January 2nd, 2019

Dear 40 Under 40 Candidate Selection Committee,

It’s my pleasure to recommend my colleague and fellow community activist, Reyma McCoy McDeid, for consideration for this year’s 40 Under 40 list. I’ve known Reyma for several years and can attest to her strength of character and commitment to the advancement of Iowa’s largest minority community- people with disabilities. As the Executive Director of Central Iowa Center for Independent Living and a former candidate for Iowa state legislature, Reyma is an actively contributing member of the community who walks her talk.

I first met Reyma during the 2016 legislative session, when she came to the Iowa State Capitol to speak on behalf of people with disabilities who are on Medicaid. We quickly found our paths crossing not just at the Capitol, but also as fellow leaders of organizations that serve marginalized communities. Creative Visions has come to count on CICIL as the go-to resource for our own clients who are disabled, and we have worked jointly to serve several clients who have participated in services with both of our respective organizations. Reyma amazes me with her commitment to our community- including her recent run for office, where she made her platform the vital issue of mobilizing underrepresented Iowans to participate in the political process. With her spirit of giving and skill for community organizing, Reyma shows that she is serious about the “business” of benevolence.

Reyma is an outstanding and active citizen with a great commitment to community service. She is the first openly autistic person that I’ve ever met; she has taught myself and many of my peers at the Iowa State Capitol an enormous amount about the disability community. I look forward to seeing all the good that she will continue to do in town; please feel free to contact me for any further information. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ako Abdul-Samad
Iowa State Representative, District 35
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