



A home for the homeless, a residence of hope
and healing for women.

Attn: Des Moines Business Record
100 Fourth Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Re: Keshia Meissner, Forty under 40 Nominee

Dear Forty under 40 selection committee,

An Executive Director is someone who leads an organization. They are the person that keeps the wheels in motion while thinking of the next move for business growth. They represent the mission, the integrity of the company, and its employees. Keshia, however, is more than just an Executive Director. She is a plumber, electrician, firefighter, fundraiser, advocate, cheerleader and bookkeeper.

Keshia's time at Beacon of Life has not been easy. In six short years she has re-branded the organization, making it more contemporary, warm and inviting. She evaluated the budget and staffing needs in order to operate more efficiently. She gave new life to a slow re-sale store by changing its name, location and upgrading its retail space. She has networked, attended council meetings and written grants. She has tackled every budget cut, leaky ceiling and deadline with a smile on her face. She has helped Beacon of Life not only become well-known in the community, but become a true asset.

Working in the field of human services, especially operating a non-profit, is thankless. It requires juggling a never-ending list of tasks that do not fall within the typical business day, for very little compensation. While the development and growth of the organization during her tenure has been nothing short of incredible, it does not speak to what makes her special. Keshia, most importantly, has never forgotten to lead with her heart.

I have had the privilege of working side-by-side with Keshia for five years as the Case Manager and Intake Coordinator. We have shared countless brainstorm sessions, major successes, and utter failures. Through all of her business decisions she has never forgotten that our clients are the voices that matter. Regardless of if she is one of Des Moines' Forty under 40 award recipients, she will continue to work tirelessly to grow and develop our organization. She believes that all women deserve a safe environment in which they can become self-sufficient and confidently take on life's challenges. This selflessness and devotion to making a real change in the world is rare, and deserves to be celebrated. I urge you to consider her for this honor.

Sincerely,

Julie Hewitt
Case Manager and Intake Coordinator

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