

Marilyn Balcombe, President & CEO
Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

I think the CHARACTER COUNTS! program is fantastic. It is a unifying set of values for the community. I first learned of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program when I began working at the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber 11 years ago. It just seemed to be ingrained in the community and I remember thinking how great it was that the City adopted the program. I also remember being a judge for one of the school contests on what CHARACTER COUNTS! means. It was great fun see how the kids interpret the CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars.

When I think of the CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars, I think about how important they are to the Chamber and to our business community. We could not do what we do without a strong sense of Trustworthiness, Respect and Responsibility. We believe that the strength of the business community relies on the strength and quality of the entire community. Being part of a CHARACTER COUNTS! community says a lot about what we stand for.

I recently got back from a week long course on Organizational Management and one of the classes was Ethics and it all came down to treating people with honesty, fairness, and respect, but most importantly to make sure that we identify what our own personal values are. I think we all try to live our lives in accordance with our values and the CHARACTER COUNTS! pillars provide an excellent framework for us to do so.

By fostering the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, the City of Gaithersburg provides an important service to our community. We need our institutions to lead by example and to help the community exhibit the values and behaviors that make Gaithersburg a great place to work, live, and raise a family.