

April 8, 2026

To the Montgomery County Council:

My name is Patricia Sing Han, a resident of District 6 and a supporter of Community Companions Program run by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington. I am writing to urge the Council to restore and protect full funding for this program in the upcoming operating budget.

For 37 years, Catholic Charities staff have selflessly served children with developmental disabilities in Montgomery County through the Community Companions Program. It is one of the only licensed, quality childcare programs of its kind in our county that provides afterschool care, school-respite days, and summer programming for up to 30 children.

For over four years, I had the honor and pleasure of serving as a contracted instructor providing fitness classes for children in the Community Companions Program. The majority of the children would not have been able to access a typical afterschool program due to their physical, cognitive and/or behavioral needs. It was beautiful for me to see how staff treated each child with dignity, respect and love, and I even saw some of the children supporting each other!

Without Community Companions, many families (some with more than one child with developmental disabilities) will have nowhere else to turn. Parents will not be able to work full shifts because they will have to leave work early to get their child after school or miss a full day of work when schools are closed for professional days, holidays, winter break, spring break, and summer break.

Let me be clear: this program is not a luxury. For children with developmental differences, consistent programming in communication, life skills, social development, and behavioral intervention is essential, and the window to make a meaningful impact is narrow. Every gap in service sets a child back.

If this program loses funding, these children will fall through the cracks. There is no comparable alternative in Montgomery County to catch them.

I respectfully ask that the Council prioritize full and sustained funding of \$175,000 for the Community Companions Program in FY27 and \$45,000 in this year's operating budget. The children it serves are counting on you!

Thank you for your time and your commitment to all of Montgomery County's children.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sing Han

████████████████████ Rockville, MD 20853

11-year resident of District 6