

Cochran, Patricia (DCOZ)

From: Jenny Riegel <riegel.jenny@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 11, 2021 10:11 PM
To: DCOZ - BZA Submissions (DCOZ)
Cc: Terrance Green
Subject: Comments in Support, BZA Application No. 20472: The River School

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Dear Chairperson and Secretary of the BZA,

My husband and I have lived at our house at 4402 Harrison St NW for over 5 years and my husband has lived in this ANC 3E neighborhood for almost 20 years. We are long-term residents of the community and want to see it continue to grow and expand the services available for families and children.

We are very supportive of The River School moving to the proposed new campus at 4220 Nebraska Avenue and we hope you will join us in welcoming this unique and wonderful school to our community. The new location will be a significant asset and resource for the local community as well as an essential resource for the larger DC hearing loss community. We are a current River School family and would love for River School students to have the opportunity to use public transportation to go to school – and for the community to benefit from the school's services in the community. Since our sons were born, we have been commuting with our sons via walking, metro, and the bus and believe the daily use of public transit provides invaluable learning opportunities to share with your children.

We enrolled at The River School following our youngest son's diagnosis of profound and severe hearing loss at 2.5 years old. Prior to going to River's audiology office (Potomac River Clinic), our son over a 6 month period repeatedly received incorrect audiological reports from doctors at Children's Hospital that he had typical or mild hearing loss. Given the incorrect assessment of hearing, the speech therapy being offered by DC was not effective. The dedicated services, therapy, and unique and inclusive teaching model offered by River School, showed us that we needed to make the Palisades location work and to change our lifestyle and incorporate driving into our daily schedule. While the school has developed an efficient drop off and pick up system (no line in the morning; two kids out of the car in less than a minute; organized pickup in the afternoon with a short wait), we would much prefer to hop on a 30 bus on Wisconsin and walk the 6 mins to school with our sons. For families that have children with hearing loss - the benefits offered by the clinic and the school are unmatched. In addition, the benefits to metro

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accessible DC residents of having The River School in our community would be immeasurable.

The school and audiological services through Potomac River Clinic are life changing. We feel so fortunate to have found the school and the wonderful doctors, therapists, and teachers throughout the school that took the time to assess and correctly diagnose my son (after three doctor appointments and an Auditory Brainstem Response Test each at Children's Hospital that incorrectly diagnosed and failed to test all the necessary levels of hearing), and then to teach him to speak and start to catch up with children that had been hearing 2.5 years longer than he had. For the benefit of our community and the DC hearing loss community, the new location would allow many, many more families to be able to access the audiology clinic, therapists, and school given the proximity to public transportation. We look forward to welcoming the school to our neighborhood!

We are happy to discuss any questions as you consider this proposal and work to improve our community by welcoming The River School to our neighborhood.

Thanks,

Jenny Riegel and Terrance Green
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