

Dear members of the board and county staff,

My name is Heidi Keyes, and I am the founder of Puff, Pass & Paint, the first ever cannabis-friendly legal painting class in the world. I started my business in the beginning of 2014 at the cusp of legalization. I was working part-time as an apartment manager while achieving my dream of becoming an artist, selling my own work through galleries and commissions, and teaching others how to make art. When I started my company, I had a thousand dollars between my savings and checking accounts. I used \$600 of it to buy supplies for my dream, a business that combined two of my greatest loves: art and cannabis. I fully believed in the power of cannabis to encourage creativity, self-expression, and self-acceptance. It turns out that other people did too, because my classes started quickly filling up. I was able to get my own space, instead of holding events in my tiny kitchen, and I was able to legally expand my business throughout the state and across the country. Money was still tight, and things were still extremely difficult, but I was so proud and so happy to be living my dream.

Puff, Pass & Paint has been legally operating in Adams County for 3 years, in collaboration with our parent company Cannabis Tours, and we have never had a complaint of any nature: medical, disruptive, or legal. We have done our best to operate within the confines of the law that we were given while being one of the only safe spaces for people to legally consume, and learn about both cannabis and art, in the entire area. We provided jobs for dozens of people, encouraged creativity, supported veterans who were experiencing PTSD (and using cannabis and art as therapy), donated, and were involved with the LGBTQ community. To think of having to leave our current space, which we've worked SO hard on, crushes my soul. Our Puff, Pass & Paint space isn't just a business, it's a home for people who are looking for family, acceptance, and support.

We have already been hit hard with COVID, have had to put our business on hold for months, decrease classes significantly, and pause payments to myself and my business partners so that we could keep the business afloat and keep at least a few employees with income. The protectionist efforts of the county to charge exorbitant fees, on top of a lottery system, threatens to (and almost certainly will) shut down everything that I, and all of our staff, has worked for and built over the past 6 years. I've been here since the beginning, I have made valiant attempts to work with Adams County repeatedly, and I am asking you to consider that this is not the time to put more small businesses out of operation, and to give those of us that have shown willingness to cooperate and do things correctly a fighting chance. You may not hold the same views about cannabis and art that I do— that it is a healing, magical plant, and creativity is necessary to live a happy, fully-formed, vibrant life— but I hope that you can see that my business brings, at the very least, a much-needed place for people to legally consume a plant that Colorado makes millions of tax dollars off of per year.

I sincerely thank the county board of commissioners, and all of the staff, for their time and consideration. We do ask you to please consider provisions, such as the cannabis social equity guidelines passed by the state just today, that are inclusive for myself and the many other small businesses that would enable them to succeed in this currently difficult market.

Thank you for your consideration; I do sincerely hope that we will be able to continue working together.

Regards,



Heidi Keyes

Founder/President; Puff, Pass & Paint

