

There are many other NCRC neighbors involved in similar work they believe in. Not because it's politically correct, but because that's where their hearts are. Do you know any of them?

You spoke in a damning manner about people you don't even know, including me.
To condemn an entire group of people is stereotyping, one of the negative and dangerous actions that leads to racism.

What you said was wrong and irresponsible, and it warrants an equally public apology.

Sincerely,

Laine Shakerdge Kaufman

Cc: Geoffrey Griffis, Anthony Hood, Curtis Etherly and David Zaidain

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 249

Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.249