Carrie and Stuart Irvin
5609 Wood Way
Bethesda, Maryland 20816

August 5, 2002

RECEIVED
D.C. OFFICE OF ZONING
2002 DEC -9 PM 4:09

Mr. Geoffrey Griffis, Chair
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, NW
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. Griffis,

We are writing as the parents of a student at the National Child Research Center (NCRC), located on Highland Place, Northwest. We are writing in support of NCRC's plans to improve their physical facilities and thereby provide an even better education for their students. Stuart graduated from NCRC 35 years ago, and we feel blessed that our daughter is now enrolled. In addition, our baby will begin at the school next fall, and we are excited at the prospect that she can directly benefit from the proposed improvements.

We have carefully reviewed the proposed plans for the addition and new building, and have attended meetings with the architect and others involved with the project. We believe that the design is compatible with the historic character of the site and in keeping with the character of the historic district. The new building is designed to appear residential in character and is in keeping with the height and density of other structures in the neighborhood. The architect has done a wonderful job of accommodating both the school's needs and the neighbors' concerns. We whole-heartedly believe that the proposal will enhance the neighborhood as well as the school.

We chose to send our daughter to NCRC because we believe in the school's mission, and we see every day how every action and decision made by the school leadership embodies that mission. It is a school that believes strongly in recognizing each child as a unique and precious individual; providing a nurturing, caring learning environment; and attracting incredibly skilled and talented teachers. The school brings together a unique mix of families from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as a mixture of children with special needs and typically developing children. It is extremely difficult to find this kind of diverse, tolerant, vibrant community in any school, much less a preschool. NCRC's success at integrating all kinds of children and families is very special, and truly serves as a much-needed model for early childhood education.

In addition, NCRC bases its entire educational program on sound research, and the proposed uses for the new space are completely supported by current research on the best practices for early childhood development.

BZA
Case No. 16970
Exhibit No. 57

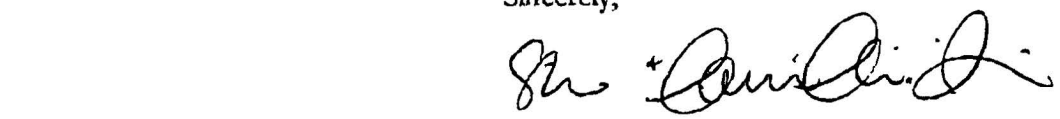
Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16970
EXHIBIT NO.57

We have been very impressed with NCRC's plans for improving the current facility. Anyone who has spent time there can see the pressing need for more space. Staff members have no space to meet with families, parents, students, or one another. The only indoor place where children can work on their essential gross motor skills is a relatively small room that has glass doors taking up one wall, and library shelves around all the rest of the walls. When you get sixteen four-year-olds in there, throwing balls, hopping, and running, it is clear that the program needs more space. Lastly, since there are at least two children with special needs in each classroom, teachers and students need smaller classes. In order to accomplish this without reducing the number of children who can benefit from NCRC's program, the school proposes adding two new classrooms. These two new classrooms, which are slated to house full-day programs—one for older children and one for younger children—will also offer much more flexibility for working parents who need a longer day for their kids.

I admire what NCRC has done in response to some legitimate neighborhood concerns. The leadership of the school has, in extremely good faith, sought out feedback and held discussions at more than a dozen neighborhood meetings. In response to the concerns expressed at these meetings, they have cut back the size of the proposed new building significantly. They have already begun to make changes in their traffic management plan, and it is clear that are very working very hard to ensure that there will be no adverse impacts from the dropping off or picking up of children.

I firmly support the school and hope you will also support their efforts. Thank you very much for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Stuart (NCRC class of 1966) and
Carrie Irvin