

September 12, 2017

Dear City of Chandler DCCP “Rockin’ Taco Street Fest” Sponsor,

As you may (or may not) be aware, the Arizona Chapters of Little People of America, (LPA), have taken issue with the City of Chandler, the Downtown Chandler Community Partnership, (DCCP), and the HDE Agency for the usage of “**Extreme Midget Wrestling**” at the upcoming Rockin’ Taco Street Fest on September 16, 2017 in downtown Chandler. As a sponsor of this event, we feel you have the right to understand how your name has been negatively impacted...

Little People of America, Inc., is a national nonprofit organization that provides support and information to people of short stature and their families; and serves more than 6000 members across the United States and internationally. LPA advocates to abolish the use of the word “midget” which was never coined as the official term to identify people with dwarfism, but was created as a label used to refer to people of short stature who were on public display for curiosity and sport. Today, the word “midget” is considered a derogatory slur. Whether the intention of the user of the word is used to bully and to demean, or just as a synonym for small, our collective experience shows us that language has the power to cause permanent damage to one’s self-esteem and identity.

LPA would like to explain to your our perspective without the slant of the City of Chandler, DCCP, HDE, or the media. When we first saw the Phoenix New Times paid advertisement “**Extreme Midget Wrestling**” we immediately contacted City of Chandler ADA Coordinator, Warren White, with our concerns and were completely shocked at the lackadaisical attitude by the City who has a fiduciary duty to its citizens. The City swept the issue under the rug by hiding behind the DCCP and claiming “limited ability to influence.” Upon further investigation, we found that several City of Chandler officials sit on the DCCP Board of Directors or are Ex Officio Members. Trickle down... Then the DCCP said it was on the HDE Agency who said it was “pre-paid”... Trickle down... Upon further investigation, we found that it was actually sponsored by Deadlift Brew & Shakes? Trickle down...

ONLY until we had to resort to media involvement did the City of Chandler make efforts to remove the word “MIDGET” from Rockin’ Taco Street Fest advertisements much too late... By that time irreparable damage had been done. While we are appreciative that the name of the wrestling event has been taken down from DCCP advertising and social media, we can cite too many examples of where it still does appear, thus creating a hostile and dangerous environment for Little People to attend. We have numerous examples of hostile, bigoted and sexist comments referring to Little People as “midgets” (and quite frankly even less than human) that we have found related to this event. We also ask that you watch the Cronkite News broadcast air date of September 5, 2017. <https://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2017/09/06/little-people-group-says-wrestling-event-chandler-hurts-discriminates/>

Many Little People have expressed that given the numerous hostile comments on multimedia, they fear for their safety and will not be attending the Rock'n Taco Festival. Please see the comments online here - <http://azlpa.org/petition-2017/chandler-documentation>. We can document one instance where a month after a similar type of event a Little Person was grabbed and thrown resulting in serious injuries.

We believe that your wrestling event will promote a similar atmosphere of hatred and bigotry (as it already has online) that will lead to some Little Person getting injured if they attend the event, and even perhaps afterward. We have asked the City of Chandler to consider terminating this “wrestling event” and have an online petition you can view at: <http://azlpa.org/petition-2017>.

We have also mentioned to the City of Chandler and the DCCP that we are more than willing to offer sensitivity training on this matter to ensure this never happens again. (Unfortunately all declined).

Please see the attached small sample of hate comments against Little People resulting from your advertising. As mentioned above, full documents can be viewed online at <http://azlpa.org/petition-2017/chandler-documentation>.

We hope that you, as a Sponsor, will sign our online Petition, supporting our efforts to educate the public to NOT use the “M-word”, and that you will reconsider sponsoring this event in the future... The City of Chandler, the DCCP, and the HDE Agency could have simply apologized from the very beginning and worked with LPA on resolving the issue, sensitivity training, etc. but they chose to sweep it under the rug and play the blame game down the line. This has impacted a community that fully intends to boycott City of Chandler, DCCP, HDE events and those of their sponsors... What disability group will be next?

On the Rockin’ Taco Street Fest website they thank their Sponsors stating: "Meaningful partnerships make all the difference in the success of any festival. Thank you for helping to make a positive impact in your Community".

There are over 5000 members in Little People of America national organization who would think differently about the above statement concerning the “POSITIVE IMPACT” of your affiliation with the City of Chandler, DCCP, HDE, and the Rockin’ Taco Street Fest.

If you would like to talk further, I can be reached at 480-331-7247 or by email at emyers62@gmail.com.

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THANK YOU SPONSORS

MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE SUCCESS OF ANY FESTIVAL. THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT IN YOUR COMMUNITY.



HATE AGAINST LITTLE PEOPLE RESULTING FROM YOUR ADVERTISING

"Please don't reproduce... We need more men in the world, not whatever your seed is." "I rather enjoy dwarf tossing."
 "I always order midget hookers. Gotta keep em paying their bills to avoid collecting SSI." "I WANT ONE FOR XMAS."
 "I have a midget at home... She's a fidget spinner... A midget spinner. Lol!" "Lollipop Grappling??? Midget Mat Madness!!"
 "Do I have to pay full price or "Half" price for a ticket." "Will it be a full match or "Half" a match..."
 "Can we see a preview of these midgets? Hot chicks??" **HATE** "Extreme naked women midget wrestling!"
 "It wanna mud wrestle with midget's" **DISGUST** "Extreme Midget Wrestling!! How could you contain yourself!!!!"
 "I'll go if the Mariachis are midgets too" "I imagine it is difficult finding employment as an itty bitty man or lady."
 "They're just mad because they have to smell farts all day." "When is the festival? I wanna go get a midget."
 "Midgets are here for the entertainment of normal people. Period." **CONTEMPT** "BLTG midget wrestling!"
 "Sensitive little buggers." "Best naughty movie I ever owned! Period." "How about we call them pocket people!"
 "I'm ok with Gnome or Elf." **HOSTILITY** "Makers of cookies and the guardians of ones lawn are noble callings."
 "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." "Who cares? I want one."