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Chris Winkler's Testimonial in Support of Palmyra Public Schools

I give my full support to keep Palmyra public schools open. I ask you indulge me if I give you some background on my family, as I believe it will help you understand why I support keeping the schools open. My wife and I have owned property in Palmyra for over 10 years. We initially wanted a place to relax and enjoy country life on the weekends as a get away from our home in Oak Creek and where my business is located. Moreover, my brother, Gary Winkler; owns the adjoining property and this was an additional reason we wanted to be in Palmyra. We initially enjoyed the property and the community of Palmyra for just that – a place to be together in a great rural setting to get away on the weekends where we could ride horses and relax.

As the years went by, we started visiting our Palmyra property more frequently and staying longer – weekends began sooner and ended later; we often strung entire weeks together. The pull of the country, the town and people drew us closer to Palmyra and each other. Indeed, my grandchildren seem more at home in Palmyra than Oak Creek. They have learned valuable lessons like doing chores outside before heading off to school or activities and taking care of animals they love and respect. For me, being in Palmyra has brought some balance to my life. As the owner of a successful business, the demands make it so there is sleep but not much rest. When I'm in Palmyra, I rest.

Since we were so emotionally invested in our Palmyra property, my wife and I started investing in our property by building a barn, a riding arena, installing new fencing and making our property a permanent place my family would enjoy for generations. These projects prompted us to start wondering whether we should move our large family to Palmyra. Two years ago we decided to do just that and we made plans to build a home that would house my wife, my three daughters and our grandchildren-two of which my wife and I have custody of. It's a house full! So, we made plans to build our family home and work began.

Our house in Palmyra is scheduled to be completed at the end of this month. Well, that's what the builder tells me... We hope it's done by then. Even so, we plan on having our first Christmas dinner at our new house even if that means spreading a table cloth on the floor and eating off of paper plates, which after having pie would lead to playing board games and coloring with my grandchildren by the fireplace. I'm thinking it will be one of our favorite Christmases. While my family background and love of Palmyra is nice, it doesn't really tell you my motivation to write to you now. So I will tell you – it's my grandchildren.

When Denise and I made the decision to build our family home in Palmyra, we thought of the life we wanted for our grandchildren. What kind of community and place would they grow up in? We chose Palmyra because of what it is and stands for – the values country life teaches, the sincerity and caring of neighbors and community schools where the kids know each other. Keeping Palmyra schools open is about ensuring my grandchildren and the children of Palmyra are happy and fulfilled in schools that are part of their community.

The threat of dissolving the school district threatens the very foundation of why we want to live in Palmyra. I understand the financial reality of what the district faces and the hard

choices the board must confront. I own a business. I can count. What can I do beyond expressing my feeling of support to you? I can help by giving.

I raised my family to this point in Oak Creek. I have built a successful business in Oak Creek as well. For over 15 years I have contributed money and devoted resources to the Oak Creek schools by gifting the transportation of the Oak Creek High School Robotics team to tournaments around the country. We also support the local baseball and football teams with donations and donate resources to the Milwaukee County Zoo for the making of the "Beasties" statues at one of my warehouses. Moreover, my wife and I donate annually to causes that help others. I say this not to brag but to let you know that my record of support to my community is grounded in financial donations and contributing resources to community organizations. I pledge to do the same in Palmyra – my new home.

I want to help the current financial situation the district faces. My wife and I will make a pledge to donate money to the district in the form of a challenge grant to inspire others in the community to help our schools stay open. Moreover, we pledge to contribute meaningful annual support to the boosters and school district for the maintenance of programs and capital needs to make sure our kids have top notch schools and programs. I'm hoping this spurs others to consider helping so that the entire community is engaged in saving the school district.

Sincerely,



Chris D. Winkler
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8060 S. Long Meadow Drive
Oak Creek, WI 53154