

American Tarot Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT FROM THE AMERICAN TAROT ASSOCIATION REGARDING THE REJECTION OF CHARITY FUNDRAISING SERVICES BECAUSE DONOR OFFERED TO READ TAROT CARDS

It is with great disappointment the American Tarot Association reads of the decision by the King County Solid Waste Division (KCSWD) officials to reject the donated services of Alexandra Chauran for the KCSWD's Waste Free Holiday program solely because she offered her skills at reading Tarot cards, crystal ball divination and tea leaf reading. In subsequent communications with Ms. Chauran, a representative of the Division stated that the decision was based on the idea that *some* people don't believe in such activities and the activities are not an appropriate fit for a county program, even though yoga, wellness centers, and other new age or alternate thought businesses are allowed. This seems to be blatant discrimination based solely on a particular ideology concerning Tarot that is rooted in factual errors. This is absolutely not acceptable for any government office at any level, whether federal, state, city or county.

The Tarot deck was created in the fifteenth century in northern Italy. The cards were manufactured for use in a trick-taking game very much like modern Bridge. Even today, the game of Tarot, and its many variants (Tarocchi, Tarock, etc.) remain popular in parts of Europe.

Most scholars agree the earliest known decks reflect a Medieval Christian mindset (though the illustrations also draw upon other sources, including mythology). Many scholarly sources believe the earliest Tarot trump cards depict an allegory, or symbolic story, which appears to illustrate the triumph of God's will over all. While cards like Death and the Devil do appear in the deck, these concepts likely do so because they appear in the Bible. Given that the earliest Trump series incorporates images of the Christian resurrection (Judgment) and the appearance of the transfigured Christ (or the dawning of the "New Jerusalem"), no well-informed person or organization would ever associate the cards with demonism or Satanism. Modern decks associate the cards with all kinds of philosophies and trends, but the cards themselves are neither Satanic nor Demonic in origin.

There are millions of Tarot readers worldwide. They are business executives, doctors, lawyers, teachers, housewives, writers, engineers, students, and any other profession that can be named. They are neighbors, sisters, brothers, mothers and fathers. They are even national poet laureates! Tarot empowers readers and their clients to think through their options and come to decisions on their own. The cards are used to gain insight into personal growth opportunities, to aid in meditation or concentration practice, to explore options or alternative answers to questions, or to enhance creativity through brainstorming. Within the last decade, the cards are even beginning to appear in therapeutic settings. Such spiritual and internal exploration is a healthy part of the human condition, and should be encouraged, not dismissed. When Tarot readings are offered at fundraising venues, they tend to be popular and fun activities for visitors at the venue to engage in.

This incident reflects badly on the diverse and vibrant city of Seattle, King County and the state of Washington. The ATA strongly encourages the officials of the KCSWD and King County to take action to reconsider these blatantly discriminatory actions and calls on the KCSWD to issue a public apology not only to Ms. Chauran but to the global community that they have insulted with their actions.

The American Tarot Association stands ready to partner with the KCSWD and other representatives of local, state and federal offices to educate personnel on the positive aspects of Tarot and dispel outdated and mis-information. The American Tarot Association strongly encourages an investigation by state and county government officials into this case and urges them to protect their citizens from such discrimination. The ATA also calls on all citizens everywhere to boycott events such as these in which such discrimination is encouraged, and to write their local officials and lawmakers that such actions will not be tolerated in 21st century society.