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Petersburg Borough Assembly

Mayor Mark Jensen
Vice Mayor Jeigh Stanton Gregor
Member Bob Lynn
Member David Kensinger
Member Thomas-Fine Walsh
Member Chelsea Tremblay
Member Jeff Meucci

RE: Childcare Professionals Support Request

Dear members of the Petersburg Assembly,

I wanted to express my gratitude for the work you have put forward to listen to, and hopefully, respond to the childcare crisis in Petersburg. As a childcare professional I feel like now is our time to advocate for ourselves so that years from now future childcare professionals will not be wondering where along the way they lost their voice, we are finding it right now.

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic childcare professionals in Petersburg poured themselves into supporting children, families, and this community. The pandemic has frayed the already thin threads of childcare, and has worn many of us too thin, yet we continue to show up for our community and our kids. It is easy for many to say, "if you don't like the job, then leave," the problem is that many of us absolutely love our jobs and are incredibly grateful to be there to support early learning and development. My programs have been fortunate to receive grant funding the past few years which have allowed us to stabilize the programs and support families, unfortunately my staff is still in the same situation as pre-pandemic times; under-valued, under-appreciated and over-worked. The ship is not just sinking anymore, it has sunk, and we are clinging together inside the life raft while some people splash ice cold water in our face and the sharks circle. So here I am, writing a letter to do the things I tell kids to do when they are stuck; ask for help, rely on a friend, and when you are unstuck make sure you reach behind you and lift the others up.

I want to express my support to the Assembly for you to utilize ARPA funds to support childcare professionals in any manner possible. This expression of support is not made for myself, it is however, very much made for my incredible staff and my peers in other facilities. They deserve better. The past few years my staff has increased their job responsibilities to include more sanitation efforts, they have taken trainings to help address the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic and they teach kids emotional literacy and emotional stamina, and so much more. My staff has created a safe, stable, enriching environment for kids all while dealing with the collective trauma of this pandemic and they have not asked for a single thing, so I am going to ask for them, please support our childcare professionals. Please recognize the efforts being made within our community by childcare professionals to enrich the lives of children, support families, and grow as professionals.

I know we still have a long way to go as a community and a country to raise our childcare professionals up and support them, but we can start now, I kindly ask the Assembly to take action. In addition, I would like to remind all Assembly members that you have an open invitation to Good Beginnings and Kinder Skog. If you join for preschool be ready to be silly with the best kids around, and if you join the Kinder Skog adventure be dressed for the weather because nothing stops those kids.

Thank you all for your continued work towards improving our community, I know public service not an easy task and wears on your heartstrings, thank you for showing up for Petersburg.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine Holmlund". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Katherine" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Holmlund".

Katherine Holmlund