



May 20, 2019

Selection Committee, Women of Influence
Business Record
100 4th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Esteemed Committee,

If you've ever gotten an email from Michelle DeClerck you know exactly what I'm about to say. In her signature, under her photo, she lists several awards she has received. Ok. She lists more than several. But that's because she has earned every one of these by working smart and working hard. I applaud her for taking a much-deserved bow.

- 2018 Enterprising Woman of the Year
- 2017 Inspiring Woman of Iowa Character Award
- 2017 U.S. House of Representatives Recognition
- U.S. Small Business Administration Women in Business Champion of the Year, in Iowa
- 2017 Goldman Sachs Small Business Award Scholar Graduate
- 2016 Top Influential Woman Innovator of the Year, *Smart Meetings Magazine*
- Top 20 Events' Industry Change Maker
- Clive Citizen of the Year
- Iowa Chapter NAWBO Woman Business Owner of the Year

This woman is heralded for many reasons. She never stops learning. She is a voracious student who pushes herself and her CEM team to excel in EVERYTHING, especially in being a leader of financial event solutions in the U.S.

She gives back in HUGE ways. When she sees a need, Michelle doesn't just shake her head and say "Aw, that's too bad." She takes action! In 2015, she founded the Iowa Hotel Donation Network, to harvest excess food, toiletries, paper products and discarded housewares. She then donates these items to Central Iowa non-profits to support low income and homeless persons. According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association, hotels discard ONE MILLION bars of soap EVERY DAY. Michelle is committed to be that one person who does one thing to make a difference in the world.

Another example of this is how she supported her son, Dylan, as he launched Opportunity on Deck in 2013. An athlete himself, Dylan was keenly aware that many

kids with limited resources couldn't participate in sports the way he could. With Michelle's support and guidance – while he was still in high school - Dylan created this non-profit which provides elementary age students in low-income neighborhoods with opportunities to participate in organized sports. Providing these opportunities expands beyond learning a sporting skill (soccer, baseball, basketball, dance and Ultimate Frisbee), to teaching teamwork and being a part of something bigger than oneself. Their over-arching aim is to help provide positive mentoring and role modeling, helping keep kids off drugs and becoming positive citizens in their communities.

In 2009, Michelle recognized a need for more women to band together to lift-up other women, so she joined a group called The Summit as a founding member. This group focused on helping professional women grow their businesses through education and leadership.

If you've ever served on a board with Michelle you know she is a no-nonsense, roll-up-your-sleeves and get it done, engaged participant. Her energy is electrifying. Her strategic mind finds opportunities, solutions or pathways not seen by others. She can take the helm effectively or pick-up the slack when needed. Whether she leads or supports, she is focused on results.

There isn't a smidgeon of doubt in my mind that Michelle DeClerck is a woman of influence! Please, can you just make it official?

Sincerely,

Carole Chambers

Carole Chambers, President & CEO
West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce