

Marlu Abarca

527 35th Street, apt 11

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Dear Review Committee,

 Thank you in advance for your consideration of Dawn Martinez Oropeza for 2016 Women of Influence award. It is my honor and pleasure to recommend Dawn for this award as she is exemplary role model, leader, and teacher in her community of Greater Des Moines, and across the state of Iowa.

 My first interactions with Dawn were through *Al Éxito*, a state-wide mentorship program that prepares Latino youth for civic engagement, leadership, and education after high school. Dawn goes above and beyond to serve the 600+ youth in our program. Moreover, she not only serves as a mentor and role model for the *Al Éxito* youth, but also for the site coordinators, Madrinas (*Al Éxito* Mentors), and even the *Al Éxito* Board.

 As someone who has served on the Board of Directors for the past two years, I have learned more about what it truly means to be a public servant, and what non-profit leadership should look like. Dawn conducts herself with tact, poise, and an approachable demeanor that makes it easy to want to support such an impactful organization. Dawn has motivated and supported so many Iowans to further their education, to dream, to learn, to grow. Dawn is one of the primary reasons that I decided to apply for the Latina Leadership Initiative of Greater Des Moines. I am now proud to call myself an alumnus, and who hope to exude as much humility, joy, and strength as Dawn has as my personal mentor.

 I hope that you can consider Dawn as much of an influential person as so many Iowans do, and honor her among the amazing and impactful women of Women of Influence, years past.

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