

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a daughter of the middle class. I have never gone wanting, yet I understand why this is so: it is because of hard work. In 2008, many middle class daughters' lives changed. The economic recession caused many families to rethink how they would be able to provide for themselves. Some families fell victim to the hard times, while others aimed to think more creatively. In other words, some families learned to endure. I am proud to say that I am a part of one of those middle class families who endured.

My parents were both professionals in the housing market and enjoyed a great deal of success while the market was in full swing. My father, a third generation custom home builder, built and remodeled some of the most ornate and beautiful houses I have ever been inside, including our own home of now fourteen years. My mother was the perfect partner to my father: she was a successful real estate agent since acing the state license exam in 2002. Lisa and Tom Bodiker were well-known and respected in our community not only for their professionalism, but their inherent ability to change the simple atmosphere of a house into a welcoming home. Meanwhile, their children—my sister Erica and myself—grew up comfortably, never going a day having to ask. However, beginning in 2008, comfort turned into necessity when the housing market crashed. It was a tremendous hit on my family's financial capabilities. Changes were made in our lifestyle; suddenly, I began to understand just how serious finances were and the extent of our fortunate life thus far. We never suffered, but we learned to adapt. This cannot be said without the efforts my parents took to continue to provide for my family. Through these efforts, something magical happened: they found their passions.

Once real estate began to decline, my mother—ever the chameleon—sought employment in a field that would suit her talents: service. She worked as a sales representative for Comfort Care, which helped elderly folks be placed in the proper care facilities. She enjoyed this immensely, but her childhood dream job soon found its way to her. In early 2011, she came across an application to be a flight attendant for US Airways, and by March, she was hired, fully trained, and in the skies. My mother had dreamed of being a flight attendant since she was a little girl and to fulfill this dream finally was a testament of endurance. The job satisfied her desire to be hospitable and to gain experience of other cultures through seeing the world.

My father has always possessed an international palate. Through the travel benefits of my mother's job, he was able to find a new passion: importing exotic olive oils and vinegars from all over the world. He enjoyed traveling and eating, so his business was the perfect combination of his two passions. Not only was he able to sample new flavors in different countries, but oftentimes, he shared meals with new friends whom he met because of his olive oil adventures. Again, the spirit of hospitality was infectious and my father began to

feel the urge to reciprocate. In October of 2012, my parents took an anniversary trip to Italy and stayed at a beautiful, yet surprisingly affordable apartment in the heart of Rome. The experience was so wonderful that the booking website they had found the apartment through became my family's go-to website whenever we traveled. This website was Airbnb.

It always takes a spark to ignite a brilliant flame and these experiences were that spark for my parents. In late 2013, a renovation of the house I grew up in began. It was a slow start at first, but by the end of summer 2014, my parents opened the door to our home through Airbnb. By the time I returned home from college in the early spring, my parents had already hosted around ten guests and had many stories to share of new friendships that had come about because of their hosting. I was glad to know that my parents had not only found a way to support themselves further, but to also satisfy their hospitable spirits. With each stay of a new guest, I got to experience the joy my parents had in sharing their home, an experience nearly impossible to find in an average hotel. I was overwhelmed, and continue to be, by the phenomenon that occurs—not only at my home but in every Airbnb listing where we have stayed—that a guest enters as a stranger and leaves as a friend.

Airbnb has revitalized my parents, not just in minor financial ways, but also by way of passion. It is an excellent segue into international relationships: it knits us together even if we are miles apart. If a testament is needed for Airbnb, one would simply need to come stay a night in my parents' beautiful Southern hideaway. I can guarantee this person would find a similar, exceptional experience in nearly every home listed on Airbnb's website.

The surname Bodiker means craftsman of many trades. To me, this concept has been my life, and it is with great confidence that I say this is the life of many Americans. As citizens of the United States, we are born in this free country to endure. Through hard work, we can find success and even further, we can find our dreams. We can find our people, our community. Airbnb has awakened an even further understanding of small communities becoming national, even global ones. My home is a global one and I have to thank Airbnb for this.

Sincerely,

Evana Kaelyn Bodiker