

**ALAN MCHALE
415 STRAHLE STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19111
215-722-8832
alanmchale@earthlink.net**

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MADAM PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF COUNCIL, MY NAME IS ALAN MCHALE AND I AM AN OUTREACH WORKER FOR THE RHAWNURST NORC, WHICH STANDS FOR NATURALLY OCCURRING RETIREMENT COMMUNITY, I AM ALSO A LONGTIME RESIDENT OF NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA AND, I WAS, I AM PROUD TO SAY, BORN IN PHILADELPHIA. AS WAS, I AM EVEN PROUDER TO SAY, OUR SON.

A COMMUNITY GROUP OF NORTHEAST FAMILIES, PROVIDERS, MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT 10 HEALTH CENTER COMMUNITY BOARD, AND MATERNITY CARE COALITION, WHICH HAS A MOMOBILE PROGRAM AT DISTRICT 10, HAS FORMED IN NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA AND MEETS REGULARLY. I AM HERE TO SUPPORT MY NEIGHBORS AND THE NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA FAMILIES' GOAL TO GET A MATERNITY CENTER, AT LEAST, IN THE NORTHEAST. I AM NOT, HOWEVER, GOING TO USE MY TIME BEFORE YOU GOING OVER ALL OF THE SAME STATISTICS AND THE OBVIOUS REASONS WHY THE LACK OF MATERNITY CARE IN THE NORTHEAST IS SUCH A HUGE PROBLEM. I WANT TO TAKE MY TIME AND TALK ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO ME TO BE "BORN IN PHILADELPHIA". NOW, MOST OF YOU, AS FAR AS I AM AWARE, WERE BORN IN PHILADELPHIA SO YOU ARE AWARE OF JUST WHAT THAT MEANS. MY OLDER BROTHER AND I WERE BORN AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE TO OUR CHILDHOOD

HOME AT 17TH AND ONTARIO. MY YOUNG BROTHER WAS BORN AT LOWER BUCKS COUNTY HOSPITAL. BOTH MY BROTHERS NOW LIVE IN ARIZONA, THEY HAVE BEEN FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS. MY OLDER BROTHER IS STILL A HARDCORE PHILLIES EAGLES FAN. MY YOUNGER BROTHER (BORN IN BUCKS COUNTY) IS A DIAMONDBACKS FAN.

WHEN I TALK TO THE SENIORS I WORK WITH ABOUT THE PAST AND HOW THINGS WERE WHEN THEIR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN WERE BEING BORN, THEY ARE ALMOST UNANIMOUS IN THEIR POSITIVE MEMORIES ABOUT “NEIGHBORHOOD HOSPITALS” FULL SERVICE HOSPITALS. THEY JUST DON’T UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF A HOSPITAL WITHOUT A MATERNITY WARD. SINCE I FIRST WENT TO THE NORTHEAST TOWN HALL MEETING AT SAINT JOHNS CHURCH BACK IN NOVEMBER, I HAVE BEEN TALKING TO PEOPLE OF ALL AGES ABOUT THE CONCEPT THAT THERE ARE VIRTUALLY NO MATERNITY BEDS IN NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA. ONE COUPLE’S DECISION, IN PARTICULAR, COULD REPRESENT A GROWING TREND IF LACKING MATERNITY SERVICES IN NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA CONTINUES. THEY WERE BOTH TWENTY-SOMETHINGS, RECENTLY ENGAGED, CURRENTLY PREGNANT AND LOOKING TO BUY THEIR FIRST HOME. BOTH LAWYERS WORKING IN CENTER CITY BOTH LOCAL COLLEGE/LAW SCHOOL GRADS. THEY ARE LOOKING AT HOUSES. ONE IN LANGHORNE CLOSE TO ST MARY MEDICAL CENTER AND ONE IN FOX CHASE, CLOSE TO JEANES. THE WOMAN WAS COMPLETELY UNAWARE THAT JEANES HAD CLOSED THEIR MATERNITY DEPARTMENT. THE ODDS ARE GOOD THAT THEIR CHILD WILL NOT KNOW THE PRIDE THAT COMES FROM BEING BORN A PHILADELPHIAN. FAMILIES DEPEND ON THE LOCAL

BUSINESSES, BUT THE BUSINESSES ALSO DEPEND ON FAMILIES.

MUCH IS BEING MADE IN THIS CITY ABOUT HOW IT'S A NEW DAY AND NEW WAY. WE HEAR ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTRACTING THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST YOUNG PEOPLE TO OUR CITY. WE TALK ABOUT PHILADELPHIA USING THE ED'S AND MEDS AS A MAJOR COMPONENT OF POSITIONING ITSELF IN A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE FLAT WORLD. WE FINALLY GET APPROVAL FOR FOX CHASE CANCER CENTER EXPANSION TO ATTRACT THOUSANDS OF HIGH TECH JOBS, AND WHAT ARE WE GOING TO TELL THOSE PEOPLE? "OH, BY THE WAY, WE LOVE YOU LIVING HERE BUT IF YOU DECIDE TO HAVE CHILDREN MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHERE HUNTINGDON VALLEY IS"?

WE ARE A BETTER CITY THAN THIS. THIS COUNCIL HAS RISEN TO A GREAT MANY CHALLENGES IN THE TIME I HAVE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION. THIS IS ANOTHER CHALLENGE: JOIN WITH NORTHEAST RESIDENTS AND SEE THAT THE MATERNITY CARE ISSUES OF NOT JUST THE NORTHEAST BUT ALL OVER PHILADELPHIA ARE IDENTIFIED AND ADDRESSED. MAKE SURE THAT THE THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN DUE TO BE BORN IN THE NEXT YEAR ACTUALLY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE "BORN IN PHILADELPHIA". IT MEANS SOMETHING. IT MEANS SOMETHING TO ME AND IT MEANS SOMETHING TO YOU.

IF IT IS, INDEED A NEW DAY AND A NEW WAY THEN LET IT BEGIN TODAY. LET IT BEGIN WITH THIS COUNCIL COMMITTING TO THE IDEA THAT NO NEIGHBORHOOD IN ONE OF THE GREAT HOSPITAL CITIES IN THE WORLD, GOES WITHOUT ADEQUATE MATERNITY CARE.