



March 4, 2010

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Members of the Arlington County Board:

The 60 members of the Aurora Hills Women's Club urge the Board to reconsider the decision to cut a library day from the already limited schedule at the Aurora Hills Branch and to eliminate the senior program.

While we understand that budget cuts always hurt somewhere, we are convinced that these two decisions undermine the very idea of Arlington's vision of livable, walkable communities for its residents. To wit:

Arlington's 2009 Profile provides the following information about the Pentagon City/Crystal City areas served by the Aurora Hills library and senior center:

- The combined area represents 12,376 housing units in 2010
- The combined area is expected to grow to 19,001 housing units by 2020
- Combined daily boarding at the two Metro stations is almost 32,000. No other two adjacent Metro stations in Arlington even come close to that number (Rosslyn/Courthouse combined is 24,686; Ballston/EFC is 16,836)

Clearly there is enough population within walking distance to, at an absolute minimum, justify continuation of the senior program and library at their current levels. For our students, the library is an invaluable resource and a safe, quiet place for many (especially our low-income families) to do homework and access the Internet for their school projects. With a significant senior population in the immediate neighborhood—including an assisted living facility within a few blocks—it's astonishing the county is not looking for more, rather than fewer, ways to serve this population locally.

The senior program has been nibbled to death in past budget cuts, and more cuts in the Aurora Hills library threaten to make it non-viable. The building is in need of major repairs, but the county's long-term neglect of this facility does not in any way justify its closing.

Several members of the Aurora Hills Women's Club are working with the Aurora Highlands Civic Association and the Arlington Ridge Civic Association on creative solutions that will keep these important resources operating in our community. We plan to actively engage a wider coalition on this project, including local condo associations and other organizations. We are very attuned to the difficult economic conditions the county now faces, but we believe that in this

case, creative thinking and some flexibility on the part of our elected government can solve the problem. For the county to not engage with us in this broad community effort would be an abject failure of governance.

Respectfully,

Van Newstrom
President, Aurora Hills Women's Club

