

4-4-05



CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF CARING

April 4, 2005

The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council  
City Hall  
301 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council:

The Campagna Center is very supportive of the goals identified in the City's FY06 budget, specifically: *a caring community that is diverse and affordable, and public schools that are among the best in Northern Virginia.* We have contributed toward the achievement of these goals for all of our 60 years, especially through our Head Start and Campagna Kids programs.

Recognizing Council's desired goal of lowering the real estate tax rate, we have reviewed our original funding requests and have reduced them to reflect only the minimum needed to maintain program quality: **\$170,469** for Head Start and **\$133,146** for Campagna Kids. Combined, these two amounts represent only **.8 percent** of the budget increases proposed by the City Manager.

Furthermore, The Campagna Center is so committed to the quality of these programs that we are ready to add \$50,000 to the \$200,000/year in private funds we already provide to Head Start to fund two new positions. We also will provide an additional \$25,000 to the \$120,000 in private funds used to support Campagna Kids through enhance the quality of our school-aged child care through additional supplies, food and field trips for the children we serve.

With this strong signal of The Campagna Center's commitment to our shared goals of a caring community that is diverse and affordable, and public schools that are among the best in Northern Virginia, we ask Council to acknowledge the importance of maintaining quality child care programs like Head Start and Campagna Kids that make Alexandria friendly to more than 1000 City families, and to keep Alexandria an affordable place to live for the 128 employees of Head Start and Campagna Kids who are now City residents. This would require a first-time commitment of: \$170,469 for Head Start and \$133,146 for Campagna Kids in addition to the \$50,000 increase proposed in the City Manager's budget.

Thank you for your consideration of these important funding requests to ensure the quality level of care we need to invest in the future of the children of Alexandria. As we face the longer term and disturbing trend of the federal government's retreat from an investment in urban issues, we recognize the importance of working collaboratively to find child care solutions that work for Alexandria, such as those in Fairfax County where the County provides direct financial and in-kind support as well as others that can help our community affordably and effectively maintain quality care for our children.

We would welcome an opportunity for dialogue as the budget process continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lavern Chatman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lavern Chatman, Chair  
Board of Directors