



25011 Ridge Road
Adel, Iowa 50003

May 20, 2019

Dear Woman of Influence Review Committee Member:

There are so many aspects of Jessica Nelsen that are important to convey in nominating her for the Meredith Emerging Woman of Influence Award. For many when they consider the women who have helped shape their lives, they first think of those who paved the way years before them — a more senior leader, generally. In recent years, I've recognized that investing time with younger women has provided insights, challenged my perspectives, and compelled me to take actions I wouldn't have ever considered. Jessica Nelsen is at the top of the list of women — regardless of age — who have had a profound impact on so many lives in our community through her career as a nonprofit leader focused on serving people who are struggling across our state. She has been a highly effective advocate for women and children.

I know Jessica through her leadership as mission director and interim executive director for Susan G. Komen Greater Iowa, where I served on the board of directors from 2012-2018. During this time, the organization successfully merged multiple affiliates into the statewide organization it is today serving all Iowa counties, plus additional counties in South Dakota, Illinois and Nebraska. It is not an exaggeration to state that without Jessica's unwavering commitment and vision, Komen Greater Iowa would not be as effective in helping save lives through our statewide community programs and national research initiatives. Jessica exhibited quiet strength during the transition years that kept the staff effectively working together as a team during leadership changes that would have been extra challenging without her constant, steadying influence and positive focus on what the organization was working toward.

Jessica is not a person who must dominate the room. She intentionally makes space for everyone participating to raise their points of view. Yet, Jessica often steps in with just the necessary opinion or information set in order to guide a group to the decision that best serves our mission. Time after time, I've witnessed her subtle, powerful ability to influence grounded in her conviction and principles. She has a rare ability to paint the vision, set a clear path toward progress, and rally others to join her on the journey. It is truly inspiring how she makes everyone around her simply better.

Jessica continually asks herself, "Could I be doing more?" Recently, Jessica co-founded Sisterhood Soup, an organization focused on creating a community where women develop connections and have conversations leading them to be the best version of themselves and find their higher purpose. It's exciting to think about the ripple effects Sisterhood Soup — under Jessica's leadership — will have in helping women find their power to realize their dreams.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring forward Jessica Nelsen as a candidate for the Meredith Emerging Woman of Influence Award. Please reach out if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Lori Southard Howe

si|are marketing

Principal and Owner
515.707.3084