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**Address to Budget Meeting, April 22, 2019**

Good evening. My name is Ann Carr-Beyersdorff. I live, worship, and volunteer in South Richmond, in Councilman Jones' district where the eviction rate is 17.3%. That's 1 out of every 6 households. I'm here tonight on behalf of RISC and also Matthew's Place and the new Literacy Center.

I wanted to speak to you this evening about the eviction crisis in Richmond because I have seen its effect on children first hand. For about 4 years I've volunteered in South Richmond with a Reading program. I've met about 50 children. In that short time, 9 of our children (3 families) have experienced eviction and then homelessness, months living in motels, sleeping on the floor in a family member's empty apartment, or living in a shelter. One 4<sup>th</sup> grader has been homeless twice in that time. Several other of our families have moved more than once in those 4 years.

The statistics you've heard from others are important, yes. But I want to appeal to your hearts as well as your minds. These are real children. I know their names and faces. I can show them to you on my phone. Children are somewhat resilient but trauma added to disruption, to instability, to insecurity, will take its toll and the children pay the price. Put yourself or your children in the shoes of a 7 year old, not knowing from day to day about a place to sleep, food, what school you'll go to, or even if you'll go tomorrow. Or a 12 year old girl sharing her motel room with 2 teenaged siblings plus mom and stepdad. Or that 4<sup>th</sup> grader living with grandma in a shelter.

If we wait till the perfect programs come along more children will lose days/weeks from school; more families, more communities will be disrupted and scattered; more insecurity, more starting over with just the clothes you can carry; more embarrassment (especially for the teenagers). That is why I am asking that you would prioritize funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the Eviction Diversion Program making sure the AHTF remains in the budget at 2.9 million and the Eviction Diversion at 485,000.

I'd also like to personally invite each of you to attend RISC's Nehemiah Action Assembly on May 2<sup>nd</sup> to directly address these issues with 1200 of your constituents.