May 15, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my pleasure to write on behalf of Kelsey Cervantes for the 2019 Meredith Emerging Woman of Influence. Kelsey is one of those wonderful board members who truly gives their time, talent, and treasure to Orchard Place and is an emerging leader who continues to go above and beyond to help further our impact in the community.

Currently Kelsey gives of her time by being an active member of the board of directors for the Orchard Place Foundation, which oversees the fundraising activities for Orchard Place. Kelsey accepted her board position very early in her career after college, something that we do not always see happen in the nonprofit sector. To have an up and coming young professional want to contribute at a such high level truly spoke to the type of person that is Kelsey. She contributes to board projects and giving campaigns along with constantly working to connect our staff with opportunities in the community. One such opportunity was a recent partnership with Raising Cane’s, a new restaurant chain in West Des Moines. At a community meeting Kelsey came in contact with Raising Cane’s marketing manager who mentioned they were looking for a nonprofit to partner with for their grand opening event where 100% of the sales from that day would be donated to the organization. Kelsey shared with her information about Orchard Place and our work with youth mental health services in Iowa and while Raising Cane’s could have picked any of the hundreds of organizations in Des Moines, they picked Orchard Place, thanks to Kelsey. The partnership resulted in an opening day event that raised over $6,000 for Orchard Place along with sharing our mission and services with hundreds of hungry diners.

Along with giving of her time, Kelsey continues to give generously of her talent to our organization. While a large amount of nonprofit board members tend to be CEOs or senior level staff, having someone newer in their career, like Kelsey, means we do not only benefit from her connections but her drive to contribute something that not all senior level staff have - the time to donate their talents outside of board meetings. Constantly we have reached out to Kelsey to help with marketing ideas and graphic design work that Orchard Place staff are unable to complete, and Kelsey continues to amaze us with wonderful and creative designs that ensure that our organization looks polished and professional. On top of it all, she does this as a pro-bono service for Orchard Place where, like many nonprofits, we are faced with tight marketing budgets and receiving quality marketing pieces are worth so much to us. Kelsey also recently started a side company that provides marketing assistance to other nonprofits at a much reduced rate as a way to continue to give to her community.

Harold S. Geneen once said, “Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in action,” and Kelsey fits this concept very well as she is one of those emerging young professionals in the Des Moines community that can sometimes go unnoticed due to her reserved nature. In reality, once she is engaged with an organization, she gives all that she can to provide support and guidance to help make a deep and lasting impact. We are so very fortunate to have Kelsey as a part of the Orchard Place team, and I truly believe she is very deserving of this award.

Sincerely,

Andrea Wright  
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