

April 5, 2024

Dear County Council members,

My name is Samantha Griffin and I am writing to advocate for increased support and funding towards youth sport programming in the Fiscal Year 2025 Recommended Operating Budget. While I do serve as a high school coach within the county and am a proud member of the newly established Sports Advisory Committee, my thoughts expressed here reflect my own views as a lifelong resident of the County.

All Montgomery County residents should be able to access affordable, equitable, and high quality programs, fields, and facilities. One of the ways this can begin to be achieved is through building the capacity of our County's youth sports programs. I believe that our community is stronger, more connected, and more resilient when we invest in youth sports. In my professional role, I work within the sport-based youth development space, specializing in training coaches and organizations through a trauma-informed lens to utilize sport to teach kids essential life skills. This lens has better equipped me to not just speak to the ability of sport to help kids grow and thrive, but to speak to the ability of sport to heal. Sport can help kids form secure, positive relationships, can help kids learn to manage physical and emotional stress, and can help kids build competency, ultimately nurturing self-efficacy and empowering resilient young individuals.

The success of present initiatives like the free Recreation pass show that when the Recreation Department is invested in, they are effective at serving more people. As a result of this, I am confident that if allocated more funds the Recreation Department will be able to reach more youth across all parts of the County, making access to programming, facilities, and fields more equitable.

I hope you consider the immense value of youth sport programming and the impact increased funding would have on our community when reviewing the proposed budget.

I appreciate your time, commitment, and service.

Best Regards,

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