



Mayor and City Council  
City of Alexandria, Virginia

Re: SUP #2007-0002

Dear Mayor Euille and Council Members,

I am writing to offer New Hope Housing's strong support for the Safe Haven project to be developed on Patrick Street in Alexandria. This support is based on 8 years of operating a safe haven called Max's Place in the Falls Church area of Fairfax County.

Safe havens meet a very special and unique need in the housing continuum for people who are chronically homeless, have disabilities, and are resistant to treatment. They provide a safe and supervised environment in which persons who have been alienated from "the system" can be accepted, kept safe, learn trust, and can begin to access the services they want and need at their own pace.

*Founded as  
Route One Corridor  
Housing in 1977,  
New Hope Housing  
provides homeless families  
and individuals shelter  
and tools to build  
a better life.*

When Max's Place opened in 1999, we had significant opposition, including picketing at our open house, which was the topic of a *Washington Post* story. Today, those same neighbors bring food to the house. Our program is directly across the street from an elementary school, and in 8 years there has not been one problem incident.

When we opened, we hoped that residents would stay 6 months. Instead, we have been able to create an environment where chronically homeless, "street" persons, who had failed in all other programs, have a home. Today in our 8-bed house we have six original residents and the most recent resident has been in the program for more than two years. Only two residents have left the program unsuccessfully, and both decided to leave voluntarily. We have linked residents to much needed mental health medication and services and to benefits. While we expected to work on psychiatric issues, we have found that health issues are an even more serious concern for residents. One resident died of lung cancer and another is now in a nursing home.

8407-E Richmond Highway  
Alexandria, VA 22309

703-799-2293  
Fax 703-799-6503  
www.newhopehousing.org  
admin@newhopehousing.org

Eleanor U. Kennedy Shelter  
703-799-0200

Mondloch House  
703-768-3400

CFC/United Way #8179

The persons the Alexandria Safe Haven will serve already live in the community -- on our streets. Isn't it better for them and for the community at large that they live in a safe place with supports where they can thrive and be healthy?

I urge you to support the Safe Haven project.

Sincerely,

Pamela L. Michell  
Executive Director

February 15, 2007