1311 Farragut Street NW
Washington, DC 20011

May 24, 2004

Jerrily R. Kress
Director, Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street NW, Suite 210-S
Washington, DC 20001

BZA#17163

Dear Director Kress,

I am writing to you today to protest the granting of a zoning variance for Amazing Life Games Preschool, Inc. (ALG) at 1309 Farragut Street NW., application number 17163. While the establishment of a pre-school is a noble intention, the residents strongly protest this new entity for several reasons. Primarily, the 1000 foot, 1300 block of Farragut Street, NW of 25 residential lots is already saturated with five separate R-1 zoning variances and the combined adverse effect on the community. Secondly, there will be a duplication of services provided to the residents - three of the five establishments are childcare establishments satisfying the needs of the immediate and surrounding residents. The services of ALG are not needed on 1300 Farragut Street NW. Also, the Amazing Life Games Pre-School is an out-of-state establishment that will transplant its current population to our community, therefore not serving the residents of the 1300 block of Farragut Street NW, but residents of other areas of the city as distant as LeDroit Park, Adams-Morgan and Virginia.

Finally, this request for zoning variance will create an cumulative undue burden upon a small residential community that is already saturated with zoning variances and the adverse effects of traffic, noise, parking problems and community cohesion. I am a resident of the 1300 block Farragut Street, a member of CBENA, the neighborhood association, and the 14th Street Heights Economic Revitalization Committee. I love and respect my neighbors and actively care about the social, emotional and political welfare of our residents.

<u>The 1300 Block of Farragut Street is currently saturated with R-1 variances.</u>
The 1300 block of Farragut Street NW is a R-1 district. According to title 11 Chapter 2 Section 200.1 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, the R-1 district is designed to "protect quiet residential areas now developed with one-family detached dwellings." In my opinion and in that of the residents of 1300 Farragut Street NW, herein referred to as "the residents," granting of a zoning variance to Amazing Life Games Pre-School, Inc., herein referred to as ALG, will violate General Provision 200.2, Title 11, Chapter 2 which states the provision of R-1 are intended to "stabilize the residential areas and to promote a suitable environment . . . and for the reason, only a few additional and compatible uses shall be permitted." Granting a zoning variance to ALG

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at 1309 Farragut Street NW would allow the existence of a sixth R-1 zoning variance in a one-block area with only 25 residential lots. Nearly one-half of the north side of 1300 Farragut Street is occupied by West Elementary School, a DC Public School, its playground, sports field, basketball courts and small, staff parking lots. The school already brings substantial traffic to the street in the mornings, afternoons and evenings from parents, after school care providers, visitors and school-buses. Also, because there is no parking in front of the school, the residents already have difficulty finding legal street parking on the western end of the street.

In addition to West Elementary School, the Kingsbury School, a private special education school is located at the closed end of Farragut Street on 5000 block of 14th Street NW. The school serves the Metro DC area and none of the residents in the surrounding community. The 57,000 square foot Kingsbury Center building and its adjacent grounds serve 1000 students and adults, all of whom are transported to the school daily by school buses or by cars. One hundred teachers, administrators and staff also drive to the school daily. As such, there is a great deal of traffic on 14th Street and spilling onto the 1300 block of Farragut Street because it is the closest side street, providing easy access to 13th Street NW, a major north-west commuter corridor. The Kingsbury School is a day school but it also provides evening tutoring and diagnostic services, student services and trustee activities, contributing more to the substantial evening traffic on Farragut Street and 14th Street. At least twice a year, the Kingsbury Center holds large fundraising events for the students, parents and stakeholders on weekends. The continuous noise, parking and traffic emanating from these events alone are an undue burden to the residents of 1300 Block of Farragut Street. Add to that the daily traffic from West Elementary School, and you have a community saturated with traffic and parking issues. An additional pre-school, ALG, would add to the residents' traffic and parking problems in the mornings, afternoons and evenings. Residents on either side of the ALG premises, 1307 and 1311 Farragut Street NW suffer from life-threatening health problems and cannot have their immediate surroundings inaccessible to emergency services, ambulances or medical attention at any time of day.

There is a third childcare establishment on the southside of the 1300 block of Farragut Street NW. The Y.O.U.R. Community Center is a community-based daycare that serves many of the children on the block. The Center is run by a long-time resident and was established only after the director sought substantial community input and support. The Center is supported by the community and serves the residents of the 1300 block of Farragut Street. Because most of the students live in the neighborhood, there are few parking or traffic problems as a result of the YOUR community Center. Many families and children walk to and from the Center.

Duplication of Services

Clearly, there are already more than a "few additional, compatible" childcare centers on the 1300 block of Farragut Street NW. The residents feel that the area is no longer the "quiet, residential area" that was intended under the original zoning requirements due to the five current zoning variances on the street. The addition of ALG would duplicate services already provided to the community, further deteriorating the "quiet, residential

climate" of the neighborhood with increased traffic and parking. ALG's application for a Pre-School/Child Development Center for "28 students, 4 or 5 teachers and 1 or 2 parents" and the ALG director not a matter of right, since the director lives in Virginia and has stated no intention of moving into the premises at 1309 Farragut Street NW. Therefore, a Zoning Variance is required. At least five adults will be parking at the school daily, but there are only 2 parking spots on Farragut Street NW and one in the alley behind the property, in violation of DCMR Title 11, Chapter 2, Section 205.4, which state that "the center shall provide sufficient off-street parking spaces to meet the reasonable needs of teachers, other employees and visitors."

In addition to the year-round schooling provided for the children, there are monthly board meetings in the evenings with as many as 10 families, and cars, attending. The property cannot sustain 10 additional parking spaces one evening per month. The current residents use off-street parking in the evenings, taking up all available space. Other parking problems will arise at the twice-annual Celebrations for all 28 families and children and the annual Auction for as many as 48 people. Current parking regulations cannot sustain an influx of 48 cars on the weekends.

Also, the residents are not convinced that the school will remain at its current size. One of the reasons the ALG moved from its current location on Mintwood Place NW was to have more space for its growing population. If ALG is to maintain its NAEYC accreditation, it must provide a minimum of one teacher to every 7 children. The additional of one more child will require another teacher, and presumably another parking space. The parking needs of additional students, parents, teachers and visitors cannot be met by the parking that is currently available. The free-style, unstructured "play" education of twenty-eight children at ALG will be very noisy on a daily basis as will the drop off and pick up of these students and parents. The daily noise will disturb the quiet atmosphere protected by R-1 zoning provisions.

The establishment of a third child development center within 1000 feet of 1309 Farragut Street is also a violation of DCMR Title 11, Chapter 2, Section 205.8, whose presence will indeed have the "cumulative effect" of an "adverse impact on the neighborhood due to traffic, noise, operations, or other similar factors such as parking and community ire. Two ALG parents live in surrounding blocks and understand the adverse impact that ALG will bring to the immediate residents. Yet, the parents, members of the ANC and the Carter Barron East Neighborhood Association (CBENA) have fought against such establishments in the neighborhood, did not consult their colleagues and neighbors on the intended purposes of 1309 Farragut Street before it was purchased. No community support was sought, and immediate neighbors did not have an opportunity to discuss the issue with ALG. As a result, the community is divided over the lack of consideration and apparent subversion of neighborhood input. The Zoning Variances is have an adverse effect upon the climate of the neighborhood, a "similar factor" to the neighborhood's undue burden.

In addition to the three current daycare centers, there are also two churches located on this same block of 1300 Farragut Street NW. Each church brings 15-20 cars to the street

each Sunday, adding to the traffic and parking problems that occur during the week from the schools. When there are weddings or funerals at these establishments, the churches have posted "reserved" parking signs, blocking current residents from parking in front of their own homes. I ask you to deny the ALG request for a zoning variance for 1309 Farragut Street NW. The R-1 community is simply saturated with 5 non-profit zoning variances in a 1000 foot area. One quarter of the establishments on the block are zoning variances, a direct contributor to the deterioration of the "quiet residential area" provided for in Section 200.1.

ALG will not serve the Community or the Residents of 1300 block of Farragut Street.
The Director of Amazing Life Games Pre-School, Inc lives in Virginia. The current staff and students pull from all parts of the city and surrounding states, therefore the majority of the current population will not come from the community. Hence, the establishment of ALG will not be a service to the surrounding community, nor to the residents, who are a mixture of senior citizens and families, already have three other schools on the block from which to choose. In addition to these establishments, there are three more day-care centers within two blocks of the proposed ALG site at 1309 Farragut Street NW. The residents and I are saturated with daycare centers and we do not support another R-1 zoning variance at 1309 Farragut Street NW. As previously stated, the day care center cannot grow in size without violating parking codes, so the population will continue to serve the community outside of 1300 Farragut Street NW.

When the property was for sale in July of 2003, the sellers indicated that "No co-ops" were to purchase the property, so the current owners were aware of the limitations of their intentions at the time of purchase. As stated earlier, two parents of the ALG co-op were aware of the R-1 zoning provisions for the block and shared concerns. Less than a half-mile away from 1309 Farragut Street, on 14th Street, there are 37 properties, many currently vacant, that are zoned for cooperatives and day care centers. The local ANC commissioner advised the group against applying for R-1 variance toward the establishment of a day care center, and even offered to help the co-op find a suitably zoned property in the community. CBENA, the local neighborhood association voted not to support the ALG in their efforts to establish a day care center in the community, as did the local ANC. The ALG work on the house at 11 pm on a Monday evening has registered continued complaints from neighbors.

For all of these reasons, it appears that ALG has no interest in serving the community or meeting its needs. Instead, they have been subversive and confrontational. They do not have the current capacity to meet the needs of the community, and therefore their stated purposes are not valid for 1309 Farragut Street.

The Undue burden on the community
As stated previously, the presence of a sixth R-1 Zoning Variance for the Amazing life Games Pre-School, Inc, Application number 17163 will contribute to an already undue burden on the surrounding community. There are many traffic, noise and parking

problems associated with West Elementary School, the Kingsbury Center and the YOUR Community Center. The street cannot sustain more vehicle, bicycle or sidewalk traffic. One-fifth of the premises on the 1300 Block of Farragut Street are R-1 variances, contributing to the deterioration of the "quiet residential atmosphere" guaranteed by the zoning provisions. The additional noise from 28 school age children comes on top of the 500 children at West Elementary and the 1000 children at Kingsbury. Ours is a strong, diverse community doing its part to support children, families and education, but how much should one street, one community be expected to take?

We support education and community involvement, be we cannot support another R-1 variance, the sixth on our street, by the ALG. All but two house on the street signed a petition against the establishment of another daycare center, ALG, on our street. We ask that you follow the lead of the residents, the block, the neighborhood association and the ANC and deny their request for a special exception to zoning variance at 1309 Farragut Street NW.

Sincerely,

Heather Brandon-Sondel
Resident

202 - 727 - 6072

To: Jerrilyn Kress
Director
Board of Zoning Adjustment

from: Heather Sander

May 25, 2004