



LEARNING CENTER
 1900 W. Washington St.
 Milwaukee, WI 53204
 (414) 389-5080
 Fax (414) 389-5084
 AGENCY MAILING ADDRESS

YOUTH CENTER
 2212 W. Greenfield Ave.
 Milwaukee, WI 53204
 (414) 384-8788
 Fax (414) 384-8860

SATELLITE
 1818 W. National Ave., 2nd Floor
 Milwaukee, WI 53204
 (414) 647-0548
 Fax (414) 647-0266

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December 9, 2011

City of Milwaukee Public Works Committee
 Ald. Robert Bauman, Chair
 200 East Wells Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Alderman Bauman,

I am writing to request that the public works committee immediately allow the construction of the two pedestrian bridges over the Menomonee River (behind Mitchell Park, and at 33rd court). Journey House is committed to increasing education, reducing unemployment and crime, strengthening families, and revitalizing the neighborhoods of the near South Side in which we work. This project is critical toward achieving each of these goals.

Journey House is located in and serves Clarke Square, one of the neighborhoods selected by the Zilber Neighborhood Initiative (ZNI). Through our ZNI Quality of Life Plan, we identified the importance of the redevelopment of Airline Yards as a park, the extension of the Hank Aaron State Trail from the Valley into Mitchell Park, and additional physical connections into the Valley to access employment opportunities. In fact, at one of our neighborhood meetings a resident announced that this project is "a game changer for our neighborhood," and we fully agree. It *will* be a catalyst for further positive developments in the Clarke Square neighborhood.

At present, there are no organizations on the near South Side that provide year-round, outdoor science education to youth in the community. Our organization was extremely excited when the Urban Ecology Center announced that they would be opening a branch in our neighborhood to provide these services, using Airline Yards as their learning laboratory. It presented an opportunity for us to partner with them to provide a currently unavailable service to a community with much need. The construction of these bridges will allow students from the new Urban Ecology Center to access a park where they can study science through hands-on instruction.

We have also been thrilled at the economic development that has taken place in the Menomonee Valley over the last several years, and we are always looking for ways to connect our neighbors with the growing employment opportunities. Many of the residents of our neighborhood do not have cars, and these bridges would allow them easy pedestrian access to major employers like Palermo's, Falk/Rexnord, Susy's Cheesecakes, and so many other Valley employers.

Michele Bria, Ph.D.
 Chief Executive Officer

Journey House Center for Family Learning and Youth Athletics
Where Education is a Family Journey

www.journeyhouse.org
www.facebook.com/journeyhouse



Wisconsin Technical College System



In short, this construction project is about far more than a pair of bridges. It is about creating a lifeline through which some of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in the region will have access to education, employment, and far more. I urge you to give this project your fullest support. Our kids want to get into this park, and their parents would like to get to work more easily.

Sincerely,

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

Dr. Michele Bria
Chief Executive Officer