

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Rosa Guzman

**Date Submitted:** 06/03/2020 06:55 PM

**Council File No:** 19-1204

**Comments for Public Posting:** SUBJECT: LETTER FROM ROSA GUZMAN RE ZIEGLER ESTATE FOR THE JUNE 4, 2020 HOUSING COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM No. 19-1204 My name is Rosa Guzman and I am the Center Director at La Casita Verde Childcare Center in the historic Ziegler Estate. I have had the fortune of working for Mount Washington Preschool and Child Care Center at Ziegler Estate\La Casita Verde for 14 years. MWPCCC started with the idea of creating a space for quality child care that was attainable for all families, and I feel fortunate to have spent my time in an organization that has stood this idea throughout these years. Our organization values families, community and most importantly a child's right to just play. Our organizations' philosophy is to give each child the opportunity to develop at their own pace. At all our centers you will find a curriculum that is emergent, which grows and changes with the children. We provide opportunities for children's imaginations to grow. It's impossible to imagine a better place for children to explore than the beautiful grounds of the Ziegler Estate which we know as "La Casita Verde" (the Little Green House). The natural setting outdoors provides constant sparks of the imagination, the children spend hours exploring their natural environment learning about bugs, plants and nurturing their garden. The grounds are natural and spacious which allow the children ample space to explore. Indoors, the children get to see their school as a home which allows them to transition into care naturally. The setting of the Ziegler Estate is welcoming, nurturing and safe for the children who spend a great deal of their early childhood growing up in the home that is La Casita Verde. The Ziegler Estate has also become a second home to the teachers of La Casita Verde and myself. Some of our teachers have been working in this home for over 10 years. All of our teachers love the center, love the community but most of all love the philosophy of supporting children as they "Learn through Play". They are invested in the Mount Washington\Highland Park community because most of our teachers live minutes away from La Casita Verde. They are able to take a short commute to work and feel peace of mind having the proximity to home and the schools of their own children. Our teachers are able to make time and attend their own children's events and meet the needs of their family, which is a shared goal for all the families or MWPCCC. On a

personal note, MWPCCC has been a home for my family as well. My daughter Emilia who is now 11 years old had the opportunity to create her own memories at La Casita Verde. My daughter enjoyed swinging on the swings in the toddler playground and still when she visits me, she desperately wishes she could still go swing. Emilia says that eventually, she would want to be a teacher here too. The setting of the Ziegler Estate is a setting that is desired for many families who tour our center, they envision their children growing up with us, running around in the gardens and making this their home away from home. Fortunately La Casita Verde remains true to this idea that high quality child care should be attainable for all families. Our center offers priority enrollment to underprivileged families. We offer tuition assistance through a Pat Griffith Scholarship and we are partners with Pathways LA. Our families have expressed relief at knowing that La Casita Verde is an option for their child, and they are not limited to the state preschool options. The Ziegler Estate has been a home for many families throughout the years. Children have attended, grown up, and their memories of La Casita Verde has brought them back to enroll their own children. MWPCCC has been a positive impact for the people who work here, and the families we serve. The beautiful setting of the Ziegler Estate creates a peaceful, natural and safe place for children to do what they do best; Play. I hope that the Ziegler Estate will be a home for MWPCCC families for many more years to come and we can continue the mission of serving the community. Thank you, Rosa Guzman Director La Casita Verde Child Development Center at Ziegler Estate 4601 N. Figueroa St. Los Angeles, CA 90065

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FOR THE JUNE 4, 2020 HOUSING COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM No. 19-1204**

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Thank you,

Rosa Guzman

Director

La Casita Verde Child Development Center at Ziegler Estate

4601 N. Figueroa St.

Los Angeles, CA 90065

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Geneva Burleigh

**Date Submitted:** 06/03/2020 07:24 PM

**Council File No:** 19-1204

**Comments for Public Posting:** SUBJECT: LETTER FROM GENEVA BURLEIGH RE ZIEGLER ESTATE FOR THE JUNE 4, 2020 HOUSING COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM No. 19-1204 My name is Geneva Burleigh and I am a parent of a toddler at La Casita verde\Ziegler Estate, a Board member and also the daughter of Patricia Griffith who was an activist for childcare, working parents and a founder of Mt. Washington Preschool and Childcare Center, Inc that has operated the Center for 20 years. I don't remember a time when Ziegler Estate\La Casita Verde wasn't the headquarters of the MWPCCC. Not really. Sure, I have a foggy memory of "helping" with playground construction in the back of the Holy Virgin Mary and St. Pishoy Coptic Church, but I must have been five or six years old. A hip-high ball of energy and enthusiasm who'd somehow conned an adult into letting her run around a construction site with a screwdriver. I'd say it was a different time – and, let's be honest, it was - but the truth is that I was there because we all were there. Small as I was, I was still a witness to the power of community. Everyone on Mt. Washington, everyone who'd heard the good news about quality childcare being the key to a bright and equitable future, they'd all turned out that day to pour cement and hoist pine girders into position and rake gallons and gallons of sand. And because they'd all turned out, because we had the community behind us, the news that came a year later, that the church was yanking our lease, was news we could survive. And survive we did. In the scramble to find another site (of which I also have only the vaguest of memories – endless stops on the way home from something or other so my mom, Patricia Griffith, could chat to a building owner or just size up an address for prima face issues), we came to La Casita Verde. It was like a miracle had been granted to us. The building was undeniably beautiful. There was plenty of room on the grounds for a new community-built playground. It was close to the families we were trying to serve. And, in a decision that still rings in memory, MWPCCC struck a rental agreement with the City . It was unbelievably good fortune. For our organization, and for my mother in particular, it was a tremendous relief. In the many years that followed, my mother's life (and, consequently, my life) were deeply tied up in the goings-on at La Casita. Monthly board meetings, biweekly visits to sign pay checks,

stopping in to check up on how everything was going ... we were there all the time. And even when we weren't there, The Preschool held a constant presence in our dinnertime conversations, and figured hugely in my mother's lesson-like illustrations of conflict-resolution, civic involvement, and how to be decent to people. I grew up valuing kindness and honesty and community because the preschool played such an outsized role in my mother's life. Since her death in 2016, I've joined the MWPCCC Board. Primarily in a supporting role, as I know I can never fill my mom's shoes. My mother poured her life into this organization, trying to give the families of North-East LA quality options when it came to childcare. I whole-heartedly believe in that mission. I know the value that quality childcare can bring to the life of a child, that child's mother, and the surrounding community. Everyone benefits. A community that invests in and maintains childcare organizations like ours sees benefits in crime reduction, greater financial stability, and higher rates of upper education completion. Kids who attend even one day a week of preschool or childcare see significant growth in social skills and intellectual curiosity, and just as important, they have a safe place to grow and explore. This is the good news about childcare, and it's why my mother and my community all rallied together to get MWPCCC off the ground and running. It's why I've enrolled my own son at La Casita Verde and am eagerly looking forward to the day the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, so we can all return. La Casita Verde is a beautiful building. For twenty-odd years, it has housed an organization that built on that beauty and reflected it out into the world. Please help us continue. Many thanks,  
Geneva Burleigh

**SUBJECT: LETTER FROM GENEVA BURLEIGH RE ZIEGLER ESTATE  
FOR THE JUNE 4, 2020 HOUSING COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM No. 19-1204**

My name is Geneva Burleigh and I am a parent of a toddler at La Casita verde\Ziegler Estate, a Board member and also the daughter of Patricia Griffith who was an activist for childcare, working parents and a founder of Mt. Washington Preschool and Childcare Center, Inc that has operated the Center for 20 years.

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Many thanks,

Geneva Burleigh



## Communication from Public

**Name:** Susan P Phifer

**Date Submitted:** 06/03/2020 05:51 PM

**Council File No:** 19-1204

**Comments for Public Posting:** SUBJECT: JUNE 4, 2020 HOUSING COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM 15 COUNCIL FILE NO. 19-1204 Dear Housing Committee Chair Cedillo, Vice Chair Krekorian and Member Harris-Dawson, My name is Susan Phifer and I am the President of the Mt. Washington Preschool & Child Care Center, Inc. founded in 1991 by the late Patricia Griffith, a local champion for working mothers and their children. Our nonprofit provides early learning and care programs year-round and full day for working families of all incomes in Northeast Los Angeles as well as to City and federal employees in downtown. On behalf of our Board of Directors and past, present and future families, teachers, staff, and volunteers, we urge the Housing Committee to approve Item 15 on the June 4 agenda related to the Mayor's 46th Program Year Consolidated Plan. We operate La Casita Verde Child Development Center at the City-owned Ziegler Estate adjacent to the Southwest Museum Station on Metro's L (Gold) Line. Designated City Historic-Cultural Monument No. 416, the property is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since 2001, La Casita Verde has served as an anchor for the Arroyo Seco's hub for local and regional recreation, culture and education. Our services give families of low wealth access to economic mobility and opportunity and provide their children with quality programs to grow and learn. The Consolidated Plan includes \$1,349,333 in CDBG funds for upgrades to stabilize this unique property. City staff have determined that its rehab is a multi-phase project and an additional \$1,349,333 is included in the Future Year Projects priority-funding list. The Ziegler Estate's deteriorating physical conditions pose not only a potential health and safety risk for young children and their families, our employees and the public but it also threatens its landmark status. Steady asset management and historic stewardship by the City is required to ensure that it can continue to be intensively used as a child-serving institution. Built in 1904 by Charles Hornbeck and Alfred P. Wilson, the 5,000 square foot two and one-half story wood structure was designed as a stately home with elements of both Queen Anne and American Craftsman architecture. It was purchased by the former Community Redevelopment Agency from the Southwest Museum in 1992. The project consisted of rehabilitating the property and adapting it for use as a child care

center to address the need for additional licensed child care for families including those with limited incomes. In 2002, the project won the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Housing and Urban Development Secretary's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation. The award cited "an energetic coalition of city departments, the Community Redevelopment Agency, the Community Development Department, and citizens groups for rescuing a gem from decrepitude while bringing a high-quality child-care center to the underserved Highland Park area." The quality of a child development center is not only related to the qualifications and experience of the teachers and the type of curriculum offered. In a dense urban neighborhood, other factors determine success including a desirable location, the quality of facility design, and access to public transit. Another key factor for us is integrating families from a variety of incomes and backgrounds to create an enriched and positive experience for everyone. La Casita Verde is one of the few mixed-income centers in Los Angeles and the only one in Northeast. Since mixed-income centers are more costly to operate and State child care subsidies are scarce, we have to rely on grants and donations to offer tuition assistance. Our Board has pledged \$50,000 to commission the Historic Resources Group, Inc. to prepare a Historic Structures Report and Maintenance Plan for the Ziegler Estate in support of this grant. We are committed to working with the City throughout the implementation of upgrades to minimize disruption of La Casita Verde operations. Prior to the pandemic, many families with young children were forced to make a choice between spending a significant portion of their income on child care, or finding a cheaper, but potentially lower-quality care option, or leaving the workforce altogether to become a full-time caregiver. We know that in the near future parents and guardians, and especially women, will incur greater child care challenges. This is due to increased operating costs to meet more stringent regulations and the reduction in the number of centers in operation due because of the COVID-19 health crisis. Please act in the best interest of working families now and in the future by recommending approval of the requested CDBG funds for the Ziegler Estate/La Casita Verde to City Council so that this public resource may continue to be a beacon of hope and prosperity for Northeast Los Angeles. Susan Phifer, Board President



# Mount Washington Preschool and Child Care Center, Inc.

**4601 N. Figueroa St. Los Angeles, CA 90065**

June 3, 2020

The Honorable Gilbert A. Cedillo  
Chair, Housing Committee  
Councilmember, District 1  
200 N. Spring St., Room 460  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
[Gilbert.Cedillo@lacity.org](mailto:Gilbert.Cedillo@lacity.org)  
[gerald.gubatan@lacity.org](mailto:gerald.gubatan@lacity.org)

The Honorable Paul Krekorian  
Vice Chair, Housing Committee  
Councilmember, District 2  
200 N. Spring St., Room 435  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
[councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org)  
[adrienne.asadoorian@lacity.org](mailto:adrienne.asadoorian@lacity.org)

The Honorable Marqueece  
Harris-Dawson  
Councilmember, District 8  
200 N. Spring St., Room 450  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
[councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org](mailto:councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org)  
[kristen.gordon@lacity.org](mailto:kristen.gordon@lacity.org)

SUBJECT: JUNE 4, 2020 HOUSING COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM 15  
COUNCIL FILE NO. 19-1204

Dear Housing Committee Chair Cedillo, Vice Chair Krekorian and Member Harris-Dawson,

My name is Susan Phifer and I am the President of the Mt. Washington Preschool & Child Care Center, Inc. founded in 1991 by the late Patricia Griffith, a local champion for working mothers and their children. Our nonprofit provides early learning and care programs year-round and full day for working families of **all** incomes in Northeast Los Angeles as well as to City and federal employees in downtown. On behalf of our Board of Directors and past, present and future families, teachers, staff, and volunteers, we urge the Housing Committee to approve Item 15 on the June 4 agenda related to the Mayor's 46<sup>th</sup> Program Year Consolidated Plan.

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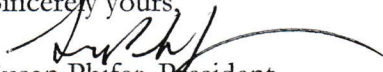
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Please act in the best interest of working families now and in the future by recommending approval of the requested CDBG funds for the Ziegler Estate/La Casita Verde to City Council so that this public resource may continue to be a beacon of hope and prosperity for Northeast Los Angeles.

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge our deep appreciation to Councilmember Cedillo and the assistance of City staff who worked on this grant application representing the departments of Building & Safety, General Services, Public Works Bureau of Engineering, Los Angeles Housing + Community Investment, and Economic & Workforce Development.

Sincerely yours,

  
Susan Phifer, President  
Board of Directors

cc: Martha Benedict, Geneva Burleigh, Tracey Chavira, Sylvia Robledo, Ashley Sipchen, Brad Weyers, Tamara Brown, MWPCCC Executive Director, Rosa Guzman, La Casita Verde Director