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November 14, 2008

Ms. Kathay Rennels
Mr. Randy Eubanks
Mr. Glenn E. Gibson
Larimer County Commissioners
Post Office Box 1190
Fort Collins, Colorado 80522

***Re: Larimer County Financial Literacy Summit – December 8, 2008
An Open Letter to the Larimer County Commissioners***

Dear Ms. Rennels, Mr. Eubanks and Mr. Gibson,

I believe that the attached email correspondence speaks for itself, but I felt compelled to respectfully share my displeasure with the “cold shoulder” Larimer County chose to extend me in response to my offer of assistance relating to the upcoming Financial Literacy Summit. It is nice to see that Larimer County is so flush with excess funds and ample resources that it can alienate those from the private sector who offer their assistance, expertise and resources.

At the Board of County Commissioners meeting on June 23, 2008, you unanimously approved the allocation of approximately \$19,000 in public funds to host a Financial Literacy Summit because “... *everyday the news reflects stories of people in financial difficulties that could have been prevented had they been more financially literate.*” I could not agree with this statement more, and as a passionate and nationally-recognized supporter of this cause, who happens to be based locally right here in Larimer County, I immediately reached out to offer my assistance, only to be greeted with an unwelcoming invitation and immediately dismissed because I am from the “private,” rather than the “public,” sector.

The intent of this upcoming event was certainly good, but why not take advantage of each and every resource available, regardless of whether the support comes from the public or private sectors? It is this “ivory tower” mentality that will continue to prevent those who exhibit it from attaining the maximum benefit for the people they supposedly represent. Much success has been attributed to public/private partnerships and cooperation in recent years, and Larimer County’s resistance in this matter is dumbfounding not only to me, but numerous others in our community. Below are several of the more than 75 comments I received back after forwarding the attached email to other fellow Larimer County citizens seeking their input (I will also post the others on my website and blog shortly):

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"Good, well-written, and fair response. This is the way a lot of higher-education (and secondary K-12 education acts). It's the ivory tower and again: "Once you eliminate profit as a motive, all that's left is turf."

- Local Attorney

"I have read this correspondence twice, and the content of Ms. Kubin's correspondence angers me and saddens me all at the same time. It upsets me that she obviously did not take the time to learn about you, and to fully understand how beneficial your partnership would be. I feel like she quickly threw the "vendor" label on you, and then dismissed you. It is so frustrating that FOX News will have you come to NYC to learn from you, but folks in our own backyard ignore a wonderful opportunity."

- Local Educator

"This is very disappointing to read. What a fantastic opportunity Larimer County missed! Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident."

- Local Business Leader

"I liked your response. What a dork. But don't you know, that's the idiocy and unfairness we are facing from much of the public sector who is supposed to be looking out for us."

- Local Rancher

As you can see, other citizens are also disappointed in how Larimer County chose to handle this situation, and obviously this is not an isolated incident. As one of the comments above states, it is certainly ironic that every national television network has had me as a guest to discuss my financial literacy project and initiatives, but my own community event, supported by public funds, was so unwelcoming.

The "Financial Illiteracy Epidemic" that is sweeping this nation is such an important and worthwhile cause, yet until recently, it has received very little attention. I have worked tirelessly conducting research, collecting data, developing relevant content and curriculum, and using my platform and credibility to bring a new awareness and focus to this issue, and in the end, the successful solution in combating this problem will require cooperation of both the public and private sectors.

I hope that Larimer County will choose to respond differently in the future when approached with an offer of support from one its constituents, regardless of whether it comes from the private or public sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Braun Mincher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Braun Mincher

BM/cmr