



Statement by John Porter, Executive Director at the City of Alexandria Public Hearing on the Budget—Wednesday, March 10, 2010

A special thank you to each of you for what you do for our community. It certainly is an important yet thankless job at times. Understanding what you are facing with state and local budget constraints and understanding that most of us speaking to you today are asking to either maintain or increase funding for various programs and services, I encourage you to look closely at what makes Alexandria the great place that it is—the people.

As you are aware, ACT for Alexandria takes seriously its role as convener of and collaborator with other organizations in the city on behalf of youth and families. I commend the city for its past attention to these constituents and for looking at better ways to increase efficiencies of operation and provide cost savings for the city. Your work in the ever growing public/private/nonprofit partnering arena is both noteworthy and forward thinking. The end result of continued attention to this area will serve our community well as we all look deeply at how we might better work in concert to address matters crucial to the citizens of Alexandria.

I also commend the city for its continued support, financial and otherwise, of the nonprofit sector. This is a true indication of the understanding you have of the level of assistance needed by our citizens. While it is much appreciated that you heard us in the fall when we asked that you not further reduce funding in the human services arena in the budget before you, it is important to note that the decrease last year, coupled with the increase in need, is making it extremely difficult for the organizations addressing basic human needs to keep up with the demand. The support for human services is more critical now than at any time in my memory. While again stating that I understand the dilemma you face, I encourage serious consideration of restoring human services funding to the FY 2009 level. And as I said in October, if this requires a tax increase let me be one citizen who encourages that you to do it.

Our community is known for our caring and concern for others, particularly those residents who are struggling during this difficult recessionary time. While things seem to slowly be moving in the right direction and we can see a little bit of “light on the horizon,” many are struggling daily to meet their family’s basic needs. Let’s not forget them. Let’s do what we should to insure that they have the opportunity to come through this difficult period as whole as possible.

Thank you.