Thank you for asking me to help with Melissa nomination to The Business Records ‘40 Under 40’. This will be one of the easiest recommendations I have ever written. Not because she didn’t do much, quite the opposite. She did it all! Seriously, she deserves so much recognition for the work she did. It is an honor to be asked to help. Below is a brief and I’m sure incomplete summary of the work she did at the National MS Society while I was the Area Director for the state of Iowa.

I have been involved in non-profit volunteering and board services for nearly 20 years. In that time I have worked with a lot of people in different roles and Melissa stands out from them all.  She always approached her volunteer work for the MS Society with enthusiasm and determination. Ready to jump into whatever project was needing her help. Like most of us she has a full time job and a family but Melissa always made time to help people affected by Multiple Sclerosis.

She brought us other volunteers to help with events and programs.  She volunteered at events like ‘Taste of Generosity’ a key fundraiser and leadership event. She helped with the Annual Meeting/Volunteer recognition program, a huge event. She used her event management background when visiting possible locations meeting with their staff to make sure we were getting the right space at the right price.  Whether it was moving boxes or driving trucks there weren’t many jobs at our events that Melissa didn’t take on at one time or another.

She accepted a role as a member of our board of directors. For some that’s the end of their involvement. They go to meetings and they provide input. Not that that isn’t important or worthwhile but that’s not how Melissa “rolls”. She gets involved in it all. After becoming a board member I remember watching her at a major fundraising event; bike MS, loading a Penske truck with riders’ luggage. On a 90 degree day! How many board members do you know that load luggage in 90 degree heat?

At walk MS season she was there early mornings helping to set up the start/finish line and then handing out tee-shirts to 1500 walkers. Sometimes staying until an event was over and help break it all down at the end. At events and programs Melissa would always try to find time to work the crowd making sure that those affected by MS knew they weren’t alone in their fight.  Finding out what they needed from the chapter.

She joined committees including the MS Scholarship committee, she was involved in mission advancement committee, budget management , the chapter merger and strategic chapter development. She went to the state Capital with the Chapter to advocate on behalf of those affected by MS. I am sure that I am missing things she did and that’s a shame since she deserves recognition for it all. The chapter owes so much to Melissa as do those of us that worked with her. She motivated all of us to do more. She is a special person that made a difference in so many lives. I will keep my fingers crossed that Melissa will be nominated as one of the 40!

Mark Davis

Compliance Officer

DeWaay Capital Management

8711 Northpark Ct.

Johnston, IA 50131

Direct Number-515-273-1280

Main Number- 515-224-9861

Toll-Free Number- 800-722-9861