Claire A. Bloch
3525 Ordway Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20016

Mr. Geof Griffis
Chairman
Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 Fourth Street, NW
Washington DC 20001

Re: Application No. 16970

October 31, 2003

Dear Mr. Griffis,

I am a member of NCRC's Board of Trustees and support the school's application. I live three blocks from the school and I am in my seventh consecutive year as an NCRC parent. I have been working on NCRC's proposed project for over two years and have attended every hearing before your board. Before this case is closed next week I feel it is imperative to draw your attention to several things that have yet to be said at our many zoning hearings.

First, as you may be accustomed to from other school cases, the opposition has blown the problems way out of proportion. Yes, it is true that Highland Place is a lovely, quiet street, but it is also true that NCRC is a lovely, quiet school. I feel strongly that this school and its operations fit in ideally on this street. The traffic generated by the school is nominal. Even taking at face value the opposition's traffic findings, the worst they have ever documented is one period of fifteen minutes when there was a queue line. On the other day they "studied" all of the drop-off activity was contained within the four spaces in front of the school. Those numbers do not support the exaggerated claims of our opposition. In reality, since we have lengthened our drop off and pick up times, the cars are spread out over a longer period with virtually no "queuing." Again, this is not the traffic nightmare that the opponents are trying to portray.

I have a child who attended John Eaton Elementary (just three blocks from NCRC) and now two of my children attend Georgetown Day School. At both schools I have often observed extremely long lines of cars blocking residential streets making it difficult for oncoming cars to pass. While I think that these conditions are pretty normal where a school exists in an urban setting, what takes place at NCRC has far less impact because the volume of traffic is vastly different. The traffic generated by our preschool is so nominal that there is rarely a disruption on the street that can't be resolved in a matter of seconds.

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Exhibit No. 270

Board of Zoning Adjustment
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CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.270

The opposition has continually referred to the number of people who support them in their fight against NCRC. What they have not mentioned is how they got people to sign petitions against the school. The vehement leaders of this opposition have repeatedly used misinformation to generate mistrust of the school and to bolster support for their opposition. A flyer that the opposition circulated when they were trying to gather signatures titled, "Ordway Alert," contained a series of gross exaggerations designed solely to frighten neighbors about NCRC's plans and to get signatures for their petition. The flyer claimed, for example, that as a result of our project, Ordway Street could experience an increase of 380 car trips in a single day and would lose up to 16 parking spaces. Both of those claims are obviously false.

Furthermore, when opponents initially collected signatures, they used incorrect information. At an ANC meeting in October 2002, opponents admitted this fact and said they would go back and provide signatories with the correct information. I have since spoken with at least a dozen people who said they were never made aware of the correct information and that had they known the facts, they would not have signed in opposition against the school.

What seems incredible to me is that the opponents have all chosen to live in the city. They opted to live next to a thriving school. However peaceful they want to keep their street, Highland Place is not a gated community. It is part of a busy, traffic-filled neighborhood. For some reason, our opponents seem to believe that they own the street, the parking spaces and the neighborhood. NCRC has been in the same location for more than 70 years and has always reached out beyond the narrow boundaries of Cleveland Park drawing students and faculty from all over Washington D.C. And this is how it should be.

In its many decades on Highland Place, NCRC has never undergone any significant expansion. We are now before your board, engaged in this protracted and costly battle with some of our neighbors, because what we are proposing is vital to the school's mission and future. While the facility is charming and historic, it clearly lacks some necessary features. What we are proposing to add--an indoor playspace, two new classrooms, private meeting rooms for staff and parents, an elevator—are all critical to ensure NCRC's future as a model preschool in the District of Columbia. At this point, after nearly two years of postponing and revising our plans to address neighbor concerns, I urge you to approve this case and to allow this historic Washington institution to continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

Claire A. Bloch

FAX TRANSMISSION

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FROM: Claire Bloch
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RE: BZA Application No. 16970

DATE: October 31, 2003

PAGES: 3 (including cover)

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