May 24, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of CultureALL, I am submitting this letter of support for the nomination of Sherry Gupta for a Women of Influence Award for 2016.

Sherry founded CultureALL in 2005 in order to provide education to elementary school students in central Iowa on the cultures of people from other countries.  Sherry recognized that the schools were facing numerous issues arising from an increasing number of immigrants and refugees, the children of whom were trying to assimilate into American culture while learning English.

Her amazing vision was to create an atmosphere in the schools, and aspirationally throughout central Iowa, of acceptance of and respect for cultural differences. In a world still plagued by racism and heightened immigrant phobias, CultureALL creates a comfortable environment in classrooms and provides an accurate introduction of other cultures, not based on fear and hearsay. Authentic, hands on experiences enable students to gain respect for others.

Over the ten years of existence, under Sherry's leadership, CultureALL has grown to embrace not only cultural training for students, but to also provide opportunities for adults and the business community in central Iowa through Photo-ethnography exhibits, Culture Kin breakfasts, Living Culture dinners and concerts and events such as the 2016 Bollywood Ball.

Conversely, CultureALL programming has provided opportunities for immigrants and refugees to share their knowledge and take pride in their cultures.  Sherry and her staff have trained hundreds of people to serve as cultural ambassadors, allowing them to build bridges for both children and adults. Drake University Professor of English, Carol Spalding-Kruse, collected a number of stories in her book, "Zachary's Bridge," which reflects the mission of CultureALL in creating discovery-filled experiences that strengthen cultural understanding and appreciation in our daily lives.

Sherry is widely recognized as a *go-to* person for those seeking to learn about other cultures.  Evidence of this has been noted in the recent articles and cover stories in the Business Record, WOW and DSM Magazine, featuring Sherry and CultureALL. She has tirelessly provided these services as a volunteer Executive Director, accepting no salary for her work.

Naming Sherry Gupta as one of Iowa’s Women of Influence is not only well deserved, but also makes a public statement of validation of community efforts of inclusiveness and respect for others.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carol Grant

President, Board of Directors

CultureALL