



October 30, 2019

Corrie Stephens, Chair
Museum Alliance of Rapid City
222 New York Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Mayor Steve Allender
300 6th Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Dear Mayor Allender,

We hope this message finds you well. On behalf of the Governance Committee of the Museum Alliance of Rapid City's Board of Directors, we are writing to inform you that one of our members, Hayley Helms, recently resigned for personal reasons. Ms. Helms served the Journey Museum and Learning Center well, both as a dedicated volunteer and as a member of the Museum Alliance board. We will miss her and wish her all the best.

As you'll recall, Ms. Helms was one of your 2018 appointees to the Museum Alliance board. Please accept this letter as formal notice of her resignation as well as a request that you appoint her successor at your earliest convenience. Per the Museum Alliance's bylaws, the replacement you choose will serve until December 31, 2019. At that time, we will again request that you re-appoint that individual to a full, three-year term.

We would like to respectfully recommend that you appoint Valeriah Big Eagle as Ms. Helms' replacement on our board. As you may know, Ms. Big Eagle is an impressive and engaged member of the Rapid City community. She serves as the diversity outreach and engagement coordinator at South Dakota State University's Native American Nursing and Education Center here in town. She is an emerging Native leader and a brilliant, outspoken critical thinker who stands to lend strong perspectives to our board. Ms. Big Eagle has met with members of our board and staff, toured the Journey Museum & Learning Center, asked thoughtful questions about the parameters of board service and the Museum Alliance's vision, and has agreed to accept your appointment immediately, should you choose to make it.

Appointing Ms. Big Eagle to our board would make a major contribution to a new diversity initiative that our board has recently undertaken. Working before and since Ms. Helms resigned, we have developed a framework for diversifying our membership in order to make it more representative of the Rapid City community. Towards this end, we are actively recruiting potential board members of different ages, backgrounds, and professions.

As our first benchmark, we aim to increase the Native American representation on our board to, at minimum, match Native peoples' share of the population of Rapid City. In other words, within the next two years we hope to recruit between two and four Native leaders (roughly 12-25%) to our board. After reaching that benchmark, we will work to sustain Native representation on the board while recruiting directors from other walks of life.

Should your appointment go forward, Ms. Big Eagle would be the second enrolled tribal member on our board. Beyond her cultural background, however, Ms. Big Eagle stands to lend much-needed insights to our work. As a student, a young mother, and a professional working in outreach and engagement, she will become a vital asset as the Museum Alliance and the Journey Museum and Learning Center serve the Rapid City community and our guests. We hope you'll agree.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Corrie Stephens". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Corrie Stephens