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Sent: Friday, February 08, 2008 12:01 PM
To: Schiller, Lynn
Subject: Empowerment Village

Greetings Members of the Planning Commission:

My name is Paula John and I was recently appointed by the Mayor to the Commission on Supportive Housing. I am also part of the philanthropic community as a board member of the AMS Fund, which stands for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Supporting Fund, Inc.

I have cared for persons with mental illness all of my life. As I have struggled to provide stability for these relatives and friends, I continue to be dismayed at the lack of support within the community for their care. Criminals are often treated better. There is still tremendous stigma attached to mental illness, even though it is a physical illness like any other except that it affects the brain. And it can be successfully treated with medication and supportive housing.

Because no one wants these people in their community, they are shunned in residential neighborhoods, ... and now in parks as well? (Come on; how much room does a bike path take?) When persons with mental illness have a support system around them, like Empowerment Village will have with Our Space and the Red Cross, two of the finest programs for this population in the City, they thrive and are able to contribute in numerous ways to the well-being of our society.

As the consciousness of the Milwaukee community has been raised through various newspaper articles, its citizens now want something done to provide stability for those with mental illness. We no longer want these people abandoned to the streets. You have the ability to speak up for this vulnerable population and I have faith that you possess the courage to do so.

Respectfully, Paula N. John