



May 11, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Benz School of Floral Design strives to embody quality and professionalism in educating its students so that they may succeed in the floral industry. It is the aim of the school to be the first choice for floral design and floral education. The Benz School embraces diversity of thought, innovation and creativity in the art of floral design and encourages collaboration between all levels of the floral industry and allied organization, community groups and related industries.

To better meet these aspirations, we have developed the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification. This certification was created to prepare the next generation of floral designers. Those with this certification have demonstrated an in-depth understanding of floral design principles and practices and are ready to begin a career in the floral industry.

At the Benz School of Floral Design, we believe individuals must possess an understanding of floral design history, flower identification, floral design basics, arrangement creation and duplications and flower business management principles to work in the floral design industry. Those who have taken this certification have proven their knowledge of the standards described above are more than qualified to work in the floral industry.

The floral design industry is a creatively stimulating and rewarding field, and those with the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification are prepared to be contributing members of the floral design industry.

Please do not hesitate of contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wm J McKinley".

Wm J McKinley AIFD, CFD, ICPF

Benz School of Floral Design

Benz Endowed Chair/Director/Senior Lecturer

Texas A&M University
Department of Horticulture
College Station, Texas 77843-
2133(979) 845-1699



JIMMY PARNELL
PRESIDENT

December 15, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

My name is Blake Thaxton and I serve as the Bee and Honey and Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Division Director for the Alabama Farmers Federation (AFF). AFF is Alabama's largest farm organization comprised of and representing agricultural and associate members in all 67 Alabama counties. We strive to protect and improve the ability of farmers engaged in production agriculture to provide a reliable supply of food through responsible stewardship of Alabama's resources.

Alabama's floral design industry represents more than just flower shops, it is comprised of greenhouse producers, retail florists, and wholesale or retail gardening. This is a niche area of agriculture in the state, and because of this, there are very limited available opportunities for students to learn the trade while in school. Current florists are in need of employees who do not require on-the-job training, which takes many hours and money to implement while still running a full-time floral design operation. Florists are obligated to undergo this in hopes of seeing a return on investment since there is not currently a certification that offers this level of skill and knowledge in Alabama CTE programs. This market is one that students are passionate about and interested in learning.

The Benz School of Floral Design is internationally known for teaching excellence in floral design and is trusted to produce successful floral designers and entrepreneurs across the globe. Making their Principles of Floral Design Certification available to Alabama's students will solve the roadblock that is hindering the ongoing lack in supply of workers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blake Thaxton", written over a white background.

Blake Thaxton

Bee and Honey and Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Division Director
Alabama Farmers Federation





405 Main Avenue • Northport, AL 35476 • 205/758-2100 • 800/223-2620

I am writing in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification and am urging the state of Alabama to allow for more students to graduate with this certification, so they are well prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation.

It is exciting to see educators moving our students in Alabama towards real-life educational experiences. The Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification proves the earner has the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in the floral design industry and a flower shop like Sue's Flowers. The quality flower arrangements that Sue's flowers designs for the Northport and surrounding areas is unmatched. So, when we look to hire additional employees, we must ensure they will be able to meet our standards and produce exceptional arrangements.

The Benz School of Floral Design is well respected within the floral design industry and is known for teaching the importance of classic elements and principles of design. They not only teach basics like design creation, but they include floral design history, flower business management, and flower identification. These are all topics students get motivated and excited to learn and will use when working within the industry too.

Students need this opportunity because oftentimes they essentially have no, or very limited training and knowledge of the industry when they are set out to the workforce. We are forced to endure the cost of training in hopes that an applicant is sincere and really willing to learn the skills necessary to make them an asset.

Sincerely,



June 5th, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

Arizona Family Florist is located in the heart of downtown Phoenix, AZ. The company has been serving its customers for over 15 years. AZFF designs and delivers floral arrangements valley wide to residences, businesses, schools, churches and funeral sites. We employ reputable designers that have a diverse background of training and experience.

Individuals who earn this certification have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of roles in the floral industry. The certification provides students the training necessary to become an accomplished florist in a very competitive industry.

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. This certification will truly help employers with staffing challenges. All too often, floral companies have many opportunities hiring great candidates. The issue many employers face is we find candidates that are passionate about the industry but they have no training or experience necessary to qualify themselves for the role. This certification process will help build a talent pool that will benefit the student, employer and consumer.

This certification is what the floral industry needs to help support the daily challenges floral companies face. An individual who has earned the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading organization, has proven they are more qualified for employment in the floral industry than an applicant without the certification. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to employers like me because it helps connect us to qualified candidates.

Sincerely,



Brent Denham

FLORAL BUYER

2050 South 16th Street | Suite 105 | Phoenix, AZ 85034

C 802.296.8378 O 802.707.6294 Ext. 8882 F 802.707.8300

azfamilyflorist.com  [azfamilyflorist](https://www.instagram.com/azfamilyflorist)

Family
of
Brands



2050 S. 16th St. Suite 105 Phoenix AZ 85034
602.507.4200 | azfamilyflorist.com

ARIZONA FLOWER M A R K E T

June 5th, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

Arizona Flower Market is located in the heart of downtown Phoenix, AZ. The company has been serving its customers for over 15 years. AZFM is the only floral company in Arizona that sells wholesale to the trade and the public.

Individuals who earn this certification have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of roles in the floral industry. The certification provides students the training necessary to become an accomplished florist in a very competitive industry.

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. This certification will truly help employers with staffing challenges. All too often, floral companies have many opportunities hiring great candidates. The issue many employers face is we find candidates that are passionate about the industry but they have no training or experience necessary to qualify themselves for the role. This certification process will help build a talent pool that will benefit the student, employer and consumer.

This certification is what the floral industry needs to help support the daily challenges floral companies face. An individual who has earned the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification, issued by a nationally recognized, industry-leading organization, has proven they are more qualified for employment in the floral industry than an applicant without the certification. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to employers like me because it helps connect us to qualified candidates.

Sincerely,

Jarrold Bennett



Jarrold Bennett
GENERAL MANAGER

2050 South 16th Street | Suite 105 | Phoenix, AZ 85034

C 602-622-3813 O 602-707-6294 F 602-707-6300

azflowermarket.com

Family
of
Brands



LUX
FLORIST



GENEVA

6 June 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

My name is Shayla Hyde and I am the Communication/Education Director for the Arizona Nursery Association. I have been here for a year and a half, and I oversee relations with our nurseries and other members as well as work with a committee of industry professionals and board of directors to plan a yearly education conference for 500 people and maintain the value of ANA membership. I have a strong agricultural background with a Bachelor's Degree in journalism from Arizona State University. Our non-profit organization is a staff of two: myself and the executive director who oversees the legislation on behalf of the green industry among a number of other duties helping this organization thrive. I assist her in these efforts and have learned a tremendous amount over the last 18 months. We are based in Tempe, AZ, but we represent businesses statewide, including a couple in Southern California.

Individuals who earn this certification have demonstrated possession of knowledge and skills vital to succeeding in a variety of roles in the floral industry. The most pertinent part of this certification is the preparation it gives individuals to go right into the industry and land on their feet. These students will be ahead in their knowledge within the floral industry and the hands-on experience that comes during/afterwards will be that much more effective with this background knowledge.

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. Not specifically our organization, but our nurseries struggle constantly with hiring young, willing and/or qualified individuals. Having a certification such as this one opens a door to the possibility of expanding that pool of individuals to choose from and helping businesses grow and thrive.

This reputable school has the tools know-how necessary to ensure students enter into the industry fully equipped with the knowledge needed to be successful in their floral careers. Floral is part of the nursery industry and educated workers are in substantial need at this time. Having more certifications that aid in that will only benefit this industry.

Sincerely,



Shayla Hyde
Arizona Nursery Association

Bloomington Florist and Gifts

2479 N Thomasville St.

Pocahontas, Arkansas 72455

870-892-2258

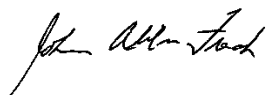
July 31, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification. My business, Bloomington Florist, has been an established florist in the current location for 22 years. We serve Randolph County and the surrounding area. Online services are also offered on our website.

During peak times, such as, prom, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, etc. it is necessary for me to hire 5 extra people to insure excellent customer service. An individual with the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification would already have background knowledge of floral design, flower identification, floral design basics, arrangement creation and flower business management. This is a fast paced customer service and customer loyalty oriented business. Individuals with this certification would enhance my ability to choose an employee that will provide the quality of service I demand at my business. It would allow me to connect to qualified candidates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Allen French". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

John Allen French



Nevada Farm Bureau Federation

2165 Green Vista Dr., Suite 205, Sparks, NV 89431
Phone: (775) 674-4000 or Toll-Free (800) 992-1106

August 16, 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

Nevada Farm Bureau is the largest agricultural organization in Nevada, representing farm and ranch families throughout the state. We are pleased to offer our endorsement for the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

As a statewide organization that's mission is to be the voice of Nevada's agriculture, we see the importance of this certification. At Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, we work to promote, preserve, protect, and resolve challenges in agriculture through advocacy, education, and leadership. This certification directly lines with our values seeing as it provides proper education in the floral design industry. With industry standards developed by the Benz School of Floral Design, I can be sure that the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification is relevant to the floral design industry.

I believe this certification will provide individuals with the skills needed to enter the floral design industry with confidence and succeed. Earners of this certification will be much more qualified than those who do not hold this certification. I would absolutely consider an individual who holds the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification for an interview or job with Nevada Farm Bureau Federation. I know that earners are dedicated to their work, willing to step outside of their comfort zone, and overall well-rounded individuals. I look for this in all employees and feel confident that earners will have all of these skills.

Agriculture is an extremely technical and wide-ranging industry. Those who have earned the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification have demonstrated that they come to you with qualified expertise.

Sincerely,

Doug Busselman

Executive Vice President



May 1, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by the Benz School of Floral Design.

The United Family is a chain of 96 stores in Texas and New Mexico that is 100. Out of the 96 stores, we have 60 full service departments that fulfill guest needs from weddings, sympathy, FTD, and event work. The days of finding trained and talented floral professionals is long gone. We believe we have to start training our future in some type of Prep school setting. Young adults find a passion at a young age and we have to foster that and lead them down a path of success. I believe that having this certificate for young professionals will open doors and give them a leg up.

Students who earn this certification have demonstrated that they have a mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in this industry, including:

- discover and analyze the history and significance of floral design
- determine identifying characteristics, common names and botanical names for flowers and other floral materials
- prepare, analyze and evaluate geometric designs with fresh and silk floral materials
- demonstrate proper post-harvest care of cut flowers
- plan and construct various types of corsages and boutonnieres
- create specialty floral arrangements for various occasions, such as wedding, holiday, bereavement, etc.
- critique and appraise various floral designs
- analyze fundamental management practices of managing a floral business

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. A student that has earned the Principles of Floral Design Certification that is endorsed by a nationally recognized association such as the Benz School has proven that they are more qualified for employment in the floral industry than a candidate without the certification and is more likely to be employed. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to employers as it helps connects us to qualified candidates and should be offered at all schools with courses in floral design.

We are a growing company that wants to hire knowledgeable team members that can give us a leg up. Having the Principles of Floral Design Certification will really help get them placed with a good florist.

Sincerely,
Bradley Gaines

Business Director of Floral

The United Family

United Supermarkets, L.L.C.
5801 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Lubbock, TX 79404
v: 806.472.5900
f: 806.472.5929



18 January 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Molly Pierce and I own and operate Farmhouse Roots, a flower farm offering bouquets and U-pick experiences located in Roswell, New Mexico.

I am writing in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification. This is a wonderful way to prepare the next generation of florists and others within the industry. The Benz School of Floral Design is the global leader in floral design education and therefore is the most qualified to certify students. The Benz School has produced countless floral designers and entrepreneurs and delivers continuing education opportunities for florists across the globe.

Individuals who earn this Industry Certification have demonstrated they have gone above and beyond the average student, and because of this, are the most likely to get hired when applying for jobs within the field. This opportunity also validates mastery of fundamental artistic elements and principles and their application such as:

- Arrangement Creation & Duplication
- Flower Identification
- Flower Business Management
- Floral Design History
- Floral Design Basics

It is important to offer this Industry Certification to students in New Mexico to create a pipeline of workers who are more qualified and skilled. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to this making the approval list.

Sincerely,

Molly Pierce

Farm Owner/ Designer

Agricultural Incubator Foundation

Where Agriculture, Education, Research and Innovation Meet

AIF & CIFT

**13737 Middleton Pike
Bowling Green, Ohio 43402**

January 31, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

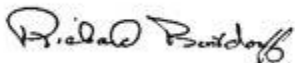
I am writing this letter in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

I am Richard Bostdorff, President of the Agriculture Incubator Foundation, an educational and research-focused organization promoting the development, advancement and appreciation of agricultural systems that are economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable. We are reaching out to individuals, entry-level specifically, providing them with hands-on skills and recordkeeping skills that will help them pursue positions in agriculture. Over the last 25 years we have had several young people working in our greenhouses producing floral arrangements and raising natural native plants for many events in the area. This certification validates mastery of fundamental artistic elements and principles and their application specifically in floral design. Individuals who earn this certification are more qualified and prepared to work in the floral design industry. With this certification, new hires will have more confidence than an individual without the certification. I feel that The Benz School of Floral Design Certification is a good start for any person that is seeking to become successful at home or at the workplace.

This certificate informs the employer that the individual wants to be successful at the workplace by taking steps to validate the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively, think critically and work with others resulting in an employee with greater interpersonal and customer service skills.

It is awesome to learn that there is another tool to help identify individuals who are career ready and want to make a mark in the work world. Personally, I would have been excited to have earned the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification. As an organization that works with individuals, offering skills for them to increase their quality of life and be more ready for employment, now is the time to adopt this certification.

Sincerely,



Richard Bostdorff
AIF President



December 15, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Melissa Gillespie and I own Bella Rose Flower Company in Oxford, Ohio. I am writing to express my support for the approval of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

As a business owner in the floral industry, I strongly support this certification because it covers standards and skillsets essential to floral design careers. I believe any student who earns this certification would have an advantage when pursuing a job role in our industry or when starting their own floral design business. I am especially excited that this certification tests a student's knowledge of business management and special event arrangements. Our industry requires strong and compassionate customer service and knowledge of special event functions, such as wedding or bereavement arrangements. It is wonderful to see the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification verifies a student is skilled in these areas.

I would be excited to see our local students graduate with this certification on their resume, and I know it will make them more marketable to employers in our industry. At Bella Rose Flower Company, we would be ecstatic to work with an individual who has earned this certification. I support approval of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification in Ohio. This certification is an excellent resource for our students and floral businesses state-wide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa Gillespie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Melissa Gillespie
Bella Rose Flower Co.
513.839.1352



August 18, 2022

Review Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to consider the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification for approval in Ohio. My name is Tanya Stover, and I am writing on behalf of Main Street Boutique & Coffee. This is a certification I wholeheartedly stand behind seeing it can make an impact in the lives of Ohio students, businesses, and the Ohio labor market.

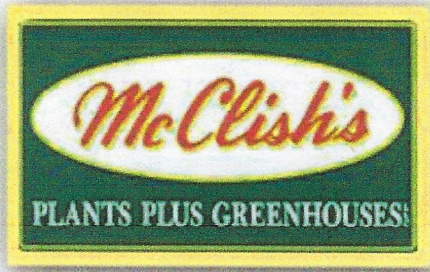
The Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification validates students' knowledge in subject areas including customer service, foliage and greenery identification, design creation, post-harvest care of flowers, and many other important aspects of the floral design industry. For students to have these skills when exiting high school and entering the workforce is something that is unmatched. I sometimes struggle to find qualified employees who are knowledgeable in the floral design industry. This certification would allow me to get connected with earners. Anyone who holds this certification and applies at Main Street Boutique & Coffee will be taken into consideration for an interview or even the job. I hold this certification to a high standard because I know earners are equipped with the knowledge and skill, they need to be successful in the floral design industry.

I look forward to seeing the implementation of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification in Ohio. With the gaps in the labor market, the need for well-trained and qualified employees is high. I know that this certification provides the training needed for a bright future in the floral design industry.

Sincerely,

Tanya Stover

Main Street Boutique & Coffee



McClish's Plants Plus Greenhouses
477 Bloomingburg-New Holland Rd.
Washington Court House, OH 43160

April 22, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Brent McClish and my family owns and operates McClish's Plants Plus Greenhouses in Fayette County, Ohio. We have been a family-owned operation for 38 years and are proud of the plant varieties we provide to our customers.

As a local business owner, I support the state approval of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification. This is a certification that can benefit all Ohio high school students with an interest in floral design and business management in the floriculture and/or horticulture industry. The gained knowledge from this certification will help students earn internships and future job roles. I am impressed that the certification includes the following industry standards:

- Flower identification, including foliage, greenery, and potted plants
- Flower business management and customer service
- Floral design elements, design techniques, and post-harvest care of flowers

Earning a certification is not an easy task. It takes commitment, passion, and perseverance. These are great traits for a high school student to have as they search for employment or a post-secondary degree. I hope to see the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification approved in Ohio so students in my local area and across the state can prove they have the skills needed to begin a career in the floral industry.

Sincerely,

Brent McClish

Brent McClish



*Teresa Godfrey AIFD, EMC
Immediate Past President
Southern Chapter, American Institute of Floral Designers
1701 Juniper Street, NW
Washington, DC 20012*

August 19, 2020

Dear Sir or Madam:

Hello, I am Terry Godfrey, representing the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD). AIFD was established as a non-profit in 1965 to recognize and promote the art of floral design as a professional career and to establish higher standards in professional floral design. There are nearly 1300 accredited members world-wide who are the forefront of the industry in presenting educational and design programs. AIFD national headquarters is in Baltimore, MD.

I recently completed my term as President for the Southern Regional Chapter of AIFD and am currently on the board for an additional year as the Immediate Past President. I was elected to this board in 2011 and have chaired various committees during my tenure. The primary mission of our chapter is to provide floral education and to support students and other individuals in our region interested in pursuing a career in the floral industry. One of our long-term goals has been to increase our participation with the FFA chapters within our region to support their students in any way we can.

At the national level, I have served as a Certified Evaluator/Judge for the association's professional certification exam (Professional Floral Design Exam or PFDE) and will be acting as PFDE coordinator in 2021. I am also the lead instructor for the Floriculture program at Anne Arundel Community College near Annapolis, MD. I worked with the college to become an Educational Partner with AIFD in 2015, which gives us the ability to grant AIFD's lower level certification.

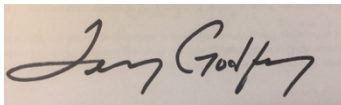
Our chapter is requesting that the State of Tennessee approves the Benz School of Floral Design's Principles of Floral Design certification. Having been developed and implemented by leaders in the floral industry, this school is one of the most respected in the US. The certification is sound and based on the elements and principles of design adhered to by the profession. In many ways, the certification is similar to that used by AIFD's certification exam. In order to pass the exam, students will need to demonstrate not just technical expertise and floral business management, but also a working knowledge of design elements and principles. Taken together, the certification and training required for that exam will encourage students to explore their creativity and excel in their art as it ignites a passion for their work.

This certification would be extremely beneficial for both the students and the industry. Because the Benz is a highly reputable institution in the industry, potential employers will know that the students are extremely well prepared, motivated and excited about their work. It is difficult to find good, qualified help in the floral industry. It is of great value to employers to hire a person with sufficient training and knowledge; it saves them the time and resources to train the new person. It is very risky to invest that time in a new hire only to find out that they lack motivation or are otherwise a poor fit. With the certification, the students will have the advantage over other potential hires and employers will have peace of mind in their new hires. It is truly a bonus to find young people with exceptional preparation. The certification will afford them an opportunity to start at a higher pay grade and have plenty of mobility as they gain experience. It is a bright future for the students and the floral industry.

If I had the opportunity to hire a young person with this certification, I would not hesitate to do so. I would feel at ease in my choice knowing that they have a solid educational foundation and the training to succeed in the industry.

We hope the State of Tennessee can complete the industry certification process. It would be a win-win situation for the students and the industry. And it would be essential to the future of the floral industry!

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "Teresa Godfrey".

Teresa Godfrey AIFD, EMC
Immediate Past President
Southern Chapter AIFD



Kim Kellum
Retail Operations Manager
Kroger Delta Division
800 Ridgelake Blvd.
Memphis, Tennessee 38120

August 18, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

Greetings! My name is Teresa Dickerson and I am the corporate affairs manager for Kroger Delta Division. We have 101 stores in five states, including West Tennessee. I am proud to work for a Fortune 25 company making great strides in the retail industry and in the communities we serve daily.

Kroger's motto is "Come for a job, stay for a career". Throughout the years, Kroger is credited for providing teenagers with their first real job. Many of those teenagers, stay with our company and work their way up through the ranks to highest levels of management, including division president.

When students have the Benz School of Floral Design - Principles of Floral Design Certification, it increases a student's likelihood of being hired in the Floral Department at Kroger, the largest florist in the country.

Again, a certification in floral design will help students receive much needed skill development to get ahead of the game to start a career in retail. Kroger Delta supports this effort to help educate our future workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Kellum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" at the beginning.

Kim Kellum
Retail Operations Manager
Kroger Delta Division



Brenda Blackburn AIFD, CFD, TCF
Immediate Past President 2019-2023
Tennessee State Florists' Association
2500 Pillow Drive
Columbia, TN 38401

August 19, 2020

Dear Department of Education:

The Tennessee State Florists' Association strives to elevate our industry through education. We partner with floral wholesalers, wire service agencies, novice & veteran florists, as well as FFA affiliated schools. It has been my pleasure working with students and faculty advancing education through scholarship the last decade. While TSFA along with the rest of the world is experiencing change, we hope for brighter days, and of course some semblance of return to normalcy. TSFA had been experiencing an increase in numbers, while our base is less than 100, that number would have doubled, and then some, in anticipation of our annual conference. Through certification classes and testing, we introduce students to the American Institute of Floral Designers pathway to advanced certification and accreditation. Our organization is based in the Middle Tennessee area, yet encompasses the entirety of the state, and includes the state of Alabama, with interest from surrounding states.

We are requesting that the State of Tennessee approves the industry certification Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design. This certification is extremely beneficial for both the students and the industry. The floriculture industry welcomes the certified students, ensuring a bright future in this artistic profession of the arts. - Make no mistake this is work and successful florists also require a business acumen. It is not just dollars and cents, so it makes sense to be educated in: IT, Branding, Marketing ... and so much more. Ask yourself - "What is MY Passion?" If your answer begins with "It has been my dream to create and design through the medium of Flowers..." then by all means pursue the dream, by becoming the best you can be, through education.

Having known of Buddy Benz, who was a friend of Cliff Mann-another trusted teacher of design theory, and people such as Jim Johnson, and Bill McKinley, I recommend the Benz School of Floral Design as an entity to certify students. I would also reserve rights to recommend other entities to be recognized through the state certification program.

Through agriculture, the floral industry is an essential. A State recognized-floriculture based curriculum, culminating in this state certification would be a win- win for the industry. I anticipate the State of Tennessee will complete the student industry certification process, approving Benz School as a certified partner. It would be a win-win situation for the students as well as the industry, and it would be essential to the future of the floral industry!

Sincerely,

Brenda Blackburn AIFD, CFD, TCF
Immediate Past President
Tennessee State Florists' Association

ALAN-RUSSELL, INC.

Keith Russell
3909 FM 390 N. Brenham, Texas 77833
979-203-2000
russellkeitha@gmail.com

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by Benz.

Students who earn this certification have demonstrated that they have a mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in this industry, they are willing to go the extra mile and are more prepared for a successful career in the real world. Students need as many tools in their toolbox as they can achieve as they face greater and greater competition.

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. A student successfully completing the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by a nationally recognized association such as Benz has proven that they are more qualified for employment in any industry dealing with plants, flowers or landscaping than a student without the certification. In turn, they are more likely to be employed. In addition, this is extremely valuable to employers as it helps to connect us to qualified candidates. Any appropriate CEV certification should be offered at all schools with courses in Agriculture/Floral Design.

Sincerely,



Keith A. Russell



May 1, 2018

Re: Principles of Floral Design Certification

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by the Benz School of Floral Design.

Devault Floral is a state of the art premier flower shop serving West Texas and its surrounding communities. Devault Floral has been in West Texas for over 35 years. We employ designers with expertise in floral design. While it is ideal for us to hire those who are already certified we can grow the designers as well. I find that if the employee has a history of school and experience with certification then they are more apt to be able to handle the demands of the advanced designs from Devault Floral and they would be employees that would be more long term employees. If I saw that someone had a certificate already I would give them an interview first and foremost.

Students who earn this certification have demonstrated that they have a mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in this industry, including:

- discover and analyze the history and significance of floral design
- determine identifying characteristics, common names and botanical names for flowers and other floral materials
- understand design principles and elements of floral design
- critique and appraise various floral designs

It is so important that we have a good number of skilled workers for current and future positions in this industry. A student that has earned the Principles of Floral Design Certification that is endorsed by a nationally recognized association such as the Benz School has proven that they are more qualified for employment in the floral industry than a candidate without the certification and is more likely to be employed. In addition, this certification is so valuable to employers as it helps connects us to qualified candidates and should be offered at all schools with courses in floral design.

Sincerely,

JLemons

Jenni Lemons
Owner
Devault Floral
3703 19th Street
Lubbock ,TX 79410
806.797.0727
jenni@devaultfloral.com



May 13, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification. As the owner of Landmark Nurseries, Inc., we operate 6 wholesale nurseries operations and 4 large growing operations across the state. I have been involved in the landscape, nursery and floral industries for over 30 years and have been a supporter of educating our young people, so they are prepared to enter the workforce. Our industry is in desperate need of qualified candidates for employment and I believe this program does just that. Those who earn this certification have demonstrated that they have a mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in the floral industry including:

- Understand the history of floral design by discovering the origins, development and significance of floral design.
- Identify flowers, floral design tools and analyze the use of various flowers, foliage and tools in designing floral arrangements
- Analyze the design elements, principles and geometric shapes in floral design, as well as their use in floral designer and use these skills to critique and appraise floral arrangements.
- Demonstrate the proper steps of post-harvest care of cut flowers and be able to identify the various tools and equipment use in post-harvest care of cut flowers.
- Identify, design and create various types of floral arrangements such as bereavement, specialty, wedding and holiday arrangements.
- Discuss the fundamental practices of managing a floral business, including tools and supplies, aspects of a business plan, pricing and marketing methods and safety practices involved in the floral industry.

I hope that you will consider making this certification available so additional individuals can take advantage of it in the future.

Kindest regards-

Jim Prewitt
CEO
Landmark Nurseries, Inc.

MEMORANDUM

February 8, 2021

Re: Support letter for Plant Science Certification

I am writing a reference letter to provide strong support for the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification. Such an endorsement requires some perspective to be credible. I have been employed as a teaching, research and extension educator for almost 30 years (13.5 at Texas A&M University, 5.5 at the University of Tennessee, and another 11 years back at Texas A&M) and have served in faculty appointments in both Horticultural Sciences and Agricultural Economics. During this time, I have performed a variety of roles including applied research and extension educational programming in horticultural marketing and management; teaching in the areas of agricultural and food marketing, strategic agribusiness management, and contemporary issues in horticulture and agribusiness; and development and coordination of the TAMU Master of Agribusiness (MAB) program. Currently, I hold the Ellison Chair in International Floriculture at Texas A&M University. It is from these perspectives that I offer my evaluation of the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

This certification is desperately needed from a floral industry perspective. There are so many florists that have gone out of business in recent years because of the lack of qualified floral designers to hire. With this certification in place, they would be able to hire students at a higher wage than they could if the individual was just starting in an entry-level position. Further, being certified in floral design gives the individual great mobility in terms of finding jobs. All of the key aspects of floral design are covered in this certification, making it a great stepping-stone for students rising up through the floral industry career ladder to someday being a Master Florist.

The Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification is a great tool to have and enhances the marketability of the student greatly. Should you need any further elaboration of these points, please feel free to contact me directly. Sincerely,



Dr. Charlie Hall
Professor & Ellison Endowed Chair in International Floriculture
Texas A&M University



May 1, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by the Benz School of Floral Design.

The United Family is a chain of 96 stores in Texas and New Mexico that is 100. Out of the 96 stores, we have 60 full service departments that fulfill guest needs from weddings, sympathy, FTD, and event work. The days of finding trained and talented floral professionals is long gone. We believe we have to start training our future in some type of Prep school setting. Young adults find a passion at a young age and we have to foster that and lead them down a path of success. I believe that having this certificate for young professionals will open doors and give them a leg up.

Students who earn this certification have demonstrated that they have a mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in this industry, including:

- discover and analyze the history and significance of floral design
- determine identifying characteristics, common names and botanical names for flowers and other floral materials
- prepare, analyze and evaluate geometric designs with fresh and silk floral materials
- demonstrate proper post-harvest care of cut flowers
- plan and construct various types of corsages and boutonnieres
- create specialty floral arrangements for various occasions, such as wedding, holiday, bereavement, etc.
- critique and appraise various floral designs
- analyze fundamental management practices of managing a floral business

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. A student that has earned the Principles of Floral Design Certification that is endorsed by a nationally recognized association such as the Benz School has proven that they are more qualified for employment in the floral industry than a candidate without the certification and is more likely to be employed. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to employers as it helps connects us to qualified candidates and should be offered at all schools with courses in floral design.

We are a growing company that wants to hire knowledgeable team members that can give us a leg up. Having the Principles of Floral Design Certification will really help get them placed with a good florist.

Sincerely,
Bradley Gaines

Business Director of Floral

The United Family

United Supermarkets, L.L.C.
5801 Martin Luther King Blvd.
Lubbock, TX 79404
v: 806.472.5900
f: 806.472.5929



Ueckert Flower Shop, Inc.

"Flowers for All Occasions"

TELEPHONE 865-2282
217 MATTHEWS • • • P.O. BOX 636
BELLVILLE, TX 77418

May 17, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by the Benz School of Floral Design.

We own and operate Ueckert Flower Shop in Bellville, Texas, and have been in business for many years. We work very closely with the agriculture teachers here in our local district on an advisory capacity.

Students who earn this certification have demonstrated that they have a mastery of concepts vital to succeeding in this industry, including:

- discover and analyze the history and significance of floral design
- determine identifying characteristics, common names and botanical names for flowers and other floral materials
- understand design principles and elements of floral design
- demonstrate wiring methods in floral design
- prepare, analyze and evaluate geometric designs with fresh and silk floral materials
- demonstrate proper post-harvest care of cut flowers
- plan and construct various types of corsages and boutonnieres
- create specialty floral arrangements for various occasions, such as wedding, holiday, bereavement, etc.
- critique and appraise various floral designs
- analyze fundamental management practices of managing a floral business

It is imperative we have a pipeline of skilled workers for current and future positions in the industry. A student that has earned the Principles of Floral Design Certification that is endorsed by a nationally recognized association such as the Benz School has proven that they are more qualified for employment in the floral industry than a candidate without the certification and is more likely to be employed. In addition, this certification is extremely valuable to employers as it helps connects us to qualified candidates and should be offered at all schools with courses in floral design.

Sincerely,

West Texas Wholesale Floral

620 15th St. • Lubbock, TX 79401
office: 806.765.8309
fax: 806.762.3138

May 22, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to express my company's support of the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by the Benz School of Floral Design associated with Texas A&M University. The Benz School of Floral Design is nationally recognized by the American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD) as an educational partner providing high quality career education and promoting professionalism in the floral industry.

As the owner of West Texas Wholesale Floral, I am well aware of the need for floral certification as a benefit to my customers managing a floral business. West Texas Wholesale Floral provides fresh flower and floral supply needs to more than 50 established florist in the West Texas and New Mexico areas. Students who earn a Principles of Floral Design Certification demonstrate a knowledge of vital concepts necessary to the future success of my customer's growth. Many of these floral business owners desire future employees that have a knowledge base of principles, elements, geometry, and basic techniques of floral design. The floral design certification will provide skilled workers for this valuable industry my company supports daily.

Please consider this letter of support for the Principles of Floral Design Certification endorsed by the Benz School of Floral Design to establish a potentially valuable asset to our floral businesses that provide the beauty of flowers to our communities.

Sincerely,



Donald L. Beyer

Owner

West Texas Wholesale Floral



West Texas A&M University™
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support for the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification.

As a professor of plant science at WTAMU, a university that is dedicated to preparing students for success in the marketplace after graduation, I see great value in this certification. The skills validated by this certification will benefit the students by providing them with experiences that prepare them for positions in the floriculture and horticulture industries. In addition, this certification will also benefit both Texas and American floriculture and horticultural industries by creating a pipeline of entry-level employees who are capable and ready to work. It is of vital importance that there are educated young people in the floral design industry to ensure a secure a viable future for the floriculture and horticulture industries

Industry certifications like the Benz School of Floral Design Principles of Floral Design Certification are a valuable tool that will offer benefits to students, employers and the industry as a whole.

Sincerely,



Brock Blaser, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Plant Science
Department of Agricultural Sciences
West Texas A&M University
Canyon, Texas 79016
(806) 651-2555 office
bblaser@wtamu.edu



Dana's Flowers

Dana Beavers, Owner

203 Columbus St. E

Fayette, AL 35555

Dear Mr. Chism,

I have reviewed the Benz Floral Design Credential and the lesson which must be mastered to obtain the certification. It is impressive! Hiring anyone who knows anything about floral design is difficult. Most new hires know little to nothing about the plant names, tools we use, or the products we produce. With two otherwise equally qualified applicants, the one having the certification and the knowledge that goes with it would most certainly get the job. Knowing anything is better than knowing nothing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Beavers". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dana Beavers