



12 Mar 2026

Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22201

Arlington County Board,

I am writing on behalf of the Douglas Park Civic Association in support of restoring proposed funding reductions to the Barcroft Sports and Fitness Center.

The Douglas Park neighborhood is Arlington County's third largest neighborhood by area, and fourth largest neighborhood by population representing over 10,000 Arlingtonians. Our neighborhood is anchored by the Barcroft Sports and Fitness Center, which is also directly across the street from Arlington's largest affordable housing community. Douglas Park takes great pride in the Center in the neighborhood and it is a staple facility which is much more than a gymnastics gym. The community utilizes the facility as a polling station to exercise our democratic rights, the gym inside provides opportunities for our residents to stay healthy and strong, the facility also provides refuge during extreme hot and cold weather. The Douglas Park Civic Association is offering to work with the County to improve the Center – and strongly opposes to shut it down.

The neighborhood was shocked by the County Manager's proposed budget this year calling for the shut down of Barcroft Sports and Fitness Center's gymnastics program. This short-sighted proposal would shutter a world-class facility, and County staff has acknowledged there is no alternative proposal on what could be put in its place if the gymnastics program was removed.

We understand the Center has seen some reduced enrollment in the last few years, the Douglas Park Civic Association offers the following ideas for increasing participation to offset some of the facility's operational costs:

1. **Change out the Center's management:** The current approach is not working and management needs a drastic change. Arlington County needs to quickly find new leadership to energize the staff, work with the community, and make tomorrow's future athletes and leaders.
2. **Engage in a targeted advertising campaign:** This program needs a new, targeted, and funded advertising strategy that finds new parents to get kids involved with Arlington gymnastics. This needs to be a County priority, not an afterthought, with advertising staff and resources redirected from other areas to reinvigorate this program immediately.
3. **Collaborate with local organizations like Civic Associations:** Center leadership needs to conduct outreach and engagement with Arlingtonians. Civic Associations such as the



Douglas Park Civic Association would be happy to provide free outreach resources for the Center including speaking at meetings, tabling at events, advertising, storytelling in newsletters and online, and getting connected to like-minded organizations in the community.

4. **Increase drop-in events:** While the gymnastics teams are the core of the Center, scheduling should be adjusted to find more opportunities for short drop-in events (school day off camps). Drop-in events raise more money, are great as advertisements to find future team members, and are more flexible for families' schedules. Bring back Parents Night Out events and offer birthday party events for purchase.
5. **Spruce up the appearance:** The Center is long overdue for a major renovation, and that conversation should be started as part of the County's Capital Improvement Plan longer-term planning. In the short-term, the County should commit to improve the facility and adjacent park with operational resources. This facility is not prioritized by the County and it has a major impact on families considering using the gymnastics gym or signing their kids up for a team. Three examples include that the Center's sign out front that has not been refreshed in decades, the recent graffiti on the top of the Center from last year that went ignored and not cleaned up for weeks, and the nearby rope climber playground equipment that remained broken with police tape around it for years.
6. **Pick up the trash:** The surrounding area suffers from constant trash issues, and the County should prioritize the Center and surrounding park for cleanliness. The County can also work with community organizations like EcoAction Arlington and NOVA Cleanups who have networks of volunteers for trash pickup events at no cost to the County. The Douglas Park Civic Association even enlisted the George Washington University Baseball team who generously helped out with a recent Barcroft Park maintenance event. Bottom line is the community is standing by to help make the Center a better place.
7. **Adjust pricing:** Pricing should be examined for various services to help offset some of the Center's operational costs. At the same time, accommodations should continue to be made for families with different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steve Jordan Tomaszewski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Steve Jordan Tomaszewski
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