Attn: Des Moines Business Record January 7, 2014

Re: 40 Under 40 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Justine Peebles the autumn of 2011 in the midst of a 30-person get-to-know-you exercise requiring blindfolds and the unearned trust of a complete stranger. I was drawn to her instantly because of her outgoing, bubbly personality; I don’t think Justine knows too many strangers. Ten months later we were knee deep in another exercise, leading a fundraiser to feed the hungry in Iowa and around the world - the Capstone of the West Des Moines Leadership Class of 2012. Our event was called Morsel Combat – A Food Event Fighting Hunger and we raised over $50,000 for Meals from the Heartland. This event still continues today, with Justine’s help.

During that time and since I’ve seen Justine perform at the highest level of commitment to the organizations she serves, serving where the needs are the greatest. Justine is passionate about children, poverty alleviation, increasing the levels of education in Iowa and putting an end to food insecurity.

During our time together in the WDM Leadership Academy I learned of her commitment to at-risk youth. Justine was enthusiastic about the use of equine therapy to help abused children overcome their trauma. As she sold tickets to her Wild About the Child Barn Dance she shared her passion for helping kids who are surviving a tough family life and her experiences leading weekend retreats for teenage girls at the Wildwood Hills Ranch.

For over two years Justine also volunteered in the crisis nursery and teen center at the Youth Emergency Services and Shelter– a temporary haven for young people enduring unsafe living environments. Yes, Justine is willing to go where the need is greatest. Her time there was spent mentoring young girls and loving on babies and small children who had been abandoned by their parents or were removed by Child Protective Services due to abuse or unsafe conditions in the home.

The children and families of the Boys and Girls Clubs know Justine as that friendly girl who sometimes hangs out at the clubs - sharing her smile, high-fives, and warm hugs. The Board of Directors know her as the young professional they eagerly sought to bring on their team, working to address food insecurity by providing weekend meals to their club kids and championing a program called Feeding the Future, with a goal to provide dinner to children who may go hungry otherwise.

Outside of her commitment to at-risk youth, Justine also ran for the Ankeny School Board in 2013 and narrowly lost the race to three returning incumbents who were long time Ankeny residents. Justine earned the only endorsement from the Ankeny Parents’ Association during this election due to her commitment to fix budgeting issues, combat corruption and cronyism and to open up the lines of communication between the community and the Board of Education.

Justine has taken off her blindfold. She sees the need in the community and offers her leadership, service, and friendship to complete strangers… an amazing gift.

The Des Moines community is for the better, thanks to the outstanding leadership and service of Justine Peebles. I urge you to make her a part of the Business Record’s Forty Under 40 class of 2014.

Sincerely,

Liz Cox

Healthiest State Initiative

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