

January 5, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of recommendation to the Business Record's 40 under 40 for Melissa Knutson. Melissa's character coupled with her philanthropic efforts is what makes her special. Not only does she lead through example, but she is also instilling the importance of goodwill to her children.

I have been lucky enough to know Melissa for over twenty five years. Melissa's character can simply be described in these terms: generous, hardworking, honest, ethical, kind, and loyal. Her hard work, her loyalty, and her ethics are clearly shown in her resume. Not only has she remained with NCMIC Finance Corporation for 14 years, but has continued to grow and flourish within the organization while consistently exceeding goals.

Melissa's generosity and caring nature can be seen through her various philanthropic efforts. Briefly highlighted as:


- **Big Brothers, Big Sisters** mentor- which operates under the belief that inherent in every child, is the ability to succeed and thrive in life.
- **Habitat for Humanity**- where they build because they believe that, everyone, everywhere, should have a healthy, affordable place to call home.
- **Meals from the Heartland**- A non-profit organization that packages meals for the malnourished people in Iowa, the United States and the world.
- **United Way Graduation Walk**- For several years, Melissa has been paired with a Des Moines Public School Staff member to visit the homes of students at risk of dropping out of school. At this event she connected personally with the student and their family, sharing powerful information about how important it is to graduate, and help them onto the path that leads to graduation.
- **St. Jude Hero Supporter**- Melissa annually donates to the St. Jude Hero program where runners fundraise for St. Jude while training for their race as part of a nationwide alliance against childhood cancer.
- **Operation #Paginacovers**- Melissa is part of the West Des Moines Leadership Academy and spent a day doing a poverty simulation and toured their donation sites at the Human Service Site. On this tour, Melissa learned that one of the big support items needed were personal care items. Melissa was sharing this experience with her daughters and then walked in on her daughter 8 year old daughter telling her grandma that for Christmas she wanted donations of pads and tampons. However, in her daughter's childlike way referring to these items as "pagina covers." It started as a small ask for donations on Facebook to fulfill her daughter's Christmas

wish which that grew into a Paypal account asking for \$150 in donations to buy pads and tampons aka "pagina covers." The tenderhearted nature of the story caught on with donations coming in right away. The momentum of #Paginacovers quickly grew with the WHO-TV Channel 13 news calling for an interview as one of their news anchors had caught wind of the campaign on Facebook. The story of #Paginacovers was then shared online multiple times, by multiple pages on social media. The story was also shared by the actor Shemar Moore. Donations continue to come in and the Paypal account has hit over \$2000 with donations coming in from family, friends and complete strangers. Melissa and her daughter continue to discuss the future of #Paginacovers and how they will continue to aid in filling this important need.

Not only does Melissa do and portray all of the great things mentioned above, she does them while also being a mother to 3 beautiful girls and a wife. It is with a great deal of honor and pride that I give this letter of recommendation for Melissa Knutson for the Business Record's 40 under 40. I cannot think of a more deserving individual.

If you have additional questions or would like additional information. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cari Cunningham". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

Cari Cunningham

515-720-5576

cari.m.cunningham@gmail.com