

January 8, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

As a former *Business Record* "Women of Influence" honoree, I am excited to nominate an up and coming leader in our community for the 40 Under 40 Class of 2015, Mandi McReynolds.


Mandi is the Director of Community Engagement and Service-Learning at Drake University, where she has built a nationally-recognized program in her three years in this role. Due to Mandi's strong leadership, Drake recently received two prestigious national honors in recognition of community service by students, faculty and staff (The Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification and the 2014 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll). These honors reflect nearly 300,000 hours of service, worth millions of dollars each year, performed in collaboration with more than 100 non-profit organizations and schools, most of which are in central Iowa. This would not have happened without Mandi's focus, drive, and unwavering commitment to strengthen the relationship between Drake and the communities of which the institution is a part.

Mandi has secured over \$200,000 in grant resources to build capacity for community engagement and service-learning. She began the program with herself and two students. Today, the office is part of External Affairs in the Office of the President and has 4 staff members, a fulltime AmeriCorps Vista member, and 8 student staff who work endlessly to connect Drake to the Community. Under her leadership, this team has empowered Drake to increase its service-learning and community engagement course offerings by 40%. The courses provide students course credit as faculty design curriculum to strategically align with experiential learning. At 31, Mandi is a highly sought after national expert in her field and recently authored a book for community engagement and civic engagement leaders.

Mandi "walks the talk" with her own personal commitment to community involvement as well. She serves on the board of the Des Moines Social Club, is a member of United Way's Women's Leadership Connection as well as a member of the Advocacy Committee. She is also a board member of Dress for Success Des Moines and serves on the Strategic Planning Committee. Mandi has served in several volunteer roles for the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service, Everybody Wins! Iowa, and, Children and Families Urban Ministries.

In 2014, Mandi was unanimously selected by Drake's President and his senior leadership team, to be the University's nominee for the Greater Des Moines Leadership and she will graduate in the Class of 2015.

I have had the opportunity to work with many talented up and coming leaders over my career, and Mandi is among the very best at what she does. It is my hope she is seriously considered as a member of the 40 Under 40 Class of 2015.

Sincerely,  
  
Shannon Cofield  
Senior Advisor External Affairs  
Office of the President