

Dear Ed Munson and azfamily 3TV CBS 5 -

My name is Gaill Blackburn and I am the District 10 Director of Little People of America (LPA). I am also the average-height Mom of a beautiful 20 year old who happens to have Achondroplasia (the most common form of dwarfism).

On behalf of the disability group, Little People of America (LPA), I feel that I must call attention to the highly offensive comments on your azfamily 3TV CBS 5 Facebook post dated August 29, 2017:

https://www.facebook.com/arizonasfamily/photos/a.456562782013.240397.145184572013/10154861361702014/?type=3&hc_ref=ARRd9NHoHOHMASL8nTZmBP4j0paB--rMihSDbH9B-xIP-8MWC70PAV0U4nK-D1GImzw&pnref=story.unseen-section

Do You Think An Event Called 'Extreme Midget Wrestling' Is Offensive? The controversial competition in Chandler: <http://bit.ly/2wIDrLO>



In my heart I would like to believe that your station was merely trying to promote awareness to your television interview with our LPA Chapter President and Disability Attorney, Ed Myers, but the REALITY is that you provided an incredibly public platform for indignant, vile, bigots whose only goal was to spew HATRED for Little People everywhere...

Here are just a few highlights of comments on the azfamily 3TV CBS 5's poll on Facebook -

- "Please don't reproduce... We need more men in the world, not whatever your seed is."
- "I always order midget hookers. Gotta keep em paying their bills to avoid collecting SSI."
- "I have a midget at home... She's a fidget spinner... A midget spinner. Lol"
- "She is so short she can use a fidget spinner as a sit and spin."
- "Lollipop Grappling??? Midget Mat Madness!!!"
- "I say we stick with the loophole... don't consider him a human, just consider it an act... we're in the clear."
- "You know, like The Flying Wallenda's. A lot of those guys died and they never sued anybody."
- "Do I have to pay full price or "Half" price for a ticket. Will it be a full match or "Half" a match..."
- "I WANT ONE FOR XMAS."
- "I rather enjoy dwarf tossing."
- "Who cares? I want one."

And here are more highlights of comments on the Phoenix New Times paid ad on Facebook -

- "Can we see a preview of these midgets? Hot chicks??"
- "Extreme naked women midget wrestling"
- "It wanna mud wrestle with midget's"
- "Ill go if the Mariachis are midgets too"
- "Extreme Midget Wrestling!! How could you contain yourself!!!!"

If you were a Little Person, or the average-height parent of a Little Person, tell me - would you not take offense to such comments?

If you were a Little Person, would you truly feel SAFE attending the City of Chandler's Rockin' Taco Street Fest on Saturday, September 16, 2017 having read all these comments (especially if you were a female Little Person)?

Our objection with your azfamily 3TV CBS 5 Facebook post dated August 29, 2017 is that you were asking the WRONG audience... You were asking people who knew ABSOLUTELY NOTHING about the situation for their opinion! All's they knew was that there were Little People out there who had no problem being called "midgets" and if the "midgets" didn't care then why should they?

Here are just a few of the FACTS:

- The "extreme midget wrestling" group has nothing to do with our LPA organization which serves thousands of Little People;
- The M-word dates back to 1865 and the "freak show" era when Little People were put on public display for curiosity;
- Over 90% of Little People in our LPA organization are 'highly offended' by the use of the M-word;
- Calling a Little Person the M-word is exactly the same as calling an African American the N-word;
- Calling a Little Person the M-word is exactly the same as calling mentally challenged the R-word;
- 1 visit by a group of "extreme midget wrestlers" can completely rewind a lifetime of progress for the Little People community.

We would like to challenge azfamily 3TV CBS 5 to go the extra mile and consider reaching out to the families in LPA who live this every single day and ask for THEIR opinions on whether or not an event called 'Extreme Midget Wrestling' is offensive... Consider asking:

- new parents of dwarf babies who were told by uneducated doctors that their children may not live;
- parents of dwarf children who are scared to death to send their kids off to school for fear of being bullied;
- dwarf teens feeling lost when all their average-height friends begin dating and they are left behind;
- dwarf young adults just trying to fit in and make their way in a world not built for them (no more school 504's or IEP's);
- dwarf professionals in the workforce who have to work twice as hard to prove they can do the same job often for less pay.

Despite all of those hardships, you will find that most little people are incredibly well-adjusted and lead amazingly full lives! So what difference does the "M-word" really make? ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD...

Think of the worst thing that anyone could ever possibly call you, and imagine how you would feel if THOUSANDS of people were doing that with complete and utter disdain... How would that make you feel?

Please view the September 5th, 2017, **Arizona PBS Cronkite Newscast** interview with: LPA Chapter President and Disability Attorney Ed Myers, LPA District Director and average-height Mom Gaill Blackburn, and LPA District Teen Coordinator Britney Blackburn. **We think you will find the "Extreme Midget Wrestling" owner's perspective both interesting and somewhat alarming...**

The interview can be viewed here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8GgoX_tJJO

(You can go to the 17 minute marker for the story)

Attached is a photo of my daughter and myself so that you can see that we are real people with real feelings - and there are thousands of families just like us. I have also attached two other opinions:

- An incredible heartfelt blog post by Erin Parsons - the average-height Mom of an adorable 5 year old little boy who also happens to have Achondroplasia;

- A poignant public Facebook post by **Matt Roloff of TLC's "Little People Big World"**, and the subsequent online "Celebrity News" article "MATT ROLOFF SLAMS AZ'S EXTREME MIDGET WRESTLING EVENT AS GRANDPA-TO-BE WAITS FOR SECOND GRANDCHILD'S BIRTH."

You can also see LPA's stance on the "M-word" at a National level:

LPA issues statement to abolish the "m" word -

http://www.lpaonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=198:the_m_word&catid=19:site-content&Itemid=176

Most sincerely - Gaill Blackburn



Gaill Blackburn
LPA District 10 Director

**District 10, Little People of America
AZ, CO, NM, UT, WY, & El Paso TX**



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