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**Alexandria Council for Human Service Organizations (ACHSO)
Alexandria, Virginia**

December 30, 2009

Dear Mayor Euille, Vice Mayor Donley, Members of City Council, City Manager Hartmann and Assistant City Manager Collins:

The Alexandria Council for Human Service Organizations' (ACHSO) purpose is to improve human services through cross sector collaboration to benefit the entire Alexandria community. Thus, we send this letter to convey our interest in making improvements to the City's Community Partnership Funds.

We believe the changes recommended below can enable the City and the nonprofit organizations that provide human services to Alexandria residents to better deliver needed services in our community. Decreased revenues at a time of increased needs is a plight both ACHSO member organizations, as well as the City, face. While the need for our services has grown during this time of reduced revenues, many of our organizations have drawn down on our reserve funds to increase our service delivery. Of course that trend will not be able to continue indefinitely. With funding restored at least to FY09 levels, it can have a significant payoff for our clients. Our ability to leverage private resources means our City's residents have even more benefit because of the City's investment.

The Alexandria Council for Human Services Organizations (ACHSO) recommends the following changes to the City of Alexandria's Community Partnership Funds (Community Partnership, Youth and Children's Funds):

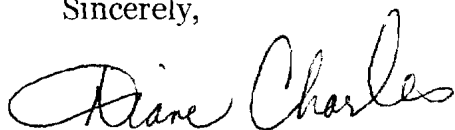
- Restore the funding for each of the three City funds that grant funding to nonprofits to carry out needed human services in the City of Alexandria to their FY09 level. While Alexandria reduced funding for nonprofits to provide human services last year, neighbor jurisdictions Fairfax and Arlington Counties maintained level funding. The reduction last year, combined with no increases in previous years, has stressed both organizations and the services delivered, while the need for services has increased. During these especially difficult economic times, both the challenge and need for services for our vulnerable population, are at an all time high. Thus, we are asking for at least a restoration of the FY09 funding level for the Alexandria Community Partnership Funds.
- Return to the practice of funding nonprofit organizations (for whom they provide grants for City human services) for a two-year cycle. We strongly recommend this approach even if during this challenging economic climate, the City wishes to include as part of a two-year cycle, a stipulation that the grants are contingent on

- **each City budget year's status.** This enables an organization to do more effective planning – on a two year cycle. It also would be expected that the City would ask for updates on any programmatic or budget alternations during the two year time period.
- Change (move-up) the dates of grant submissions to March 1st, and thus grant notifications to organizations by May 15th each year. Enabling nonprofit organizations to have a little more lead time on notification of grants is critical to effective planning. We suggest moving up the process so that organizations can learn of the status of their grant requests within two weeks of the City's final budget passage.

We believe these changes can mean important improvements that will make a significant difference to those who most need the human services in our City. We look forward to continuing our partnerships with the City to ensure that the most effective, efficient and critical services are delivered to our citizens.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. We look forward to working together to make improvements to the delivery of human services in Alexandria.

Sincerely,



Diane Charles
Chair, ACHSO's Education & Advocacy Committee

....on behalf of the

Over 40 Members of the Alexandria Council for Human Service Organizations (ACHSO)

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Alexandria Budget Public Hearing – March 10, 2010

Good afternoon Mr. Mayor, Mr. Vice Mayor, Members of City Council and Mr. City Manager. I'm Diane Charles and I am speaking today, wearing 3 hats. One, as Executive Director of SCAN, a child abuse prevention nonprofit organization that provides valuable services to children and families in Alexandria; two, as a member of the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations (ACHSO) and Chair of our Education & Advocacy Committee and three; as a 28 year resident of Alexandria.

Know that I am empathetic about the tough decisions that must be made with regard to the budget. On behalf of the Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations, I want to express our appreciation for the City Manager's response to requests for some alterations to the Fund for Human Services. Specifically, moving up the date of the notification a month earlier to nonprofits about the City's grant awards for needed services, now lets the organizations know by May 30th for our fiscal year that starts July 1st. This additional month enables a little more time for planning. We also appreciate your continued consideration of going back to a two-year funding cycle and look forward to discussing that in the next year's budget. I admit that I felt a sense of relief that the Fund

for Human Services did not experience another cut in funding in the proposed FY2011 budget. However, to be honest, the need for this funding for the incredibly creative, effective and cost-conscious nonprofits who provide some of the most essential and critical services to our most vulnerable residents is that it be at least restored to the level of funding it was in the FY2009 budget. Even that level of funding during this very difficult economic time, of course, isn't enough. But, the additional funds for those most in need, can go a long way.

As you all know, SCAN provides court advocacy to abused and neglected children in Alexandria through our CASA Program, which receives some funding from the Youth Fund. Last fiscal year, this program, that makes very cost effective use of extremely qualified volunteers, served 127 Alexandria children, giving them a community voice in the court system. SCAN also provides support and services to parents through our parenting classes and educational parent support groups. Through some funding from the Alexandria Community Partnership Fund and the Alexandria Children's Fund, SCAN pieces together a variety of funding to make these classes and support groups possible for any parents seeking them and/or those parents being asked or required to take them. In FY2009, SCAN served 87 Alexandria parents and their 110

children in ways that helped them to find support, skills and information to forge a non-violent, nurturing family environment. These services for families, as well as many other services provided by other Alexandria nonprofit organizations, as you can well imagine, are in more demand when families are stressed. They are more critical now than ever.

I'm a very proud resident of Alexandria, proud of our government and the balance it seeks in providing critical services. In this time of extremely high human need because of difficult financial times for many, I, speaking for myself as a resident of Alexandria, see the need for an increase in taxes to keep the balance we have so been known for. As our elected leaders, you have much to balance when it comes to this budget. I just ask that you carefully consider the diverse human needs that have so increased during this difficult time. I hope you will seriously consider what must be done in the budget now to get through this time, so that we can all look forward to the better times when the City support may not be as necessary to maintain this important balance. Thank you.

Diane Charles, Executive Director
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