Barbara B. Haas
3200 Highland Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008

BZA Hearing 11/04/03
Case #16970

My name is Barbara Haas. ~~My husband and I~~ We have lived at 3200 Highland Place for 18 years. We have four children and two grandchildren. Our house is 200 feet from NCRC, on the blind curve, where the carpool line starts. I testified before this Board in 1998 in conditional support of NCRC's application to increase its Certificate of Occupancy. But I am here today in opposition to NCRC's proposed expansion.

In 1997 I was part of a group of neighbors who initiated a dialogue with NCRC to address potential safety problems resulting from the escalating NCRC traffic on Highland Place, 33rd Street, and Ordway. We were repeatedly assured that our concerns would be fully addressed. Then, in January of 1998, we discovered that NCRC had appeared before the BZA requesting a Special Exception to increase its Certificate of Occupancy. We also learned that the BZA had approved the application for a period of 15 years. I wrote a letter requesting that the BZA hold a new public hearing as a result of inadequate notice given to the neighbors.

The rehearing was held in April 1998. In its May 6th decision hearing, BZA members were openly skeptical about NCRC's ability to "ameliorate" its traffic problem and control "rogue parents" and therefore reduced the number of years for the Special Exception from 15 to 8.

During the current hearings Ms. Piggott has testified that NCRC is in full compliance with the 1998 Order. In 1998 NCRC assured us that there would be a maximum of 120 students enrolled. Total enrollment today is 171. NCRC promised to implement a traffic management plan. As you have heard from others, we now have orange cones marking driveway entrances, occasional use of walkie talkies, and some staff members on the street but there is little consistency and the staff is often involved in conversations with parents/drivers, and each other, ignoring enforcement of their own traffic rules. We have a dangerous, congested, disruptive traffic problem on Highland Place. We are told that making Highland Place a one-way street will cure the safety problem, but it will only add another layer of inconvenience to residents on Newark Street, 33rd Street, and Highland Place, in order to accommodate NCRC and will further stress the already overwhelmed infrastructure of this historic neighborhood.

I continue to witness traffic violations by NCRC drivers. An example can be seen in the handout (photograph #1). The black car was illegally parked on the south side of Highland Place facing east, directly across from NCRC, on the blind curve. ~~As I took this photo~~ the driver had just exited his car and was walking up the hill on the school

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property toward the children and teachers who were gathered for dismissal. The driver saw me ~~taking pictures so he~~ ran back to his car, tried to make an illegal U turn in front of NCRC (photograph #2), drove up on the sidewalk, was unable to complete the turn so backed the car to where it had been illegally parked, then headed rapidly to the east on Highland Place. This is but one example that graphically illustrates the continued problems that occur with just the status quo. If the school is unable to control existing conditions, how can they justify an application to increase enrollment? How is allowing even more traffic going to improve the situation?

We are being told by NCRC that despite its plan to build 9000 additional square feet, it does not plan to "significantly" expand the student body. Given their past record of misleading arithmetic, they have no credibility in their current representation that enrollment will only increase by 10 students.

Please reject this application. Thank you.

BZA Case 16970: National Child Research Center, Applicant
Photos to accompany testimony by Barbara Haas, a Party and opponent

Photos were taken on February 27, 2003

1. The parent driver has left the car and walked up the hill to where the children have just been dismissed. The car is parked illegally in front of Mrs. Marshall's house, facing east, in the wrong direction, directly across from NCRC on the blind curve.



2. The parent/driver has returned to the car and is attempting to make an illegal U-turn directly in front of NCRC on the blind curve. He drove partially onto the sidewalk and was unable to complete the U turn, so backed up and drove rapidly east on Highland Place. Note the adult and child in the lefthand corner of the photo walking in the street toward NCRC.



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