December 12, 2016

Jason Swanson

Business Publications Corporation

100 – 4th St.

Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Jason,

Brett Smith’s commitment to strengthening education, his leadership within the I Have a Dream Board of Directors, and his personal involvement in numerous community development initiatives are all factors that lead me to write this letter of recommendation for his Forty Under 40 application.

I recruited Brett to the I Have a Dream board, and have worked with him as he’s taken on more leadership within the organization, becoming our board chair in 2015. Brett has brought strategic direction to the organization, and he’s helped I Have a Dream navigate a number of intricate and important transitions. With Brett’s leadership, I Have a Dream has:

* Launched a new program model – the Dreamer Academy – that has expanded our organization’s reach from 50 students to over 500 students;
* Exponentially increased fundraising to support this programmatic shift that is already leading to improved student outcomes and increased academic achievements;
* Strategically grown our staff, programing, outreach and volunteer efforts to engage new stakeholders and increase our return on investment;
* Successfully lobbied to change Iowa law to allow all nonprofit organizations in Iowa to own 529 college savings accounts; and
* Created new partnerships with over 35 businesses, nonprofit and community organizations to redefine how these organizations can truly work together to increase our collective impact in the community.

Brett is an ideal candidate for the 2017 Forty Under 40 class. As a member of Wells Fargo’s executive management team, he balances the demands of a high performance job with his commitment to our community. He is passionate, involved, and an effective advocate for long-term, sustainable philanthropic efforts such as I Have a Dream.

I strongly encourage the committee to consider Brett for this year’s prestigious Forty Under 40 class.

Sincerely,

Emily Westergaard

Executive Director, Des Moines I Have a Dream Foundation