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JELLEFF BOYS & GIRLS CLUB BOARD OPPOSES SALE OF PROPERTY

Decision by Parent Organization Flawed and Short Sighted

The Jelleff Boys and Girls Club Board unanimously approved the following resolution Monday night: "The Board of Directors of the Jelleff Branch of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington unequivocally opposes the sale of the Jelleff and Eastern Branch facilities. The Board further expresses a lack of confidence in the management skills and judgment of the executive staff and the Board of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington (BGCGW). Finally, the Jelleff Board condemns the process by which the sales decision was reached as secretive, flawed and excluding community involvement."

This resolution is the first step in fighting what is viewed as a short sighted decision by BGCGW to redevelop four DC facilities. Two of these clubs, Police Boys and Girls Clubhouses #10 in Columbia Heights) and #11 (in SE), will be redeveloped with a commitment to include a club, but the Jelleff and Eastern branches have been slated simply for sale to the highest bidder. This decision was reached due to a continued deficit at the parent organization, BGCGW, despite the fact that Jelleff is the only club in DC which meets its budget and does not act as a financial drain on BGCGW.

Moreover, a recent commitment to invest \$4.25 million by Venture Philanthropy Partners has resulted in an apparent change of the mission of the organization. This change is elaborated by focusing exclusively on at-risk children, as defined by those living within a mile of the club and at 200% of the poverty line. BGCGW has said there will be "a special focus on youth living in low income families." This would not be a "special focus", but an exclusive one.

The Jelleff Board feels that all children are at risk and should be welcomed to participate in Boys and Girls Club programs. We should not need to check tax returns at the front door to see if a child qualifies, but rather be a haven for any child who wants to participate no matter what his or her race, economic standing, religion or creed. In fact, Jelleff is one of the few diverse clubs in the BGCGW portfolio and serves as a great melting pot in what is otherwise often a still segregated city.

The Eastern Branch also suffers from the perception that a gentrifying neighborhood will not still need a boys and girls club. This perception reflects both BGCGW's anti-diversity attitude as well as the defects in its decision making process. As an example of their flawed methodology, the study conducted by consultants and a task force of

BGCGW only looked at the youth population residing within a one-mile radius of a club. Thus, most of the youth served by Jelleff and many potential Eastern members were not even counted.

Jelleff, located at 3265 S Street in Upper Georgetown, has been an integral part of the community since 1931. Currently, the club serves over 6,000 children, far more than any other Boys and Girls Club in the District or surrounding suburbs. Jelleff also provides valuable recreational asset in an area of the city where athletic fields and gym space are scarce. The Club currently serves over 900 area children from all over the region in its well known winter basketball league, 5,000 DC Stoddert Soccer players, 300 boys and girls members of the Washington Youth Lacrosse league, youth from the DC Shotokan Karate Club, as well as conducting Saturday night public roller skating, numerous camps and clinics, and educational and other after school programs. In addition, Jelleff is the home of the City Collegiate Public Charter School. These partnerships indicate the importance of Jelleff as a community resource and show what an adverse impact a sale of the club would have on the community.

In lieu of the annual fundraising reception scheduled for the following week, the Jelleff Board, will hold on May 10th, at 7 pm an emergency community meeting and open forum in the gym. If you would like to support Jelleff, please attend the community meeting and contact the club at (202) 462-1317 or email: savejelleff@gmail.com See our blog at: <http://www.savejelleff.blogspot.com>