

## Rebecca Ragsdale

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**From:** k.hallahan@gmail.com on behalf of Kate Zuckerman <kate@commongroundcville.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 30, 2016 10:43 AM  
**To:** Rebecca Ragsdale  
**Subject:** Letter of Support (CLE 2016-032 Rose Garden Family Day Home)

Re: CLE # 2016-32 Rose Garden School (Rebecca Garson) 7342 Plank Road; Tax Map Parcel 070000000039E0

Dear Ms Ragsdale,

I am writing in favor of Ms Rebecca Garson's application to run a family day home called The Rose Garden School at 7342 Plank Road. My son has attended the Rose Garden School in Batesville, where Ms Garson is the head teacher, for the past two years. We are grateful to have such high quality childcare in close proximity to our home, as both my husband and I work full time and there are no comparable options in the area.

I understand that the owners of the property adjacent to the Rose Garden School are opposed to having the school as their neighbor for the following reasons: trespassing concerns, additional traffic, and a fear of their property value decreasing. I am writing to shed some light on the above issues as they relate to The Rose Garden School, from my perspective.

The Rose Garden School is a Waldorf preschool. The Waldorf educational approach emphasizes the role of imagination in learning, as well as holistic integration of a child's intellectual, practical, and artistic development of pupils. This is an environment in which teachers are very hands on with students, and in which students are consistently expected to be good listeners. I believe that coming to observe the current environment at the Rose Garden would alleviate many of the neighbor's concerns, as they would be able to see first hand the attractive play area, highly structured environment, close teacher-child interaction, and cooperative child behavior.

There are potential perils at the current location in Batesville. For example, there is a creek running past the property that is wide and deep in places. There is also a parking area where cars pull in and out to drop off and pick up children. There is a fence separating the children from the creek and the parking area. In the two years that our son has been a Rose Garden student, there have been no incidents of students climbing fences or going beyond the boundaries of the playground without explicit teacher permission and accompaniment. I have no concerns regarding the proximity of the proposed location to the lake on the neighbors property, as I am fully confident that Ms Garson and her teaching assistant will be keeping a close eye on my son and his friends, and also that the children are fully respectful of the boundaries of their play areas.

Although I am currently a Nelson County resident, prior to moving here I enjoyed living in Batesville for 4 years. I drove the road between the Batesville Store and Rt 250 on a regular basis, and I am very familiar with the sharp turn at the proposed location. My experience on that turn is that it must be taken at about 15 miles per hour, meaning that the speed at which I am going makes all the driveways on the turn visible to me and allows me time to stop if necessary. Practically speaking, The Rose Garden school has 8-12 students per day, depending on the day of the week. Some of these students carpool or are siblings and so get dropped off together. The drop offs and pick ups are spread out over a half an hour period of time. Thus, the increase in vehicle traffic during drop off, from 8:30-9:00am, amounts to 16-24 car trips (including each car both pulling in off Plank Rd and then pulling back out) or, fewer than one additional car trip per minute. In the afternoon, the traffic is lessened, as some children do not stay for nap time. Thus, afternoon pick up, between 3:00-3:30, amounts to approximately 12-18 vehicle trips or, an average of one every two minutes. This does not account for carpooling habits, which means that vehicle trips are actually less than stated above.

Finally, regarding property values, numerous research projects have demonstrated that quality school options, both private and public, can both raise property values and insulate areas against declining property values. The Rose Garden is a preschool that is sought after by a number of discerning parents, many of whom drive from Charlottesville--and even as far away from Batesville as Louisa County--because it provides a unique preschool and kindergarten experience that is unrivaled in the area. In fact, a family whose child is currently at The Rose Garden recently bought the adjacent home in order to be closer to both the current location and the proposed location. I am certain that property values will not be negatively affected by the presence of the school. We feel so blessed to have it so close to us!

I hope that my perspective is helpful as you consider whether or not to approve Ms Garson's application. I know there is a precedent of support for family day homes in rural areas of Albemarle County and I am optimistic that you and your colleagues will be in support of this positive, community-oriented business in Batesville. It is an option that is greatly needed in the area. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Best regards,

Kate Zuckerman

Owner, Barefoot Bucha Kombucha

615 Pauls Creek Rd

Afton, VA 22920

434/227-9297

May 30, 2016

Ms. Rebecca Ragsdale, Senior Planner  
County of Albemarle  
Department of Community Development  
401 McIntire Rd, North Wing  
Charlottesville, VA 22902-4596

Re: CLE # 2016-32  
Rose Garden Family Day Home  
(Rebecca Garson)

Dear Ms. Ragsdale--

This letter is in support of the zoning variance requested by the Rose Garden Family Day Home. As a 35 year resident of Albemarle County, I was delighted that my son could attend preschool with Sharifa Oppenheimer as his teacher, first at the Batesville Methodist Church and then at the Crossroads Waldorf School in 1984 when it was located in North Garden. Thirty years later my son's daughter had the great joy of attending the Rose Garden founded by Ms. Oppenheimer in Miran Forest in Batesville. How precious to have two generations supported by a curriculum designed to optimize their development through cooperative play, music and story. I loved visiting the Rose Garden with the children and engaging in the seasonal festivals. I found the participating parents to be respectful and thoughtful, and good neighbors to the Miran Forest community where I lived for 20 years.

The Rose Garden is a local business supporting local families and it creates opportunities for neighbors to meet each other and provide mutual support, which are cornerstones to any healthy community. The impact on the Miran Forest private road and our larger community was only positive.

As I understand it the school follows the very strict Day Care Regulations guided by our state legislature and supervised by unannounced visits twice a year.

I hope you will consider supporting this zoning variance in support of the future generations of Albemarle residents.

Respectfully,

Zakira Beasley  
formerly of Batesville, VA  
917 Locust Lane  
Charlottesville, VA 22901  
434-960-5656  
zakira@cstone.net

Thomas Pierce & Catherine Cayce  
6770 River Hill Lane  
Afton, VA 22920

To Whom It May Concern:

My wife and I are writing to express our support for Rebecca Garson and her effort to establish a Family Day Home on Plank Road for children in our community.

We are residents of the Batesville area, and we cannot say enough how important it is to us, as local parents, to have quality childcare—childcare with an excellent underlying philosophy of education and childcare that doesn't require us to drive all the way into Charlottesville or Waynesboro. For the last year, our oldest daughter has attended the *Rose Garden*, currently located in Miran Forest, and we can speak to the quality of that experience and to the quality of its teachers, including Rebecca Garson. We intend to continue sending our daughter to the home on Plank Road, as well as her younger sister when she reaches the right age.

The current Rose Garden—if you haven't visited before—is an amazingly beautiful place. It is well-maintained, clean, and organized. You might even say it's sort of magical. In other words, what Rebecca and her co-teachers operate is not a typical daycare. I can understand why new neighbors might be skittish, but whatever their fears, they should know that the *Rose Garden* is a high step above the typical daycare, in all ways. I don't think we could find a better place to send our toddlers—not here, not in Charlottesville, not anywhere.

We hope that you understand how important it is to have places like the Rose Garden in our area. When we decided to move out this way from Charlottesville last year, I assure you that, as parents with small children, having the *Rose Garden* nearby was a big draw for us. Meaning, the Family Day Home that Rebecca is working to establish on Plank Road will be a real boon for the area.

Thank you,  
Thomas & Catherine

## Rebecca Ragsdale

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**From:** Erika Howsare <erikahowsare@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 26, 2016 1:01 PM  
**To:** Rebecca Ragsdale  
**Cc:** Gulino, John (jg7ed)  
**Subject:** CLE # 2016-32 (Rebecca Garson and the Rose Garden)

Dear Ms. Ragsdale,

I am writing in support of Rebecca Garson and the Rose Garden preschool.

My husband and I first visited the Rose Garden in its original location in 2014. Immediately, we were impressed with the calm, respectful atmosphere at the school; the orderliness of a group of three-, four-, and five-year-olds sitting down to a meal was surprising and notable, and was a big part of our decision to enroll our daughter. For the last two years, as Rose Garden parents, we have continued to observe the way the teaching philosophy of the school has effectively created a culture of respect and thoughtfulness, encompassing students, teachers and parents.

I have observed Rose Garden families to be an unusually considerate and mindful group. Rather than noise and traffic, my prevailing experience—even during busy pickup and dropoff periods—has been one of calm, quiet and gentle behavior among all members of the school community. The school's small size, its educational approach, and its aesthetic qualities (an emphasis on natural materials and low-key design) all contribute to the way it fits so easily into its forest surroundings.

Rather than loud voices and garish colors—things we associate with typical institutions serving kids in this age group—the Rose Garden conjures images of children on a picnic blanket, listening intently to their teacher while seated in a circle. Or a line of children carrying lanterns through the landscape at dusk on a fall evening. Or a group of children in a large sandbox outlined by logs, speaking quietly to each other as they carve out shapes in the sand.

I know Rebecca Garson to be a person of high integrity and generosity, and one who wishes to recreate the nature-based, calming Rose Garden experience at her new location on Plank Road. My husband and I have also visited the new spot, helped Rebecca prepare the outdoor space, and talked with her about her plans for the property.

I truly believe that the school will be a delightful neighbor, not at all a detriment to nearby residents. Its enrollment is small, and Rebecca, as its guiding hand, will strive to maintain the Rose Garden culture of respect and care for people, nature, and neighbors. The Rose Garden wouldn't be what it is without these qualities.

This school is a special place and a special community, one that can't be fully appreciated without a personal visit. Our daughter and many other children have absorbed life experiences of harmony and peace there, very different from the chaos and distraction that prevail in so many other places. We very much hope that Rebecca will be able to go forward with her plans for the Rose Garden, and we urge you to support her.

Sincerely,

Erika Howsare

Nellysford

## Rebecca Ragsdale

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**From:** katrina von Briesen <katrinavonbriesen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 25, 2016 7:34 AM  
**To:** Rebecca Ragsdale  
**Cc:** Rebecca Garson  
**Subject:** Rose Garden/Rebecca Garson

Dear Ms. Ragsdale,

I am writing in support of Rebecca Garson and her Rose Garden child care.

I don't know what specific concerns have been raised, but I can share my experience of being a Rose Garden neighbor the past fourteen years.

I have lived in Miran Forest, (where the Rose Garden has been located for fourteen years) for 30 years, My four grandchildren have all been blessed to attend the Rose Garden.

The Rose Garden is not a typical daycare operation. The magic of early childhood is supported with careful planning, appropriate and healthy activities and calm, respectful communication.

It is unique in my decades of experience as an educator.

The Rose Garden has been a wonderful addition to our neighborhood, bringing the magic of early childhood to our community.

The parents and staff at the Rose Garden have been very respectful of the neighborhood and residents; some have even moved here.

I can imagine that the prospect of having a 'daycare' in the neighborhood might be startling to Rebecca's new neighbors, but I want to assure them that it was a wonderful gift to our neighborhood.

The Rose Garden's new neighbors can look forward to the joy of little children being well cared for, the Rose Garden staff's good heartedness, and the cultivation of beauty on that land.

It is a peaceful prospect.

I wish them all the best.

Kate von Briesen

May 25, 2016

Batesville, VA

## Rebecca Ragsdale

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**From:** Linda Krag <linda@knitdenise.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 24, 2016 3:01 PM  
**To:** Rebecca Ragsdale  
**Subject:** CLE #2016-32 Rose Garden School

Dear Ms. Ragsdale:

I'm writing in support of CLE #2016-32 Rose Garden School, Rebecca Garson.

My granddaughter currently attends the Rose Garden School in its Miran Forest location. I have seen first hand the gentle care with which the adults attend to the children both inside and outside, and how firmly but gently they enforce the rules about polite behavior with each other and with their environment. The Rose Garden provides a very special experience for preschool children. They are taught respect for each other and for the earth. Classes are small with plenty of adult supervision. Play equipment is made of natural materials whenever possible. The objective is to nurture children to become conscious of themselves, their surroundings, and of each other.

I am a small business owner operating in this rural setting. Small businesses are the backbone of our county, and it is my experience that a small business can thrive in such a rural setting with hardly any awareness in the community of its existence.

I hope the county will allow the Rose Garden to settle into its new, secluded environment where children may learn to treasure a new landscape with the same respect with which they have treated the current Rose Garden.

Sincerely,

Linda Krag

Linda Krag  
Denise Interchangeable Knitting & Crochet  
1618 Miller School Road  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903  
434.823.8234 or 888.831.8042  
fax 434.823.7007  
[www.knitdenise.com](http://www.knitdenise.com)  
On Ravelry, the [Denise Divas group](#)  
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## Rebecca Ragsdale

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**From:** Barbara Albert. <balbert@centurylink.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2016 1:55 PM  
**To:** Rebecca Ragsdale  
**Cc:** Barbara Albert.; Sharifa Oppenheimer  
**Subject:** Rose garden

Dear ms Rebecca Ragsdale,

I am Barbara Albert and served as the president of the Boxwood Farm Owners association for the past dozen years. The Rose garden has been operating from the home of Sharifa Oppenheimer which is next door to me with one parcel between us.

During all of this time no neighbors voiced an objection to the presence of children at the Rose Garden. Conversely, I and many others, enjoyed meeting many new people who knew my neighborhood thanks to an association with the Rose garden. I believe home based service business are the best form of residential business. Our county should grow in this direction. It is a win win. Families need support and home based persons can forge a new source of income. Everyone gains and the land is kept in a natural state.

I sincerely hope that the Albemarle County planning commission and the board of supervisors will continue to accept and encourage child care organizations along the line of the Rose Garden. We will all gain by developing in this benign direction.

Thank you for your consideration,

I will gladly post this message as a physical letter if you suggest that it is advisable.

Barbara Albert

Formerly president, Boxwood Lane farm Owners Association

Sent from my iPad

## Rebecca Ragsdale

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**From:** Emily McKeon <emily@birthadventure.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2016 1:47 PM  
**To:** Rebecca Ragsdale  
**Subject:** CLE # 2016-32, Rose Garden School (Rebecca Garson)

Dear Ms. Ragsdale,

I am writing to you in regards to the CLE # 2016-32, Rose Garden School and Rebecca Garson. I am a Batesville resident and am fully in support of the school's operation in our rural community for a number of reasons.

My daughter has attended the Rose Garden School for the past three years in its current location in a home on the other side of Batesville from where the new school will be. As a long-time Batesville resident and new mother, I was absolutely thrilled to learn that there was a preschool of any description only a 5-minute drive from our rural home. When I learned more about the school, I was even more amazed that this gem was in our community. The Rose Garden is a Waldorf-based school, which means that not only is it a very creative and nature-based school, but it is highly focused on respect: respect for the child as a whole, respect for the family, respect for daily rhythms of life, for community, and for the nature and people around us.

When my husband and I went to visit the school for the first time, we were blown away by the *peacefulness* when we entered the building. The children were in the living room area, happily absorbed in play. They were chatting with one another and laughing, but there were no shouts and screams, no din as we had expected there might be with 12 preschool children in a relatively small space. The children's joy and creativity were clearly not dampened by this very sane rule of keeping voices to an "inside level."

Later, on the playground, we experienced the same amazement and delight. There was motion and laughter and the sound of children's voices calling to each other and the teachers, but again, no shouting or screaming. Out of respect for the neighbors, the rule on the playground is clear and absolutely respected: no screaming. If the noise level gets too high, Rebecca quickly and gently reminds the children to bring the sound down and they listen. It is a truly remarkable thing to witness! Again, the children's exuberance is clearly not diminished by this rule, and in fact they seem more comfortable and happy, more able to express themselves through creative play, and visibly less overwhelmed by the whole experience of being little people at school!

The playground area is a space very worthy of mention. Unlike a traditional preschool/daycare with multiple bright plastic play-structures, the focus at the Rose Garden is on natural materials. The play space, complete with wooden climbing structures and wood-framed swing-sets, therefore blends beautifully with the environment without marring the scenery of a very lovely part of our county.

Children and their parents are extremely respectful of the fact that the school is on private property. The rules for families are set that by half an hour after school ends, they will be out of the playground area and on their way home. I have never seen a child or family wander into the surrounding environs, even though it's a beautiful forest setting with trails. Parents are careful to shut off their cars at drop-off and pick-up times, so noise and exhaust are at a minimum (again, a school rule that benefits not only the children but the neighbors and the environment as well).

This school is an incredible asset to our community, drawing families from Afton, Crozet, and Charlottesville. As Batesville residents, my husband and I have often heard from other parents that they have

grown to love this area so much they have begun looking for property here. Indeed, one Charlottesville family recently bought and moved into the house immediately *adjacent* to the current school! So, rather than being a blot on the landscape, this gem of a school is not only an asset to the current community, but is also a magnet for new families throughout Albemarle and Nelson counties. It is one of the reasons I continue to love living and working in Batesville. (I am office manager, marketing director, and head of research and development at Denise Interchangeable Knitting & Crochet at 1618 Miller School Rd., also a residential-based business.)

Thank you for your consideration.

Best wishes,  
Emily McKeon  
PO Box 111  
Batesville, VA 22924  
434-823-1413