



For Immediate Release

April 7, 2009

**Statement of LPA regarding the episode of the “Celebrity Apprentice”
that aired on April 5, 2009**

Little People of America is a national non-profit support organization for people with dwarfism and their families. As a membership organization representing thousands of people with dwarfism around the country, we are deeply disappointed with the episode of “Celebrity Apprentice” that NBC aired on April 5, 2009. Over the past few decades, representation of people of short stature on television, in print and on film has made significant progress. In years past, people with dwarfism were most often portrayed no better than a side show attraction at a traveling carnival or the court jester. Today, television, print and film often portray people of short stature as fully developed characters, not defined by their appearance. In addition, increased awareness has challenged and limited use of language such as the word “midget,” considered highly offensive by the dwarfism community.

Working against efforts to create a more tolerant, inclusive community, the April 5 episode of “Celebrity Apprentice” repeatedly used the word “midget” and portrayed people with dwarfism more as objects than as individuals. Some of the cast members saw nothing wrong with portraying people with dwarfism as items of ridicule to make people laugh and create a “buzz” for a “viral video” project. Even though, on more than one occasion, contestants recognized that people with dwarfism find the word “midget” highly offensive (Donald Trump, Jr. even raised the question of terminology), the word continued to be used, including by celebrity role members and a mother of four. The word was also included in the title of the final product created by one “Celebrity Apprentice” team (the Athena Team). More than eighty percent of people with dwarfism have average height parents and siblings. Like other disabilities, dwarfism can impact any family, making the behavior of contestants on “Celebrity Apprentice” all the more upsetting and disappointing.

As part of the disabled population, people with dwarfism have worked hard to navigate social and physical barriers in order to become full participants and contributors to their communities. Today, people with dwarfism are employed as teachers, social workers, entertainers, lawyers, doctors and scores of other professions. In addition to working these professions, through the work of Little People of America and beyond, thousands of people with dwarfism are striving to positively impact all communities in accepting and embracing difference. In order to reach this goal, the community of people of dwarfism has been challenged with scores of social and physical barriers. We applaud the work of actors with dwarfism whose diligent work to advocate for better roles is helping the community navigate those barriers. Though we recognize the right



of all actors to pursue employment, we are saddened that roles demeaning people of short stature continue to be created as a gimmick to gain attention.

On April 5, rather than use an opportunity to present a positive portrayal of people with dwarfism, “Celebrity Apprentice” added another barrier through which the dwarfism community will be forced to navigate. It is the hope of Little People of America that, in the future, NBC, Mark Burnett Productions, Donald Trump and “Celebrity Apprentice” tear down walls of ignorance and discrimination rather than build new walls. We call on “Celebrity Apprentice” to partner with Little People of America, the dwarfism and the disability community in order to create a more inclusive community where all people are allowed to pursue opportunity without prejudice or discrimination.

About Little People of America

LPA is a non profit organization dedicated to advocacy and support for individuals of short stature. LPA strives to enhance the lives of its members and their families by providing services and programs that meet their needs. LPA provides information and support to individuals whose short stature is generally caused by one of the more than 200 medical conditions known as dwarfism.

Mission

LPA is dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with dwarfism throughout their lives while celebrating with great pride Little People’s contribution to social diversity. LPA strives to bring solutions and global awareness to the prominent issues affecting individuals of short stature and their families.

If you are upset with the Celebrity Apprentice episode that aired on April 5, call or contact these companies to let them know how you feel.

NBC
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112
212-664-4444



Mark Burnett Productions
310-903-5400
640 N Sepulveda Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90049
USA

ALL Detergent
Sun Products Corporation
Consumer Services
920 Sylvan Ave., 2nd Floor
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632
1-800-298-2408

Trump Organization
725 5th Avenue,
NY, NY 10001
Fax number 212-755-3230

For more information contact Gary Arnold, VP of Public Relations for Little People of America at 312-640-2199 or Joanna Campbell, Executive Director, at 714-862-4247.

LPA National Office:

Little People of America, Inc.,
250 El Camino Real, Suite 201,
Tustin, CA 92780
www.lpaonline.org
