January 8, 2014

Business Publications-Business Record

100 4th Street

The Depot at Fourth

Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Forty under 40 Selection Committee,

I am writing to recommend Kerry Gumm for the 2014 class of the Business Record’s Forty under 40. As her application will show, Kerry’s combination of both professional success and commitment to her community are commendable.

I have worked with Kerry for 10+ years. During that time, I have witnessed Kerry’s dedication to leadership and creating an inclusive work environment, and experienced her commitment to serving her community. As part of her responsibilities, Kerry is a member of the Corporate Diversity Council. The goal of the council is to support the attraction and retention of a diverse workforce, value inclusive behaviors within the workplace and position the organization to understand the cultural demands of a diverse marketplace. Through her work on this Council, Kerry has impacted the lives of many employees throughout the organization by creating an environment where people feel welcome and included, and where differences are valued.

As part of her service to the community, Kerry serves as co-chair of the financial sector board of Central Iowa Works. Through this program, the board assists in the development of short term training programs which are designed to provide the unemployed as well as the underemployed with an introduction to digital literacy as it applies to the work site, customer service as well as the basic skills/attitudes/work behaviors employers expect across industries from job applicants/employees. As a result of this work, the financial sector partnership has served over 130 unemployed/underemployed individuals over the last 2 years. Of those who successfully completed the financial services academy training, they have seen a 64% placement rate in careers within financial service organizations across central Iowa.

 In partnership with her involvement with Central Iowa Works, Kerry has spent time educating legislators at the state as well as the national level on the growing skills gap within the state in order to ensure continued funding and support is provided.

Kerry is dedicated to positioning the Des Moines community as an attractive, desirable location for attracting candidates of all backgrounds and cultures. Because of this, I strongly recommend her for the 2014 class of 40 under 40!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Souhrada
AVP – Human Resources
Principal Financial Group