



January 7th, 2014

Mr. Jason Swanson
Business Publications Corp.
100 4th St
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Jason;

This letter is in support of Joe De Jong's nomination for one of Des Moines "Forty Under 40".

I know Joe through his volunteer work at Orchard Place. Orchard Place is a leader in children's mental health services in Iowa, serving over 8,000 children and families each year through a wide array of services. We are the safety net children's mental health provider in Polk, Warren and Dallas Counties, ensuring that kids in crisis get services regardless of their financial resources. Orchard Place has extraordinary support from the community and key partnerships with organizations such as United Way; ten Central Iowa school districts including Des Moines Public Schools; the Fifth District Judicial District; Polk County Department of Human Services; and so on. We develop strong futures for children with mental illness.

In 2010 Joe joined the Orchard Place Foundation Board, and, this year, Joe is serving as the President of the Foundation Board. In this leadership role, Joe has recruited several young business leaders in the community to join the Foundation Board, and, has brought an energy and focus to their fundraising initiatives. He is passionate about increasing children's mental health awareness in our community. He is equally passionate about his role in raising funds to ensure the sustainability of what we do.

Joe began volunteering here as a mentor for children at our residential campus program in 2011. He understood the youth in residential treatment need additional support as they go through a difficult experience and many are away from their families for the first time. Joe enjoyed it so much he has worked to recruit others to mentor youth at the campus. He describes feeling privileged to get to know these youth and they are an inspiration to him.

Joe is very deserving of this award. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Anne F. Starr, MSW
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