



Laura Sussely-Pope



April 26, 2011

Lawrence Jacobs
Senior Executive Vice President and Group General Counsel
News Corporation
1211 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Jacobs,

I am writing to convey my heartfelt support for the critically important message of respect and dignity for our children and adults with intellectual disabilities in the new “R-word” PSA. News Corporation is to be commended for its vision and leadership in challenging the public to recognize the power of words and promote change. You are setting an amazing example for all other media to follow.

As the mother of a precious, gifted child with Down syndrome, not a day goes by that I do not hear the “R” word used in a way that was not initially intended (to designate a medical diagnosis). And most often, it is in the media, more precisely network television. And as hard as we, as parents, advocates, and organizations as well respected as the Special Olympics, try, we can’t change this without the support and proactive participation of the media and its influential and powerful voice.

I have been involved in advocating against this word from the time my child was born 10 years ago, working hard throughout my community and throughout social media so that this word could be seen as the hurtful language that it truly is. It is my hope and the hope of so many that I represent that one day it will be considered as inappropriate and socially unacceptable as other discriminatory, hateful words. You and other media can help make that a reality, and this PSA goes a long way toward making that happen! This PSA clearly illustrates that words have enormous power to hurt or heal, that language can evolve – that people can evolve – and that we all have a responsibility to speak out against injustice. As Dr. King wrote, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Your PSA brings this truth to life.

On behalf of myself, my child, and our many friends and fellow advocates, I thank you for your efforts to eradicate hurtful, demeaning language toward people with intellectual disabilities and I proudly endorse this PSA.

Sincerely,

Laura Sussely-Pope
Social Media Consultant
Attorney at Law