## THE YOUTH AND DR. EVELINA ANTONETTY

The young people Dr. Evelina Antonetty mentored from the 1960s to the early 80s like to call themselves "las ahijadas y ahijados de Evelina", the godchildren of Evelina. Many of them, known as "come candelas", actively followed her legacy in their work in social justice, community activism, and political empowerment for our communities.

For more than three decades, Dr. Antonetty confronted the obstacles that precluded young Puerto Ricans from opportunities that would help them succeed in life. The United Bronx Parents (UBP) archival records contain articles documenting the life of Dr. Evelina Antonetty. These documents speak loudly about her as a leader eager to find permanent change and solutions to social inequalities by creating programs that would result in better education, nutrition, and higher self-esteem for the youth around her.

Dr. Evelina Antonetty was a founding member of The Center for Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College, Eugenio María de Hostos Community College/CUNY, and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund, among other institutions that advocate change in our communities. The UBP's archival records, housed at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies archive, reveal the extensive work of a woman who hand-wrote proposals to governmental agencies and private funding sources to empower the youth in her community. These proposals demonstrate her efforts to curtail juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, school dropout rates, and crime among young Puerto Ricans by providing educational programs to develop their leadership and work skills. Evelina provided tutorial classes in English and Spanish for the community and General Equivalency Diploma classes for those who had dropped out of school. She appropriately named the UBP main building "La Escuelita", transforming it into a welcoming place and a cultural symbol in a community where 52% of the residents only spoke Spanish.

Evelina's programs were a foundation for the generations of Puerto Ricans growing up in the South Bronx, a community plagued by social problems and injustice, to forge a better future. Evelina used to say "cada niño es una esperanza", every child represents hope. By the early 1980s, approximately 75% to 80% of those served by UBP were young people hoping to change their lives. These young people became her community helpers providing their service as accounting assistants, daycare employees, paraprofessionals in the public-school system, and food distribution coordinators for the summer food programs Evelina established throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

Dr. Evelina Antonetty also trained young people to become agents of change by enlisting them in her organized protests and government office sit-ins. She taught young people not to fear challenging a system that regarded them as "other." Finally, Dr. Evelina Antonetty inspired young people to possess a desire to know, love, and respect their own culture. She strengthened their self-esteem. It was an act that would serve them throughout their lives because, for Evelina, loving yourself meant being proud of being Puerto Rican. Evelina continues to symbolize resilience and fortitude for many young Puerto Ricans facing discrimination on the mainland.

## DR. NYDIA R. EDGECOMBE

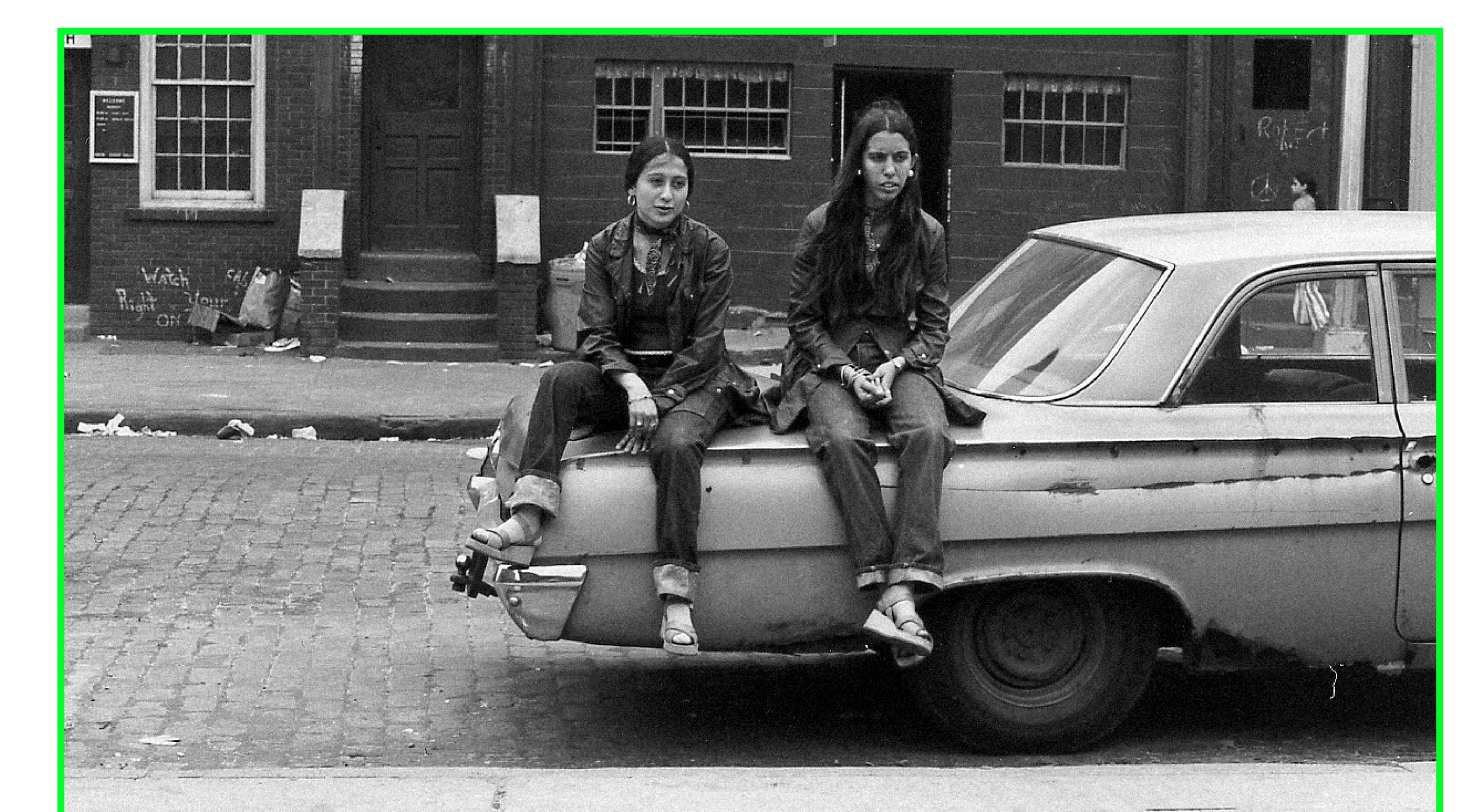
Ph.D., Former Director of Admissions and Recruitment; Founding Member of the Hostos Circle of 100 Scholarship and Emergency Fund

## IN HER OWN WORDS

(scan QR codes to hear audio files)







"Blacks did far better in improving family-income levels than Puerto Ricans. Even so, 22 per cent of the borough's 88,000 black families were below the poverty level in 1970. Thirty per cent of the Puerto Rican families were below that level."



HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION 240 CHURCH STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10013

STANLEY BREZENOFF Administrator/Commissioner

GEORGE C. RICHARDS Acting Executive Director

W-2EE

March 12, 1981

Dr. Evelina Antonetty, Chairperson United Bronx Parents Association 888 Westchester Avenue Bronx, New York 10459

Dear Dr. Antonetty:

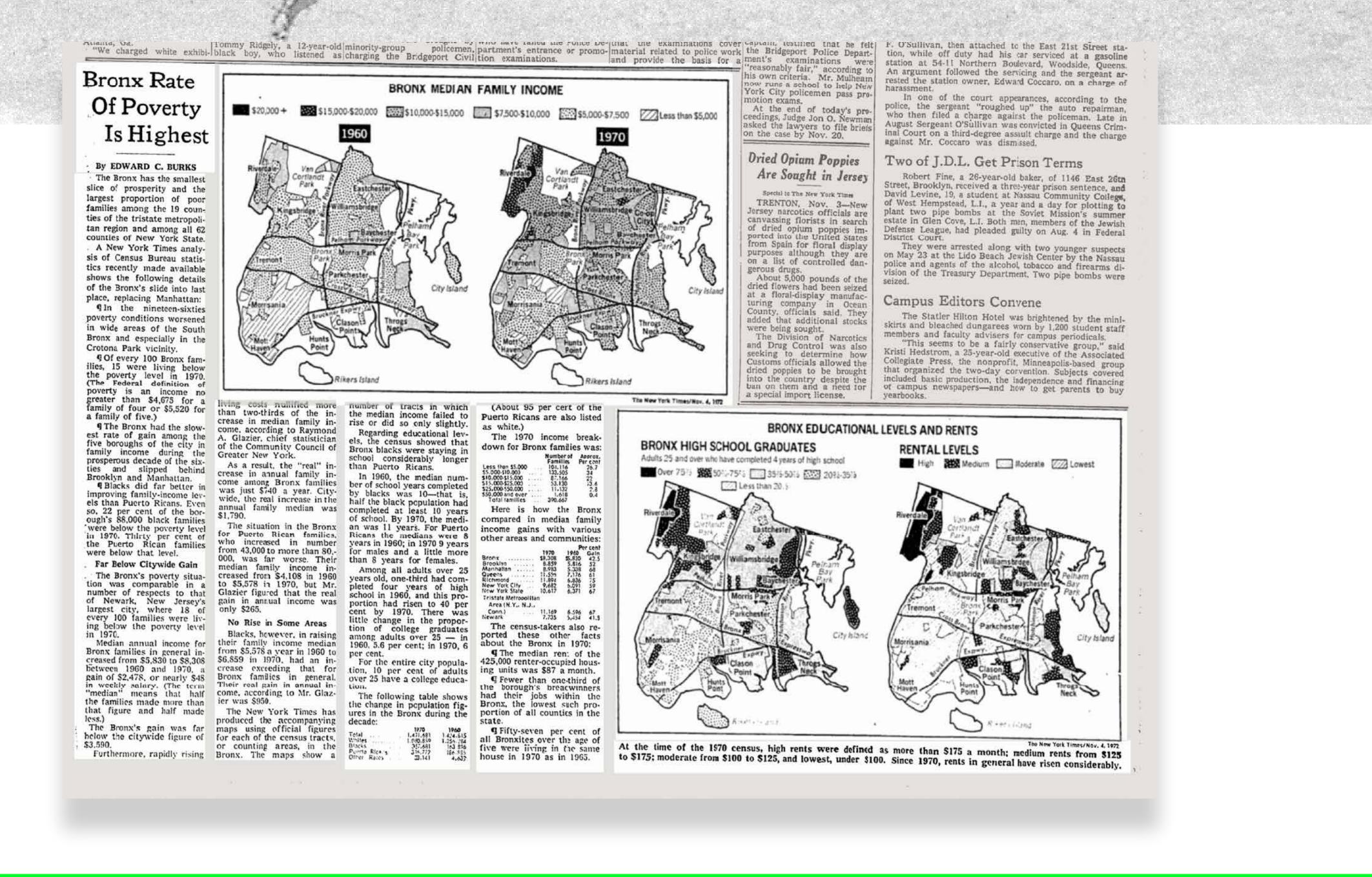
We know you are aware that the City-Wide Child Care Advisory Council has a policy which states that "after three (3) consecutive absences from the regular Advisory Council meeting, a member will be replaced". Our records show that you have not attended any meetings this year.

We find it necessary to terminate your membership on the City-Wide Council. We have come to this decision reluctantly because we have always welcomed your participation. However, we must abide by the established rules.

We should like to thank you for the contributions you made in the past. If, in the future, you find the time to rejoin the Council, we should

"The situation in the Bronx for Puerto Rican families, who increased in number from 43,000 to more than 80,000, was far worse. Their median family income increased from \$4,108 in 1960 to \$5,578 in 1970, but Mr. Glazier figured that the real gain in annual income was only \$265."

Burks, Edward C. (1942, November 4). Bronx Rate of Poverty is Highest. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/1972/11/04/archives/bronx-rate-of-poverty-is-highest.html





be pleased to hear from you. Very truly yours, George C. Richards Acting Executive Director GCR/mc 346-0924 cc: Geraldine Nicholas, Chairperson 396-City-Wide Child Care Advisory Council 299-3535 Maggie Parker, Chairperson Nominating/Structure Sub-Committee 133.18

yana C.C. TO oner ass Stonly Sund Mean Idenge I received your letter Really surplied me. This fall

all your letters to the council meeting I to the our Day Care pluch an not the addres to my office ls This makes it at least another Secondly, Sprually buy in arriving " calls to the meeting a day. . lefore get " The meeting Which is peaky unfair because in these days of stress are in y our community have a are form south many important meetings . with and decisions to make. Hawever if you can find another P.R. Sport to acted your meeting you are quite welcomed! You or anyone. Will keep me out afany any problems which