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**Iowa Mentoring Partnership**

Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service

200 East Grand Ave. Des Moines, IA 50309

To Whom it may Concern:

Please allow this correspondence to serve as my unconditional support for Zach Smith and the work his doing with the She’s Up and Man-Up Iowa Program.

Over the last year and a half I’ve had the privilege of getting to know Zach and the work he is doing on behalf underserved and at risk young men and women. Candidly, when a co-worker recruited me to become a mentor with Man-up Iowa I was somewhat skeptical. Zach’s enthusiasm and passion, however, is nothing short of contagious.

Under Zach’s leadership, Man-Up Iowa has made tremendous progress. The mental health component of the program has become invaluable. While She’s-Up and Man-Up Iowa are based in the Des Moines public schools, they have gone beyond those parameters to actively seek opportunities to work with other community outreach programs. Zach has also done an incredible job in recruiting and engaging local corporate support. This progress, however, is both a triumph and tragedy. Triumph in that the programs have unquestionably helped scores of young men and women recognize the importance of family, setting goals, making sound decisions and perseverance. But a tragedy in that there are so many more kids that we just can’t reach because of the lack of available resources. And the kids we can’t reach are of particular importance me.

I am prosecuting attorney, currently assigned to the Major Offense Bureau of the Polk County Attorney’s office. The defendants I prosecute commit the most heinous offenses in our community. Sadly, many of those defendants come from the same environment, broken homes, and generational dysfunction as the kids that She’s Up and Man-Up Iowa help on a daily basis. Under Zach’s leadership, these programs have recognized that early childhood intervention is the best way to help young men and women from becoming yet another statistic in our criminal justice system.

The people who make up She’s Up and Man-Up Iowa come from various backgrounds. Some of us have dedicated of lives to public service, while other work in the private sector. We are blue collar workers, as well as white collar workers. We are most importantly, however, dedicated to seeing young men and women succeed despite setbacks, challenges, and adversity. And I credit Zach with bringing together those resources to accomplish that common goal.

Should you have any additional questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact me.