



HOWARD COUNTY AUTISM SOCIETY

July 15, 2016

Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Subject: CB50-2106: Multi-Year Grant Agreement

Dear County Council Members:

On behalf of Howard County Autism Society (HCAS), I am writing to express support for CB50-2016. The Multi-Year Grant Agreement between the County and the Howard County Housing Commission for the grant of funds to a Non-Profit Center will be an important factor for the HCAS Board of Directors as we consider tenancy at the Nonprofit Center. Funds provided in CB50-2016 will go directly to offset the cost per square foot of rent for the nonprofit organizations occupying the Nonprofit Center at 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive. Furthermore, this subsidy will make it affordable for participating nonprofits to co-locate and create a center that is accessible to clients and that will allow them to provide services more effectively, efficiently, and in a more coordinated fashion.

As you know, HCAS is a community-based organization dedicated to serving individuals on the autism spectrum, their families, and the community. HCAS provides information, support, and advocacy; promotes awareness of autism that values the dignity and uniqueness of each individual; and works to improve the quality of and access to services and to educational opportunities.

HCAS is excited about the proposed Nonprofit Center for two main reasons. First, the Center will provide HCAS access to facilities to effectively support an extensive and expanding array of programs from a central and accessible location. HCAS maintains a staffed Resource Center and a significant portion of our limited budget (approximately 12%) is committed to rent. It is our hope participation in the Nonprofit Center would decrease that line item as well as other related cost categories such as phone service, internet, printers and copying services due to economies of scale. Second, the Nonprofit Center will allow our organization to strengthen ties with other Howard County nonprofits and provide opportunities for partnerships, knowledge sharing and relationship building. Leveraging co-location will also allow HCAS to more effectively refer HCAS members to other service-oriented organizations; expand HCAS' reach to individuals and families affected by autism that may not have connected with our organization; and create new opportunities for HCAS to fulfill its mission.

Of course, these benefits can only be ensured if the financial structure of the Nonprofit Center makes the occupancy costs affordable on a sustaining basis. Your support is vital to ensure the planned Nonprofit Center proceeds with a viable financial plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa Ballinger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Theresa Ballinger
President

• providing support • promoting awareness • advocating for change
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