



The Elmwood Business Association

October 26, 2020

Subject: **Therapy Stores**

To Whom it May Concern;

This letter is written at the request of Therapy Stores, a retailer located in the Elmwood Business District of Berkeley, California.

Therapy Stores is a member of our local business association in good standing, and a charming complement to our unique neighborhood's shopping experience.

Doing business in our city comes with many challenges, but Therapy Stores does so impressively well, which is not an easy thing to do particularly this year. We appreciate their contributions to our Elmwood community.

Sincerely,

**The Elmwood Business Association, Inc.**

---

Joseph Aguiar  
President

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to recommend the family owned business of Therapy Stores. They have been serving our community for over 20 years and I have been shopping with them for about a decade. I have always been completely satisfied with their products, customer service, and now in the times of COVID I feel it is especially important to support small businesses. Therapy is unlike any store I have ever shopped in, and each store is unique, inclusive, and tailored to the local community.

They also give back to the community in many ways, including supporting other small businesses and local merchants--from having them work on maintenance in their stores, to sourcing local jewelry makers, and beyond.

Therapy would be a perfect fit for Placerville's Main Street.

Thank you,  
Rachel Aknin

To whom it may concern:

My name is Angelique Archuleta and to simply start, Therapy Stores has been an absolutely positive part of my life. I have shopped at many of the Bay Area locations for the last 7 years. The customer service that I have always had the pleasure of experiencing, along with shopping at a company that puts so much time, thought and effort into the very creative and unique (often handmade, locally made, USA made) items they bring into their stores has always brought me back as a loyal customer. After getting to know the employees and the owners themselves, I was drawn to this company as one that I would love to be a part of. I began working for Therapy Stores Inc. mid 2016 and it has been the best experience that I have had professionally. Jing, Wayne, and Ava have been the most caring employers I have had thus far! There is nothing that these three folks would do for their employees OR their communities. With 1% of sales donated to nonprofits like adopt-a-classroom, food banks in counties they have stores in (just to name a few), Therapy Stores Inc. strives to be a place that gives back to their communities and employees. The care and concern for all those around Jing, Wayne and Ava is unmatched. "Formula Business" is no where close to what Therapy Stores Inc. is and strives to be as a small business company. I truly believe that those who actually run a "formula business" would not have so much passion in the people they come across daily and build the relationships that we all do here at Therapy. I have been working at Therapy Stores for the last four years and the amount of growth and knowledge that I have had, again, is unmatched. I am not exaggerating when I say that I hear "I came to Therapy for therapy!". Having a store like Therapy Stores Inc. in Placerville would add value to the other neighboring stores as it will continue to bring a positive environment. Therapy Stores Inc. has been nothing but a positive influence to many in the communities that they are in and serve. Jing, Wayne and Ava are some of the most hard working, caring, selfless, kind people I have had the satisfaction of working for, working with, and knowing as family. I hope my words help you recognize the hard working, dedicated and determined people that Jing, Wayne and Ava are and I hope that they will be welcomed with open minds and open hearts into the Historic Placerville community.

Thank you for your time.

Kindly,  
Angelique Archuleta  
[acarchuleta021@gmail.com](mailto:acarchuleta021@gmail.com)

October 23, 2020

Dear Downtown Community,

I strongly recommend Therapy for your downtown. I have been the owner of Opal Wine Bar in Downtown Mountain View for 16 years. I am also the Board President of our Downtown Business Association. During many of these years, I have had the pleasure of having Therapy as a business neighbor on my block.

Jing and her staff at Therapy have been wonderful neighbors. They participate in our special programs and events, and are easy to reach when we are coordinating these efforts. They are also very pleasant and nice. We feel fortunate to have Therapy in our downtown.

Best Regards,

Sarah Astles  
President, Opal Wine Bar  
251 Castro Street, Mountain View, CA



Development Services Planning Division &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

---

**New Business on Main Street**

1 message

**Reid and Teri Briggs** <reidteribriggs@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 2:08 PM

To: pv.planning@gmail.com

Dear Commissioners,

I recently heard that you are considering a "formula business" moving into the building that previously housed Combella's on Main Street. I would strongly recommend that you do not move in that direction. I understand that Sourdough Sandwiches kind of broke the ice in that direction, that it is a real economic burden to have a building empty, and yes, jobs are important. I must say that once you make the change for "formula businesses" to move in, the character of our Main Street will never be the same.

My wife and I have lived in Placerville and shopped on Main Street for more than 40 years. We have friends and family who come to visit from several different areas of the U.S. as well as Australia and other countries. The ALL are amazed at the character of our Main Street area. It is very unique and has caused many to return (not that they don't want to see us!). It also draws people off Highway 50 due to its unique character.

We are seeing an influx of "formula businesses" in town as well as close by. However, we see the unique character of our Main Street as part of what makes Placerville a special place. We sincerely hope that the formula businesses can find a different area in our town other than Main Street.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Reid and Teri Briggs

10/28/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Jing Chen and Therapy Stores.

My relationship with Therapy Stores began when I kept popping into the Pleasanton store to shop and see Chris, the manager, when I was on my lunch breaks. Chris was so kind when I would voice my frustrations with finding what to do after graduating college. She encouraged me to work at Therapy, and I've fallen in love with the company and my coworkers since. Jill was there to hold me when my cat died, Dominique and I would run over to grab chicken wings after work, and even our district manager, Noemia, helped my now fiancé pop the question!

Therapy Stores is Jing's baby and she takes such good care of us. When we had the shutdown Jing and Wayne used their personal savings to keep the company afloat. Jing brought food provisions to every store before the shutdown. Employees were also given the opportunity to help get our website going, allowing me to get work despite the uncertain time.

I have worked for huge chains and other small businesses, and I have never had such a close relationship with an owner and other employees. Jing has trained me *personally*, brought me ice cream, and is not afraid to come clean out all the dead flies in the window. Jing has given me life advice, met my parents, and keeps encouraging me to save more of my paycheck instead of shopping in the store.

If you walk into one of our stores, you will not find some chain or "big business" but a family that has been so loved by our communities.

Thank you for your time,  
Valentina Bunnell

valentinabunnell1@gmail.com

To Whom it May Concern,

Therapy Stores was my first job right out of high school, that I worked at all through college, and that I am still working for today. Going five years strong, I have never been more thankful than I am now, to have been able to grow up and develop both as a person and as a professional in an environment as nurturing, educational and inspiring as Therapy Stores. I've learned what it means to run a business that is founded upon customer service, where the most important thing is how the customer feels walking out that door. While we do offer a great curation of goods, my regulars come visit the store because they know we care about them beyond hellos and goodbyes, beyond transactions and beyond any bottom line. This company cares about the impact we have on a small scale, within the company, offering only the best for their employees, in the way of pay, benefits and support; as well as large scale, within our communities and neighborhoods, through the countless donations made year after year. Jing and Wayne built Therapy Stores from the ground up and it hurts me deeply to see people try to tear them down, without first stopping to see who we are as a company. Thank you Therapy Stores for everything you've done for me and lives you've touched over the years!

Sincerely,

Melissa Butar

Therapy Stores Support Staff Member

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been a part of Therapy Stores for 8 and a half years, starting from a sales associate when I moved to a new town to start college to today as a district manager who wears many hats for our humble company. Jing and Wayne supported me while I went to school with flexible schedules and cheered for me every step of the way. Through my years at Therapy I have made so many friends in our neighborhoods, from merchants to customers. I have regulars who I've seen their children grow up as they come in to tell me about their life. Our focus has always been to support those around us; giving our team the best we can offer with thoughtful scheduling, to helping our local makers when fires tore through their homes and studies, to reading through thousands of Adopt-a-Classroom letters to give to as many as possible. Nothing we do is formulaic or mechanical, instead we work as a team with that same mom and pop mentality that Jing and Wayne have had from the beginning.

Jing, Wayne and Ava are just an extended part of my family, from spending Thanksgiving at their house and sharing many of life's milestones with them. Jing Chen gave me a chance and an opportunity when I was young and green and has taught me everything she knows about retail; teaching me the importance of creating a sense of community within our team and our neighborhood. She is such a giver and has the biggest heart, always going above and beyond, never more than a text away. Wayne Whelan was part of my interview that lasted over three hours and told me all these wonderful stories of them starting out with nothing and the little hollowed out book to hold the day's earnings. He is still such a help with day to day things, to share a story, or make friends with a customer. I've seen Ava Chen-Whelan grow up over the years, from her first attempts to help out in store over the summer, to covering during breaks from school, to coming into her own as a key part of the team. She is the most unselfish person who comes in on all her days off and has the best parts of her parents. I could go on for pages and pages about their character and hardworking nature that has gotten us to where we are today but it would all spell out the same thing. Therapy is a family operated company that strives to stay humble, to give more than we ever take, and to build a safe community for all to be a part of.

Kind Regards,  
Noemia Butar  
District Manager at Therapy Stores



October 27, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

The Pleasanton Downtown Association has been designated as a 2020 Accredited Main Street America™ program. Our mission is to promote the economic vitality and hometown character of downtown Pleasanton. The PDA is a strong downtown community of dedicated individuals and business owners who, by cooperative efforts, community events and activities work to make the downtown a richly rewarding place to visit and shop.

Therapy is located at 525 Main Street within our downtown district and has been located within our downtown for 10 years now. Over the years Therapy has been a wonderful part of our downtown community, participating in our many annual and traditional events. It has been my experience that Therapy is always willing and eager to support our organization and is a great member of our community here in downtown Pleasanton.

Should you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me directly to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Cadrette  
Executive Director  
Pleasanton Downtown Association

**Anjelica Cattivera**  
**2234 40th Ave**  
**San Francisco, CA**  
**94116**

**Oct 27th, 2020**

To whom it may concern,

I'm passionately writing this letter of recommendation for Therapy Stores as both a customer and employee. I have been working for Therapy since 2014 - when I was just 21 years old and attending San Jose State University working as a Part Time Sales Associate. I'm now part of the management team and have seen all aspects of how the Therapy Stores are run.

In no way is Therapy a "formula business", there are absolutely no standardizations in effect. I've experienced firsthand all the hard work that Jing, Wayne, and Ava have put into every single one of their locations. There's no corporate funding. There are no big business gimmicks. Just hard work and dedication from this small family and their amazing employees.

I've jumped around and worked at 9 of the 11 Therapy Store locations. Each and every one of the Therapy Stores are tailored to the community around them. Local business owners, neighbors, and staff have become a community. 1% of every single sale is donated to nonprofits in our neighborhoods, some of which are Second Harvest Food Bank, People's Program, and Adopt A Classroom.

As the individual running Therapy Stores social media, I hate to witness ill-informed small business owners in Placerville spread misinformation about this business and the family behind it. I'm very proud to be a part of this small team and I'm confident that the addition of Therapy in your community will only enhance it.

Thank you for your time.

Anjelica Cattivera

To whom it may concern,

My experience with Therapy Stores began with my first visit to the Elmwood location in Berkeley some five years ago now and I still feel the same welcoming, inclusive and lighthearted feeling whenever I walk into their store. I know I can count on walking out with my spirits lifted, regardless if I decide to buy anything because the people who work for this company care about their customers. The staff who I've had the pleasure of meeting and have known for years now, go above and beyond getting to know the people who walk in their shop. It still blows my mind that out of all the people they see on a daily basis, they still remember conversations and tidbits of information that I've shared with them, this is a group of people who care about their patrons! I don't know what the neighborhood would be with my daily dose of Therapy, a place that always manages to beam a positive light during these dark and uncertain times! Thank you for being there for me and the neighborhood!

Your devoted customer and supporter,  
Christina U.  
Berkeley Customer



## Folsom Historic District Association

October 26, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for a new business located in Historic Folsom. The building at 728 Sutter Street was purchased early this year and in June, the Therapy Stores opened, right in the middle of the Covid-19 restrictions. I met Jing Chen (property owner) and her team and saw them working hard to prepare for opening.

728 is one of our oldest buildings on Sutter Street and it is incredibly special to all of us. We are pleased that the new owners are treating it with such care and have brought new retail to Historic Folsom.

In the short time they have been in the District, Therapy Stores staff has joined in with us at our merchant meetings and they have donated to our lighting fund. In addition, they are open with consistent hours and this benefits our visitors as well as the rest of the businesses in the District. Therapy Stores have already been an asset to our District in the 4 months that they have been open.

Sincerely,

Judy Collinsworth

Executive Director

I'm writing this letter in support of Therapy's Placerville location. When I moved to the San Francisco Mission district from Florida, in 2016, I knew nothing about my new city, neighborhood or community. While exploring my new neighborhood, I wandered into Therapy Stores on Mission Street and was greeted by the manager, a San Francisco local who helped me shop, told me about the store's history and the owners, Jing and Wayne. Fast forward a couple of weeks and I'm interviewing with the owner herself for a sales associate role.

Jing and Wayne took me in, shared their mission with me and introduced me to the community of their customers and their local vendors. I quickly acclimated to the neighborhood and moved up into a manager role, hiring other locals in the community to best serve our customers. It was clear that Jing and Wayne make a huge commitment to the neighborhood they reside in and the employees they hire. They prioritize employee success, growth and well-being. I eventually moved into the tech space, leaving Therapy as an employee but becoming a forever customer of the Therapy family. My admiration for Jing and Wayne's business approach goes beyond the product and resides in the opportunity they provided me and the many employees they've taken under their wing.

Please feel free to reach out to me for any further information. 415-350-6613

Thank you for your consideration,  
Rachel Coven

## Support for Therapy's Placerville location

I am a small business owner and I support Therapy's Placerville location because they are a small family owned and operated business that works very hard to source and sell unique items that **are not** available in chain stores.

I started my business in my apartment and am very proud to have been selling my products to Therapy for the past four years. During that time, I have been able to form a wonderful relationship with Jing Chen, Ava Chen-Whelan, and their staff. Therapy fosters a very family-like culture amongst its owners and staff. The mood they create is very warm and welcoming, which I find refreshing, compared to some store's zero customer service approach to customer service.

Yes, Therapy does have multiple locations throughout the Bay Area, but that doesn't mean they are a soulless franchise or chain. What it means, is that they are a hardworking family who is trying to get ahead in an unbelievably challenging retail climate. Malls are dead, but mainstreet is coming back to life. Therapy is here for mainstreet, so please let Therapy be a part of Placerville's Mainstreet.

Thank You,

Sam Culkins

sam@culk.co

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter On behalf of Jing Chen and Wayne Welan.

When I first open my business in San Francisco Wayne and Jing help me set up my space with the things that I needed. They instantly became more friends than fellow retailers. My businesses grew over the years and when I relocated my business onto Valencia Street in San Francisco, I was delighted to be on the same merchant strip as Therapy. When I decided to form a merchants association Wayne and Jing were the first people that I called. (They had helped me out a few years earlier by giving me a gift certificate at their store to help me refurnish my home after an apartment fire.) They gave me a lot of guidance never wanting any of the credit. When the Valencia Corridor merchants Association was formed and became active, Wayne and Jing were a constant source of support and involvement. They still are to this day.

I heartily endorse adding Therapy to any merchant group. They are involved, generous, and non-competitive. From a business angle, I would say it would be a very good bet for a community to take on a business like theirs right now with things being so uncertain. They have a stable business model that can withstand an economic downturn and already has, due to the length of time they have successfully been in business. It would be very smart to have Therapy in your community for financial stability and tax revenue. Therapy Stores also draw foot traffic that might otherwise not stop, as the stores are well known. This makes them an asset to any retail corridor.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Deena Davenport Conway

Founder, Valencia Corridor Merchants Association

Owner, Luxe

Founder, Glama-Rama Salons and Galleries

415-823-0819

JAXKELLY

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of recommendation for the owners of Therapy Stores Inc., Jing Chen, Wayne Whelen, and Ava Chen-Whelen. I have known the Chen-Whelen family for the past 8 years. This family started Therapy Stores one by one, neighborhood by neighborhood, leaving a sense of community at each location. Jing is always getting involved in helping and giving back to the community in more ways than one. Not only are Therapy Stores a place to shop, they are a welcoming store that offers goods from many local hand-made makers. They not only care for their customers but also for their business associates and employees.

Therapy stores helped my small jewelry company flourish. They have been one of my top stockists year after year. They support my business, are respectful business associates, and most of all they are fair, honest, and trustworthy people who work hard to create a wonderful shopping experience and work environment.

Jing, Wayne, and Ava take pride in their stores. They travel the country looking for new product. They take the time to meet the makers and learn about where the goods are sourced. These are the type of business owners you want in your community. I hope you welcome them into your community so you can experience for yourselves.

Sincerely,

Kelly Decker

Owner

JaxKelly Inc.

October 28, 2020

To: Placerville Planning Commission  
Re: Combellack's Building

As a business owner for over 38 years on Main Street( The Bookery) I am very concerned about the Chain business that is proposed for the Combellack building site. I love my job, my town, and the people in it. Cultivating my business, maintaining ethical standards and customer satisfaction has been my life's work. Having unique stores, people who care about our town and our customers, and the future of our town and businesses is very important to me. Several businesses in the one block area of downtown have most of the same products as the new chain store.

I thought, until recently, that we had an ordinance against chains. I have always believed that the city had our best interest at heart since we are the main tourist revenue area. Many business owners are beginning to question if that is true. I have heard from 2 sources that the owner has stated that they could care less about Placerville, its people, customers and that they would not put their children in our schools. Do we really want a business like this? Less than 15 years ago Main Street had 12 empty buildings. We can easily go back to that time if we lose local businesses that are unable to compete with chain stores. Our town has flourished and persevered without the need for chain establishments. If we keep having chains we will be like most other towns without charm and a friendly welcoming atmosphere for visitors. Why would someone bother to drive up the hill when they can go to Folsom or Sacramento?

Please consider your faithful existing businesses that have been here for 50 plus years. We look forward to hearing from you and continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Dunk

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Danielle Dunne, and I am writing this letter on behalf of Therapy Stores.

Therapy Stores is a small business, family owned hidden gem that offers an inclusive and inviting shopping environment throughout many local downtown areas. My experience with Therapy Stores started in October of 2019 -- I was walking in downtown Pleasanton with my boyfriend after dinner, noticed a cute shop open, and immediately said to him "Oh, I have to go in here."

I was instantly impressed with the selection of products they had to offer. I grew up in a very small town in the Central Valley of California and immediately felt like I was back home shopping at my mom's favorite gift shops in my hometown. I ended up purchasing gifts for two of my best friends that had birthday's coming up, and also left with something for myself!

The staff offered me the best customer service I'd had in years, even better than my own staff at the time -- and that's coming from someone who at that point in her life had been working in shopping malls for the last 9 years, 8 of which have been Retail Management.

Less than a year later, my boyfriend and I moved to Campbell, and I remember telling him I'd be willing to make the 30 minute drive to Pleasanton to shop at that store. Little did I know at the time, but my new neighborhood had a Therapy Stores right down the road. I stumbled upon the Downtown Campbell location this past January -- fast forward to today and I am now a Sales Manager for a family owned business.

While I am newer to the team, I am so grateful for the opportunity Jing and Wayne have given me during all of the chaos that is 2020. This year led me to realize that I actually hated working in a "shopping mall" environment, and wanted to work for someone who gave back to their community, was involved in their employees well being, and truly valued their customers.

Therapy Stores offers communities an escape from the over-saturated "chain" retail environment. The fact that they have been able to expand as much as they have since 1994 is a testament to how supportive our customers have been over the years. Just today I was helping a customer who has been shopping for gifts with us for 10 years, and she was expressing to me how thankful she was to see us open.

Bringing Therapy Stores to your downtown will foster a sense of community and will provide a memorable family owned shopping destination to your already amazing downtown area, whether you're a local or just passing through.

Thank you for your time.

Best,  
Danielle Dunne

Jessica Fernandez  
Jessica Lynn Collection

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this on behalf of Jing Chen, owner of Therapy Stores, whom I have worked closely with over the past decade. As a sale representative for several brands that are carried in Therapy Stores, I have had the chance to get to know the business and Jing and her team on a personal level. Jing is one of the most dedicated, intelligent, and hardest working business owners I have come across during my time in the industry. She always treats her vendors, customers, and employees with the upmost respect and care. Her employees are like family to her, and their gratitude truly shows through their loyalty to her and the business. Every time I enter one of the stores, I'm greeted with a warm smile and engaging conversation. The employees always take the time to help you find the perfect gift or special item for yourself. Never have I felt like I'm walking into a chain store...it's always a unique experience with a knowledgeable staff and eclectic offering of product.

Therapy Stores fully deserves to have a home in Placerville on Main Street. As a resident of Folsom, I frequently shop Main Street and love the charm and small town setting it provides. I am a firm believer that Therapy Stores will not only add to this charm, but also bring more shoppers to the community. It will offer an assortment of handpicked product that is constantly evolving to cater to a wide array of customers. The store will never feel stale or chain-like, and instead will blend perfectly as another charming boutique for locals and tourists to shop. Jing remains courteous about the brands that she carries in her various locations, and always asks the vendor/brand for approval before selling in any given territory.

In conclusion, Therapy Stores will be a vibrant and unique addition to Main Street, and Jing will be a wonderful owner to add to your business community.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Fernandez

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Nicole Fujihara and it is my pleasure and privilege to write this letter today in support of this wonderful company that I consider my family. I became part of the Therapy family back in 2011 but have been a long time customer for years before employment. Jing & Wayne have played such an essential role in my growth as a human being. This family has been by my side and supported me through some very difficult times in the last decade of my life. Jing, Wayne & Ava's dedication and support has always been unwavering and so many others would agree. It has been so wonderful to witness their daughter Ava become an essential part of this company as she was just a little teen when I first met her.

I cannot even begin to describe or explain the selflessness and dedication Jing, Wayne & Ava have for this family that they've humbly grown from the ground up. Very few people can say that they've worked for a family that was so personally invested in their employees and serving their communities. Therapy Stores is the type of business every community should strive to have. The Chen-Whelan family are the good neighbors one would want next door. This is a family that thrives on community, integrity and authenticity.

The family-owned aspect of this business is the foundation in which this company is built upon and the driving factor behind its success. Success does not make a business a "formula business". This family has worked tirelessly to ensure that will never happen.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to support my family with these sincere words.

Sincerely,

Nicole Fujihara



Development Services Planning Division &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

---

**CUP For Proposed Therapy Store on Main st.**

1 message

**buggyandtoots@outlook.com** <buggyandtoots@outlook.com>

Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 4:21 PM

To: "pv.planning@gmail.com" &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

My name is Debbie Furtado.

I own Mattywags at 376 Main St. I also own Treehouse at 327 Main st.

It has been brought to my attention that The Therapy Store has requested a CUP to do business in the Combellicks bldg on Main St.

I find this discusting that you would even entertain the idea of permitting a Bay Area chain store to encroach on the merchants on our beautifully designed unique Main st.

We have provided appropriate documentation for an urgent moratorium to be placed on the agenda for council to review. Main street merchants have been placed in a horrible position with COVID-19 and many other obstacles this past year. Please have faith in our hard working town and delay your position to grant a CUP until we can recover from the financial harm COVID-19 has placed on us as well as allowing us to be heard as a community. **NO ONE WANTS A CHAIN ON MAIN!**

People come from far and wide to our unique town. The community as well as merchants plan to roar like a lion. We will stand strong to stop this beautiful town from becoming just another strip mall. Please stand by us and let us be heard. Decline the CUP and be proud of what you say that you stand for. Keep Main st unique, and allow us unite as a community to figure out a good solution.

Thank you

Debbie Furtado

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Letter of Recommendation

In support of Therapy Stores (Jing Chen, Wayne Whelan)

To the City Council of Placerville or whom it may concern:

I am a resident of Alameda, CA. When Therapy Stores came to our Historic Park Street some years ago, there were a few doubters, of course, alarmed that "It's a chain store!"

What's special about Therapy Stores is that while they were able to expand to multiple stores over a span of a few decades, they are still the same mom (Jing) and pop (Wayne) that I met over 20 years ago. They run their small business in a similar way, treat their customers, employees, and commercial neighbors the same way, which is with respect and gratitude.

I worked for Jing and Wayne from 1999 to 2007, at their original San Francisco location, when I lived there. They are the kindest and most generous people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. They are not a greedy faceless corporate chain. This is a family, making a living, and giving back to the communities that they know they owe their success to. As employees, we were told, "Treat customers well, and appreciate them, because they are really the ones who are paying your salary, not us." I've always taken that to heart, and as an online seller, apply that principle to my own happy customers. I also know that Therapy has consistently donated to various non-profit organizations.

It wasn't long before Therapy became a beloved part of Alameda's close-knit community. They invested in our community by hiring Alameda locals, supported local crafters by placing wholesale orders, and made donations such as sponsoring our Little League team. No other businesses suffered, as far as I know. When they ultimately had to close, years later, many of our residents expressed their sadness, through our online groups, and said they will now have to drive out of town to visit a Therapy Store. Therapy customers are loyal! I would not be surprised if Therapy customers will travel to or make a stop in Placerville, thus creating more foot traffic to Main Street.

I believe that having Therapy Stores in Placerville will add overall value to your community.

Sincerely,  
Maria Goretti Yen

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of the Therapy Store. Initially I had reservation about their addition to the Folsom Historic District. I was concerned that they might not be the best fit for our local demographic. I also had concerns that they may compete directly with my own store.

I am happy to report that I no longer have any related concerns, and in fact the Therapy Store has been a very beneficial addition to Sutter Street. Their success is noticeable with the number of people walking around the district carrying the store's obvious orange bag. Far more telling, is the number of customers that come in my shop each day telling me that the woman at the Therapy Store told them that they had to check out the bookstore!

Folsom shoppers and Sutter Street business owners are lucky to have a new business of the caliber of the Therapy Store in our Historic District.

Sincerely,  
Stacy Gould  
Owner, Ruby's Books  
724 Sutter Street  
530-574-3617 cell

To Whom It May Concern,

I have worked for Keena, a multi line sales representative agency for 26 years. Therapy has been a customer of mine for 24 of those years. So to say that I have a breadth of knowledge and experience in working with them (and in this industry in general) is an understatement.

When we first started working together Therapy had one location on Mission Street in San Francisco. I have watched as the owners Jing and Wayne have worked tirelessly over the years to grow their business and open additional locations. I can tell you they are some of the hardest working and most committed merchants; attending more trade shows than anyone I know, constantly evaluating their product assortment, following trends, offering a variety of price points to their consumers. They bring this value to the customers they serve in their community.

They are not a deep pocket corporation coming in to take over main street and in no stretch of the imagination would they be considered a "large chain". They ARE a home grown, hard working success story of a small, bay area based business managing to succeed. All of their locations have always been located in neighborhoods, often the old town centers. They are also a family business, having watched their daughter Ava grow up over the years, she is now involved with purchasing for their stores.

I have also witnessed that they very much treat their employees like family. When the pandemic hit they purchased 2 weeks of groceries for all employees, full paid time off after the initial SIP and store closure and even paid for flu shots for all of them. I also want to mention that as they have opened additional stores they preemptively reached out to me to confirm that it was OK to carry my vendors in the new location. If there was a significant conflict of interest (i.e. another store already carried a significant portion of a line) then they honored that exception.

I have seen many times over the years these sorts of fears come up around a new store opening. If these other stores are serving their community and customers well, they will continue to be supported and have nothing to worry about. Competition is a good thing and can be a winner for all. Again, we are not talking about Walmart or Target here. Therapy is a California based, family owned small business.

Best,  
Nanci Graham

To whom it may concern:

I have been an employee with Therapy Stores for a little over 3 years now and I am here to tell you why this has been the best company I have ever worked for and why I love everything we here at Therapy stand for. This is a family owned and operated business that has created a safe, fun place where people can come to feel good, and forget about what's going on outside our doors for a few minutes. We offer a wide-range of mostly local, U.S made goods, it's our mission to have something for everyone, from every age and every walk of life while still supporting local artists and other small businesses. We donate 1% of every sale company-wide to give back to our communities. We also make annual donations to many different charities/organizations we are passionate about. We have become neighborhood staples in the communities we currently have stores in as we are actively involved in those communities.

I personally have grown more than I could have ever imagined since having been employed with Therapy, professionally and outside of work. Our owners opened our first location in San Francisco themselves in 1994 . Having started from nothing and to see what Therapy is today, is truly incredible. Our owners are some of the most caring, genuine, humble, influential people I have ever met and I am blessed to call them my friends. They have mentored me for years always encouraging their employees to grow in and outside of work. They want to see us grow and be the best we can be, and they have been an extremely important factor in my growth the last few years.

We are not a large chain or corporate company. This is a small Mom and Pop business where the employees truly feel like family, we're a tight knit circle. We are selective when deciding where we want to potentially open new stores, and I know Placerville has a special place in our hearts. Please give us, Therapy Stores a chance to show you why you'll love our company just as much as we do.

With love,

Emily Grohs

(510)712-2186

[emilygrohs@therapystoresinc.com](mailto:emilygrohs@therapystoresinc.com)

To whom it may concern,

My name is Nikki He and I have been with Therapy Stores for over 7 years, but I've known Jing and Wayne for over 23yrs. Therapy Stores began as a family business in 1994 and nothing has changed since day one. Jing and Wayne have operated Therapy as a mom and pop shop for as long as I can remember. My mother used to clean for Jing and Wayne back in the 90's. They have always been the most caring and selfless owner, even when Therapy Stores was just a start-up. They treat their employees like family and we still are family to this day.

Over the past 26 years I've seen Jing and Wayne go through a lot of ups and downs to get to where they are now. Therapy has opened a total of 17 locations throughout the last 26 years, only 11 are still standing. They have gone through a fair share of hard work and failures to make it to where they are. Each and every product in the store is handpicked by Jing. She goes to dozens of trade shows every year to find the right line of product for our customers. We do not have a huge team of buyers or personal designers to pick our products.

Therapy Stores is my second family, Jing and Wayne work closely with each and every one of the employees and get to know our story. If I ever need help with anything I can always count on Therapy Stores to back me up. My father was recently diagnosed with liver cancer. Jing would check in on me almost every day and make sure things are going ok at home. She would give me flexible days off to take my father to all of his appointments. It helps a lot to know that I have a boss who is so reasonable and accommodating for unforeseen circumstances. As an employee and a family member of Therapy Stores I vouch that Therapy Stores is a family owned small business that gives back to the community and not just takes. Therapy Stores donates 1% of annual sales to local schools, clubs, community centers and more...

Therapy is a business that has grown to what it is because we are led by two generous and caring individuals that always put others first. Therapy Stores has a strong ambition to serve our community. We would like to bring all the joy we can to everyone who walks into the store, we are not trying to steal anything away from anyone. Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

Nikki He

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing you this letter on behalf of Therapy Stores Inc. in hopes that you will consider them as a valuable addition to your downtown. There is no way of getting around the fact that Therapy is now considered to be a small "chain". A truth they do not hide or deny. However, it is also hard to overlook the fact that they achieved such a title one store at a time. The owners started out just as most small business owners do and they understand the struggles of the little man—having, themselves, faced many of the same trials and tribulations that other small business owners often face. The main difference between them and other small businesses, though, is that they turned what could have been defeat into triumph. Pushing forward over the last twenty-six years through hard times, recessions and now even a Pandemic to find ways to grow and continue to offer their loyal customers a truly one-of-a-kind, personal and customer service forward based experience. Their success should not be something that they are punished for, but, rather, something that other businesses admire and look to learn from.

As a former Therapy employee, who has personally worked alongside Jing and Wayne for years, I speak from a place of experience when I say that they make it their mission to add value to every community that they join and that they make it a point to give just as much as they get. I have been on the receiving end of their generosity more times than I can count and I am no exception. Numerous other employees, community members and even strangers can speak to their kindness too. Whether it be something as simple and selfless as matching a percentage of their annual sales, providing countless in store donations to local causes, volunteering their own time to walk for a worthy cause or feeding the hungry during the holidays to something as big as taking a chance and offering a job/opportunity to someone who is down and out the list of people impacted by this family and their endless kindness is long and ever-growing still. If these are not the type of people you want contributing to your town's moral, I am not sure who you would want?

So, when deciding whether or not Therapy is a good fit for Placerville, I would ask you to consider all that they will add to your community and not what other retailers are worried they might take away. As columnist George Matthew Adams once said, "There is a tendency among some businesses to criticize and belittle their competitors. This is a bad procedure. Praise them. Learn from them. There are times when you can co-operate with them to their advantage and to yours! Speak well of them and they will speak well of you. You can't destroy good ideas. Take advantage of them." Therapy is presenting Placerville with the opportunity to learn from them and thrive with them. Yes, shops overlap on merchandise on occasion and similar brands can be found in many different places, but their Therapy Stores mission is uniquely their own and their brand recognition and loyal customer following is something that also makes them quite an asset to any town that will welcome them. This is something that should excite you, and inspire potential neighboring shops not intimidate them. Especially since the large following they bring into your community with their well-known brand is additional foot traffic that will increase business and revenue for all shops on main street.

Sincerely,  
Brenda House  
Former Store Manager  
Therapy Stores Inc.

## Therapy Stores

Concerned Business owners of Placerville:

I have had the pleasure of doing business with Jing, Wayne, Ava and the extended Therapy Family for over 10 years. This is a hardworking family with community and integrity as a top priority when operating in all new and existing areas of their business locations.

As a manufacturer's representative, Therapy Stores when opening a new location has always consulted with me on other accounts in the new areas, wanting to respect any overlapping of products already carried in the neighborhood.

Therapy Stores will not hinder your business, they will help you improve your business with the excellent reputation they currently have. They have a fabulous following, perhaps customers who would normally not shop the area will want to now.

Paula Johnson

Anne McGilvray & Co.

To whom it may concern ,

My name is Tara Johnson and I have worked in retail for twenty years. Additionally, the past fifteen years of my experience has been in the role of retail management. I've worked for companies both large and small, which makes me grateful for Jing, Wayne, and Ava's family operated business.

My relationship with Therapy Stores dates back to my 20's when I was living in San Francisco. I was a customer long before I started my career with Jing Chen,, Wayne, and Ava Whalen. To this day I still own many products that I bought at the San Francisco location. I think this is a true testament to the products and service they provide a neighborhood. Out of all the shopping in San Francisco I always found myself back at Therapy. Now being able to work for the Chen-Whalen family I have a whole new respect for the store.

In all of my years of retail I've never had the opportunity to have an impact on not only my work but also my community in such a positive way. For example, being able to call, text or email the Jing or Wayne any time of day or night is unheard of in "Commercial" retail. The heart and souls of Jing, Wayne, and Ava is next to none. It is truly amazing working for this family, I honestly wouldn't trade working here for anywhere else. We have so many unique items that are all hand picked by Jing, if I ever have a light bulb out or a shelf to be built Wayne is there to do those things. In addition, they have kept the integrity and character of the Historic building at the Folsom Location. In particular, customers who grew up in Folsom are reminded of when the store was previously a hardware store, when they see the preserved tin walls. Hearing these stories everyday is just part of the reason why I can't stress enough that this isn't just another commercial store you will find just anywhere.

As the Store Manager in the Historic Folsom location I've been able to build relationships with both customers and neighboring businesses. Such as, Jim at Dorothea's, who has been in business since 1965 to Stacey at Ruby's Bookstore that opened a mere month ago. Both whom I call friends and colleagues. We all support and cheer each other on. When one of all our stores does well, we all do well.Or how about Tammy a customer who moved to from New York nine months ago and stops in Saturday mornings on her way to the farmers market to say "Hello" and see a familiar face. Gabbie who works down the street for a local construction company who comes in on her lunch break to not only buy but also chat with me about her weekend, how she's decorated her home with our products, or giving me a name of a local repair shop. It has created a great sense of community during uncertain times.

Thank you,  
Tara Johnson  
10/26/2020

Sonia Karam  
San Jose, CA 95136  
[soniabkaram@gmail.com](mailto:soniabkaram@gmail.com)

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my support for Therapy Stores opening in downtown Placerville, as well as for Jing Chen and Wayne Whelan. I have known Jing and Wayne for 9 years, the first 8 of which I worked for them at Therapy Stores. To me, Therapy Stores is an example of what a small business can become when emphasis is placed on treating customers, the community and employees ethically. Jing and Wayne have been willing to share all of their knowledge and experience with employees and I have seen multiple ex-employees go on to successfully own and operate their own small businesses.

When I started working for Therapy 9 years ago, my mother had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. Jing and Wayne worked with me to make sure I had a schedule that allowed me to take her to weekly chemotherapy appointments and made sure I had time off for surgeries and any unexpected complications that arose. When things finally took a turn for the worse, they allowed me to take multiple weeks off to spend time with her before she passed and ensured that I didn't experience any financial burden from being off of work. I can't imagine any other employer being this compassionate. That time with my mother was the most amazing gift anyone could ever have given me and I will always cherish it. I have had ups and downs since then, within my family and my health and my Therapy family has been with me through it all. I have watched them extend the same level of support to other employees who have been faced with hardships and blessings, from deaths in the family and physical abuse to marriages and welcoming a new child to the world. I'm sure all employees can remember a time they had a cold and a warm soup was delivered to their doorstep.

I have watched the company evolve as more stores were added and was always impressed with the ability to maintain the company culture of compassion and generosity. I can confidently say that this same culture is extended to the neighborhoods in which the stores reside. As employees we shop at other local businesses, we know our regular customer's names (as well as their spouses, children and pets). We also know what other stores carry and recommend them to customers. We want local businesses to succeed and we are trained as new hires with this mentality.

Jing, Wayne and Ava shop all over the US at small local trade fairs hunting for unique products that will bring something new and different to the community. They always try not to overlap products with surrounding stores because they understand that in order for a downtown to be alive and thriving you need multiple stores that are successful, not just one. Every year, 1% of sales (not profit) are donated to the communities they are in, the majority of which go to underfunded public schools and food banks.

Employees are offered fair wages, health insurance, 401k, paid time off, tuition reimbursement, parental leave, etc. but in my opinion the absolute best benefit of working for Jing and Wayne has always been the community and overwhelming generosity and support they offer. Never before have I worked for a company where everyone knew the owners, has worked alongside them and has probably spent Thanksgiving at their home when they would have otherwise spent it alone. They truly treat their community and employees like family. I am confident that the Therapy culture and store would be a wonderful addition to your downtown and bring with it a strong following to enjoy what your city already has to offer.

With best regards,



Sonia Karam



CAVALLINI PAPERS & CO., INC.

October 28, 2020

To whom this may concern,

I am writing this letter of recommendation for Therapy Stores Inc. and the owners, Jing Chen and Ava Chen-Whelen. Cavallini has been working with Therapy Stores for over 20 years. They are a family business and care about the communities they serve. They are kind, professional and act with integrity.

Personally, I have gotten to know the team that works at Therapy Stores at the trade shows. Jing and Ava are always present, and they include all different members of their team each time they come to the shows. This always stood out to me as extraordinary. They do not operate with any ego about being buyers/owners for a chain of stores, rather they are interested in helping their staff have new experiences that helps them grow as people in the community.

I would think that Therapy Stores would be a wonderful addition to the town of Placerville. We are proud to have them as a customer and appreciate all the support they have shown us over the years.

Sincerely,

Sookie Koban

Vice President, Cavallini Papers \* Co., Inc.  
401 Forbes Boulevard  
South San Francisco, California 94080

Stephanie Kofu  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260  
[stephaniekofu@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniekofu@gmail.com)

To whom it may concern,

My name is Stephanie Kofu, and I am a former employee of Therapy Stores. I am writing to express my support for not only the company, but the Chen-Whelan family as well. It was brought to my attention that in the midst of opening a new location, this family-owned business was being challenged based on what I believe are unsubstantiated claims.

In fall of 2017, I had the privilege of being hired at Therapy Stores. I began working in the distribution center of the company's warehouse. I was warmly welcomed and quickly found a place for myself there. By 2018, I was offered the chance to work in the offices in their headquarters. In between working in the distribution center and the office, I assisted on the sales floor as well. I worked in many different areas of the stores and learned a lot about the company itself.

From the day I was hired, I noticed a remarkable difference in the owners and management of Therapy Stores compared to other jobs I've had. Where some business owners can so easily keep their focus strictly on financial growth or what they can gain from their employees, Jing and Wayne took the time to get to know their employees and be there for them in ways that really matter. Aside from offering things like career guidance and competitive employee benefits, they created a space to grow and learn from one another. When they could keep the profits for themselves, Jing and Wayne chose to regularly donate a portion of it. At times we needed help in the stores or the distribution center, they stepped in themselves. Personally I've never come across a more hard working family. Yes, over the decades they have been in business, they have earned great success and a reputation to match. But the most important take away I have from my time with Therapy Stores is something I used to doubt: you can grow continuously and still keep your good character.

Jing, Wayne, Ava and our managers accepted their employees as family, and always spoke to us with kindness and respect. They were flexible if times were hard, and they were always generous. It saddens me to hear that misinformed people believe the negative claims about Therapy Stores to be true, when this family has worked so hard to build something of this scale with their integrity at its roots. This company was structured around family values and a strong sense of community, and I've always admired that as one of Therapy Store's greatest attributes.

Thank you for the opportunity to show my continued support of this company and family.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Kofu



Development Services Planning Division <pv.planning@gmail.com>

---

## Therapy store

1 message

---

**Craig Koski** <mailbox@craigkoski.com>

Tue, Oct 27, 2020 at 8:58 AM

To: pv.planning@gmail.com

Please do not approve a special use permit to the Therapy Store. This is not a local business or business people.

Sent from my iPhone

# HONESTLY GOODS

October 27, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of recommendation for the owners of Therapy Stores Inc., Jing Chen, Wayne Whelen, and Ava Chen-Whelen. I have known the Chen-Whelen family for the past 4 years. I started my company out of my garage and over the past 4 years was able to grow my business, in large part due to Jing, Wayne and Ava noticing my products, appreciating handmade nature and willing to pay the price for the work that goes into them.

I used to live in Mt. View, CA and there is a Therapy store on Castro Street, where all the locals' shop. The store has that "hometown" feel, products and goods are geared toward the neighborhood and the city. It felt small town but offered so many different goods, handmade by people, like me, who don't mass produce.

My experience with everyone at Therapy, from Jing to administrative staff have always felt easy and respectful. They don't have turnover, like some other stores I deal with, so the relationship is important to me and my brand. When COVID shutdown started – there was outreach from Therapy – and we all worked together to support each other and do whatever we could to keep the doors open and orders coming in. We worked together to make sure that we could all survive this unprecedented time.

Therapy is a neighborhood store. They aren't a chain. They care about their vendors; it matters to them where we make our products and they don't try to price gouge you on wholesale pricing like big chains often do. They respect the work that goes into a product and will support it like they made it themselves.

2019 was a record sales year for Honestly Goods. In large part due to Jing, Wayne and Ava's support and faith in my product. They are by far my largest customer and I value our relationship. It has taken me almost 6 years to grow my business and I feel fortunate to have met Jing.

They will bring added value to any community by way of providing that hometown shopping experience that so many of us look for in our own communities. The hard work and attention to detail that goes into opening a new store isn't lost on Therapy. It is something to be celebrated and will be a welcome addition to any "Main Street" in any city.

Sincerely,

Mary Kral

Owner / Creator

Honestly Goods

To Whom It May Concern:

I just wanted to let everyone/anyone know what Therapy Stores means to me as a consumer and a Bay Area resident.

Therapy Stores is my "go to" place for every thoughtful gift I need to purchase. They not only offer a wide variety of items for all genders, but a superb collection of miscellaneous items perfect for gift giving.

However, what I love most about Therapy Stores are the people whom they select to work in their stores. Without a doubt, they have the best retail staff in the East Bay and beyond. There are times when I just pop in to say hello to whomever is working that day. It is my own version of therapy!

I have literally traveled some distances to go and visit some of my non local Therapy Stores and each one is staffed with courteous and helpful associates. Some of whom I've gotten to know through the years and I just adore them.

I've worked in retail and I know that it is not an easy job. What I can assess from my own working and shopping experience, is that the owners, Jing and Wayne treat their employees well, I'd say above and beyond what most retailers these days do.

There has never been a time when I've entered a store and not been greeted with a genuine smile and a salutation of a welcome nature. Key word here is **genuine**. These associates are truly pleased to be working at Therapy, that is some really great upper management when your staff is alert, happy and engaging. You can't fake that.

Once, while shopping at Therapy, Wayne came in with some bread and cheese for the associate who was working that day. No reason, he just stopped by to bring her a little snack. Pretty rad.

Therapy Stores get involved in their community, whether it is by donating to nonprofit organizations or participating in local merchant events. They are a fabulous addition to any community and I am so thrilled that, even with this disaster of a year 2020 has presented us, Therapy Stores are still open in my local community.

2020 has been tough on all of us, consumers and merchants. My firm, as so many companies did, had salary reductions and some layoffs. We were all affected in different ways. When Therapy Stores adapted to the pandemic module by creating clever ways for us to shop digitally, I felt compelled to do my part to make some small purchases, not because I really needed anything at that time, but because that is how strongly I felt the need to support them as a customer. I did not want to lose Therapy Stores as an alternative to big box stores for my shopping. Many of their loyal customers felt the same way.

Thank you,

Cheri LaFontaine  
Alameda resident

Dated: 10/27/2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a recent customer of Therapy Stores, as I walked into the store in small downtown locations in Pleasanton and Livermore. The store caters to local population with a personal touch and feel. The first time I entered the newly opened Livermore location, I was greeted by Jing. I did not realize she was the owner as she was very down to earth, personable, and pleasant. She works the floor herself, and that is how she maintains the culture and quality of her stores. I would like to highlight the following points as to why these stores would be a positive addition to any town.

“Mom and Pop” Small Business:

Therapy Stores is not a faceless corporate chain. Through hard work spanning decades they have managed to expand their small business into multiple locations. They run their small business in a similar way as they did when they were small, treat their customers, employees, and commercial neighbors the same way, which is with respect and gratitude.

Best Retail Staff:

Therapy hires the best retail staff. There has never been a time when I've entered a store and not been greeted with a genuine smile and a salutation of a welcome nature. There is never pressure to buy something. Yet someone will gladly give you a tour of the shop and show what's new. The associates seem genuinely comfortable and pleased to work here. This shows that Jing puts in an effort to not only hire the best people, but looks after them to keep them happy to work at Therapy Stores.

Community Involvement:

Therapy Stores get involved in their community, whether it is by donating to nonprofit organizations or participating in local merchant events. They would be a fabulous addition to any community and I am glad to see them adjusting to prevailing pandemic conditions and keeping Therapy Stores open in my local community.

Sincerely

Akhtar Mahmood  
Pleasanton Resident

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Janell Martinez and I am an employee at Therapy Stores. When I started working for Therapy Stores, I was finishing my last year at the University of California, Berkeley. I applied for a Sales Associate position and interviewed August of 2019. The day of the interview I was hesitant to attend because I was tired of working retail throughout college, but I quickly learned that Therapy Stores is much more than retail, it is a space that cultivates community, it is authentic and transparent, it is compassionate and giving, and most of all, Therapy Stores is a family to all.

Jing Chen and Wayne Whelan truly care about the well-being of their employees and the communities they touch. For the past 26 years, they have made it their life's work to create a store that feels like home for both their employees and their customers. Most importantly, Therapy Stores never takes from its communities, instead they give as much as they possibly can even when they do not have it. From donating 1% of every sale to non-profits in the communities they are in, to raising over \$29,000 for social justices this year alone, just gives you a glimpse of how much they really care about the world around them.

I want to share a personal story that illustrates the amount of hard work, sacrifice, and compassion that defines Therapy Stores.

---

On November 26, 2019, it was my third month working for Therapy Stores, I was still very new and just finished my training. The night before my morning shift, I had a traumatic experience happen to me but I still went into work to try to forget what happened, but throughout my shift I couldn't seem to hold myself together. So, I called my manager and shared with her what happened and within minutes, Ava Whelan, the daughter of Jing Chen and Wayne Whelan, reached out to me. She comforted me on the phone and allowed me to close the store, and offered me money to Uber home. Then Wayne Whelan, showed up to the store to relieve me but before he did, he played a song for me and told me that I wasn't alone and that he would be there if I ever needed anything. Later that day, both Jing Chen and Ava Whelan showed up to my apartment with warm food and hugs. We talked for a while that day and Jing offered her home to me, so that I wouldn't have to spend the night alone. In addition, they gave me paid time off from work until I was ready to come back and provided me with countless of resources.

You see, a 'formulaic' company doesn't do this for their employees, a community-based company like Therapy Stores does. The love they shared with me that day, is the same love they share with all employees and customers of Therapy Stores. I am forever grateful for the unconditional love and support I have experienced from Therapy Stores, and I hope the Placerville community is able to witness their love firsthand.

Thank you,  
Janell Martinez  
Janellmartinezd@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of reference favouring Therapy Stores Inc. I have been a loyal customer to them for the past twelve years.

Besides being a happy customer for over a decade, I feel like I have also become part of their family, because that is how they run their business. Jing, Wayne and Ava not only get to know their customers on a personal level but they are also highly active in giving back to every community they are a part of. There is no other store I can think of where I can walk in and have the owners not only know my name but also know all my family members' names, know about my sweet dog and my weird cat and it is because they genuinely care about people and building strong sincere connections. Being a big fan of Therapy I have managed to travel to almost all of their stores, given that each one is so unique. It is very evident they really consider each location to ensure members of their new community feel welcome and at home. Their staff is hired locally and even provides local recommendations on where to shop and eat for the day. When Covid hit, I did my best to support their small online space, ordering gifts and jewelry from their instagram page. I would love to see Therapy and their family get back into the store and continue their success of serving their community in so many ways.

If you have any further questions about my positive experiences with Therapy, please feel free to contact me 602-538-6703 or [Catmayfield@gmail.com](mailto:Catmayfield@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

Cat Mayfield

Jim Metzker  
CEO Dorothea's Shoppe  
801 Sutter Street  
Folsom, CA 95630

To whom it may concern,

I have owned Dorothea's Shoppe for 7 years. I have seen many businesses come and go as running a small business is extremely difficult, especially under these stressful times. When The Therapy store moved in across the street, we were pleasantly surprised on many levels. They are committed to making the Folsom Historic district a better place to shop, they also bring a lot of new and fun items to our district. I am grateful that they chose to open a business on Sutter street as they are a huge asset.

Please feel free to contact me with further questions.

Jim Metzker  
916-985-2714  
dorotheas@dorotheas.com



Development Services Planning Division &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

---

## Conditional Use Permit 20-04- Therapy Stores

1 message

---

**Ruth Michelson** <ruthmichelson@sbcglobal.net>  
To: "pv.planning@gmail.com" <pv.planning@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 4:50 PM

Dear Planning Commission-

I would like this letter to be part of the packet given to the Planning Commissioners on this CUP 20-04, to be heard on November 3rd, 2020.

I am going on record as being **against** the approval of the CUP for the Therapy Store for the following reasons.

1. It is a formula business, having more than 5 stores. Because of this, it comes before you to obtain its CUP. To my knowledge, the Planning Commission looks at the CEQA issue of signage as a main determinant of approval or disapproval. I think this is in error. There are other CEQA issues of relevance, such as blight. See more on this issue below.
2. If this very large successful chain comes into the Central Business District (CBD) of Placerville, it will do severe damage to many of the existing Mom and Pop establishments that can not compete with the buying power of a chain that has done reportedly \$70 million in business over their 24 years in existence. This number is extrapolated from the website report that Therapy Store has given \$700,000 to charity, 1% of their sales, which implies a total of \$70M in sales overall. If these businesses go out of business, blight in the CBD will follow.
3. Much of the products sold in the Therapy Store, as seen on their website, are redundant with products already sold on Main Street in the CBD.
4. The current stakeholders, the businesses on Main Street, need to be considered ahead of a newcomer. The stakeholders have put their livelihoods on the line during this most difficult year and for many years. Loyalty and responsiveness to current stakeholders is of higher concern than that of someone wanting to enter our marketplace and do damage to existing business owners, especially at the critical holiday season for retailers. Current stakeholders are your constituents, and we, the Planning Commission and the constituents, need to be forming a cooperative alliance, and not one in which City officials and appointees are going against the will and the livelihoods of the people.
5. We have a unique downtown, one which attracts locals and tourists alike. If we continue to fill our stores with formula/chains that people can find in their home towns, they will have less reason to come to Placerville. The charm of the "getaway" will be gone, and we will become just another "Anytown, USA." This issue cannot be underestimated. For those of us who speak to customers on a daily basis, we know why people come to Placerville from far and wide. They come for the charm, history, and uniqueness.
6. The argument of "we need to fill an empty building to get sales tax revenue" is short-sighted and false. When this argument was used recently with a formula fast food restaurant in the CBD, there were 10 other mom and pops lined up that would have been grateful for the space. This Therapy Store business would no doubt bring in good sales tax revenue for the near term, but, that must be

balanced with the other CBD businesses that would have less sales or go out of business as a result of the Therapy Store presence.

Thank you for considering my input. My hope is that you will deny this request for a Conditional Use Permit.

Thank you.

Ruth Michelson  
[352 Main Street](#)  
[Placerville, CA](#)

Deborah Munk

October 27, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Deborah Munk and I have known Jing and Wayne since they had a tiny 500 sq ft shop in the Mission District in San Francisco where they sold used furniture. In the early 1990s they moved to a larger space and I was hired as their first employee where I stayed until I finished my master's degree seven years later.

I have known their daughter, Ava Chen-Whalen, since she was born. She now manages the very store she practically grew up in and helps her mom do the buying. Their shop is truly a family owned business.

In the early days, when he wasn't loading furniture into the store, you could find Wayne out in front, drinking a cup of coffee and talking to all the neighbors and other store owners. While Jing certainly helped move her share of armoires, she was usually inside arranging and rearranging, and of course, talking to the customers. They knew everyone in the neighborhood and brought much joy to Valencia St. and have carried this sense of community and family with them to their other stores.

I am so proud of the business they have created from very humble beginnings. And while they and the business have grown over the years, their values haven't changed. They are community minded, they treat their staff like family (many of whom stay for 10 years or more), their customers are top priority, and they are service oriented. Besides these values, they are incredibly bighearted and donate money to many organizations. As an employee, I saw first-hand their generosity and kindness over and over again. I've seen Jing stuff extra clothing into customers' bags if they can't afford a purchase and Wayne would give the shirt on his back if someone needed it.

Most recently, they reluctantly opened an online store, but only because of Covid 19. They have always said that they want to interact with their customers face to face not through an online purchase, even though this would have generated more income.

They are still at it 26 years later. You can find Wayne moving furniture and drinking a cup of coffee in front of a store, and Jing talking to her customers, who she considers friends. They will be a great addition to any commercial area and their presence will increase foot traffic for all the other businesses. I am proud to be a friend, a customer, and former employee.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Deborah Munk  
415-642-9440  
debmun@gmail.com



Development Services Planning Division &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Objection to CUP**

1 message

**Jack Nissen** <pntxjack@aol.com>

Tue, Oct 27, 2020 at 5:40 AM

Reply-To: Jack Nissen &lt;pntxjack@aol.com&gt;

To: "pv.planning@gmail.com" &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

Dear City of Placerville Planning Commissioners:

I am a sixteen year member of the Gold Country Artists Gallery ([379 Main Street, Placerville](#)) and a nearly thirty year very frequent patron of businesses in downtown Placerville. (I write this letter for myself, and not on behalf of the gallery.)

I value very highly Main Street's unique look and feel having no franchise and/or formula businesses, but only businesses owned and operated by "locals". The economic damage to our locally owned and operated businesses if the CUP to the "Therapy Store" is granted is incalculable.

I am not alone in that respect-my friends, neighbors and visitors with whom I have spoken agree-Main Street's lack of formula businesses is highly valued.

I write to object to the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit for "Therapy Store" at 339 Main Street.

The "Therapy Store" operates eleven locations, including one out of the state of California. (It is already advertising "Coming Soon" to Placerville on its web site.)

The "Therapy Store" is a formula business and it should not be permitted to operate on Main Street.

PLEASE deny the application and preserve the unique character of our downtown Placerville.

Thank you.

Jack Nissen

(530) 642 0390

To the community members and proprietors of downtown Placerville,  
As the HR Manager for Therapy Stores Inc. it is my responsibility to provide details and information about the company's organizational chart in hopes that it may give insight to the values of our brand. These values have unfortunately been called into question and disparaged by inaccurate information that I vehemently deny.

Despite the narrative provided by some of the current business owners, Therapy continues to operate as a small business with incredible dedication by a small group of individuals. Therapy has been built from the ground up with no advantage except for the hard work of the owners and our small staff, which currently sits at a total of twenty five people. Despite the sometimes complicated implications from an HR standpoint, the owners are extremely active in the day to day operation of the business and work alongside not just their management team, but their sales associates. To claim that the organization is a chain or anything other than a family owned business is not only misleading, it is simply untrue. It is because of this hard work that Therapy Stores has proudly opened locations in small communities to bring jobs, commerce, and patronage. It has been our hope to do this in Placerville and sit with, not against, members of this community.

The concept of Therapy Stores has always been to create a place of inclusivity, a place where there is something for everyone. That is also how Therapy interacts with the external environment and what has led to our success. I would urge the current individuals who oppose this opening to think about the good of the community, commerce, and future of Placerville, not just their own wallets. This is the thinking that got Therapy to the place it is today.

Very Sincerely,

Alexandra O'Dowd

# AMANO STUDIO

HANDCRAFTED IN CALIFORNIA

10 Maple Street, suite 201, Sonoma CA 95476 \*\* 707-996-4920 -- info@amanotrading.com

To whom it may concern, this is a letter of recommendation and support for the family owned business Therapy Stores. I have known Jing Chen, Wayne Whelen and their daughter Ava Chen-Whelen for over 20 years. From modest beginnings as a small vintage furniture store in San Francisco, they have grown with boutiques around the Bay Area. Their stores are beloved and welcomed by the communities they operate in. They are known for offering an appealing and interesting selection of gift, apparel and accessories at very fair prices. They are also known as being generous, responsible employers.

They also support many small Northern California makers (Amano Studio included). As a small Sonoma based jewelry maker, Therapy has been my biggest customer and has been an important part of the growth of Amano Studio. Furthermore, they are honest, fair business partners.

The success of Jing, Wayne and Ava's stores is the result of being sensitive to the community's needs: those of the other merchants, their employees and their vendors and they should be welcomed in any community with open arms.

Sincerely,  
Seana Pedelaborde  
Amano Studio  
Designer/Maker

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of support and recommendation for Therapy Stores, Jing Chen, Wayne Whelan and Ava Chen-Whelan.

I have worked in retail for over 15 years at real “chain” stores, and Therapy Stores is not one of those. I started working at Therapy Stores nearly 3 years ago. From my first interview with them, I knew this was going to be an amazing experience, and I’m continually impressed by Jing, Wayne and Ava’s integrity, support, respect and fostering a sense of family and community.

The best part about working here is the fact that we have stores in beautiful downtown areas. We coexist wonderfully with the other boutiques, bakeries, book stores and restaurants in the neighborhood. I have the privilege of being able to travel between multiple locations, and getting to know our different communities. It is so special to have regular customers who have been calling Therapy Stores their “go-to” place to shop for years. I can go to Pleasanton one day and chat with our upstairs neighbor, Milton, then head down to Mountain View and see Toni and her girlfriends out shopping after their weekly dinner at Agave.

Jing, Wayne and Ava have grown this business with their own hard work, store by store, over the course of 26 years. They put so much detail and effort into every space they create, and curate it with the most fun, insightful, and thoughtful items. It is such a privilege to have employers that want to see you grow and succeed.

In conclusion, their hard work and dedication shines through in all of our staff and in our communities. Therapy Stores is an asset and pillar in the communities they’re a part of.

Best Regards,  
Savannah Peña



Development Services Planning Division &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Keep Chains Off Main**

1 message

**Emily Peter** <emilylpeter@gmail.com>

Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 3:17 PM

To: pv.planning@gmail.com

Planning Commission,

I'm writing to oppose the opening of Therapy on Main Street.

They carry similar items already carried in multiple stores on Main Street. What are they offering then? These owners are not local and do not care for Placerville as much as the small business owners on Main Street do.

The charm of Main Street Placerville will be lost when chain stores begin opening. I can visit chain stores in Folsom, Roseville, Sacramento, and so on. Placerville thrives off the community built from unique, locally-owned stores. Totem, Panic & Swoon, Midnight Kin, Matty Wags, Placerville Public House, The Independent, etc. are the reasons I drive from El Dorado Hills to Placerville for shopping and food and drink.

Please consider helping the businesses already on Main Street sustain their business. These are real locals who have worked hard to create a vibrant Main Street.

Kindly,  
Emily Peter-Corey

Planning Commission  
Town Hall 549 Main Street  
Placerville, CA 95667

**RE: Tuesday, November 3, 2020  
339 MAIN STREET - CUP 20-04 AND SPR 20-04 – Therapy Stores:**

As the Elected Board of Directors representing the Placerville Downtown Association (PDA) we ask that the City Planning Commission deny this Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan Review. The PDA represents many merchants and businesses on Main Street within the Central Business District. Many of these business owners bought into the understanding that they were investing in a pedestrian-oriented, unique shopping area that would be protected from encroachment by unrelated and incompatible uses within a historic city. It is also well known that the downtown serves as a public gathering place for numerous events in which the local business owners are heavily involved, both in supporting financially and physically. Placerville being the County seat, these events are a benefit to the entire County. Formula Business are not geared to contribute to these types of activities. More formula businesses will mean less events that contribute to the unique character of the downtown.

The Merchants and Business owners within the Placerville community Central Business District (CBD), wish to see the City policy makers consider their General Plan and supporting ordinances placed to protect the Downtown's historic gold rush identity that is the backdrop of the community "culture" and experience. The City of Placerville's documents repeatedly cite a commitment to the **unique character** of the Central Business District within their General Plan, their zoning ordinances, and their streetscape plan.

**FACTS:**

As ordained by the City Council on 2/24/2004 with ordinance 1597, as follows; the Community Design Element of the City of Placerville's General Plan includes policies pertaining to the quality of life in Placerville by maintaining the City's foothill landscape character, small town rural atmosphere, prospering local and regional business center; and, maintaining the City's Gold Rush heritage. And, further contains policies reinforcing the Central Business District as the icon of the community; the City Council finds that these policies are necessary to preserve the unique and historic character of the City's Central Business District, including regulation the aspect of businesses, services and merchandise which reflects the history of the community and which has become a cornerstone of the tourist industry, is an important component of the City's overall economy; the City Council further finds that certain Formula Business establishments do not reflect the unique character of the community and the desired aesthetic ambience of the Central Business District in that they offer standardized architecture, use and character identical to similar Formula Businesses located in other communities and , thus, cannot contribute to the established uniqueness of the Central Business Districts;

**CITY OF PLACERVILLE MUNICIPAL CODE — TITLE 10, ZONING ORDINANCE**  
**10-5-14: CBD, CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONE:**

(A) Purpose: This Zone is established in order to:

1. Provide for a broad range of pedestrian-oriented commercial, institutional, and public uses.
2. Protect the downtown area from encroachment by unrelated and incompatible uses.
3. Differentiate the downtown area from all other land use designations because of its **unique** character. (Ord. 1487, 14 Jan 1992)

I understand that a formula business, as defined by the City has the right to apply for a conditional use permit as long as they “are in harmony with the various elements or objectives of the Comprehensive General Plan.” We believe that a formula retail store that has a buying power advantage over individually owned stores will be detrimental to the merchant community within the CBD and is not in harmony with the unique character that has been established by the locally owned downtown businesses.

**Per City Code: “FORMULA BUSINESS:** Any business with a proposed or existing exterior design (appearance, colors, signage) that is essentially identical to five (5) or more other business sites using the same or similar name or identity. (Ord. 1597, 10 Feb 2004)”

Businesses on Main Street have worked hard to create one-of-a-kind experiences along with creating a working downtown. The City of Placerville’s Planning Commission is currently the steward of the ordinances that were put in place to protect the uniqueness of the Central Business District. Allowing a large formula business with products collectively similar to so many of our small downtown shops and with buying power to undercut these individual shops will lead to degrading the uniqueness of the Central Business District. Losing these individual shops due to inability to compete with a formula business will leave a hole for other formula businesses further degrading the CBD’s uniqueness.

Historically the City of Placerville has maintained the image of Placerville as a gold rush destination town. Placerville is unique not only because of its 1800’s architecture, but because of its small individualized shops and restaurants. This unique character would be adversely affected by the inclusion of “formula businesses” and would conflict with the historical, distinct atmosphere and unique character for which Placerville is famous.

**Therefore, this project must be denied because it is encroaching and incompatible with the individual stores and not compatible with the City of Placerville’s unique character.**

Per the sign regulations for the Central Business District:

Per City Code: 10-4-17: **“SIGN REGULATIONS:** (A) Purpose: The purpose of this chapter is to provide minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property, and the public welfare in keeping with the unique aesthetic and historic character of the City of Placerville by regulating and controlling the size, height, design, quality of materials,

construction, location, electrification, and maintenance of all permanent and temporary exterior signs and sign structures and to accomplish the following results.”

It is clear that the signage will be similar to the other and growing Therapy stores. Just because the exterior will be simplistic does not make the power and sameness of a chain any less impacting.

**Therefore, this Conditional Use Permit and the Site Plan Review must also be denied because the sign is not in keeping with the unique aesthetic and historic character of the City of Placerville.**

Since the Planning Commission illegally opened the door to Sourdough as a Fast Food/Formula Business, others are now following as predicted. This will quickly change the unique character that brings so many locals and tourists to our historic downtown.

Members of the Placerville Downtown Association has asked visitors what draws them to Placerville. Almost always, the answer is that they come because of our unique downtown and our commitment to the history of this region. They want a taste of the small-town life where there are no well-known formula businesses that remind them of Anytown, USA. The question has been asked as to how visitors would feel about the introduction of a formula business and they are all horrified and fear that it will ruin the quaint, unique atmosphere they have come to appreciate so much.

We ask that the City Planning Commission abide by the City Codes, respect the General Plan that protects the **unique and historic character** of Placerville's central business district, including regulating the aspect of businesses, services and merchandise that is reflective of the history and people of the community and which has become a cornerstone of the visitor industry which is a key component in the City's economy and culture. Therefore, I ask that you deny the Conditional Use Permit and the Site Plan Review for the Therapy Store.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bryan Chase  
President of the Placerville Downtown Association

Tim Taylor  
Treasurer of the Placerville Downtown Association

Heidi Mayerhofer  
Secretary of the Placerville Downtown Association

Email: [bryanchase85@gmail.com](mailto:bryanchase85@gmail.com)

Nancy Prickitt

1 Manor View Drive • Fairfax, CA 94930 • Phone: 415-309-9891  
[nancyprickitt@gmail.com](mailto:nancyprickitt@gmail.com)

Letter of recommendation for Therapy Stores

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my support for Jing Chen, Wayne Whelan and their daughter Ava in specific, and the Therapy stores in general. I have known Jing and her family for 25 years and I can honestly say that they are the most conscientious business owners I have ever dealt with.

I was a representative in the accessory industry for many years. I was fortunate to have a line that was in very high demand. I watched as Jing and Wayne and then Ava grew their business from a small mom and pop store in San Francisco. They did this throughout difficult financial times in Northern California history and always with extreme professionalism and integrity.

If you are familiar with business in a small town then you must be familiar with the fact that some lines are highly desired and some store owners will try to establish relationships with companies that already have existing clientele in geographic areas. Jing and Wayne were always above reproach and very respectful of others stores product mix. I cannot say that about some of their neighbors who tried to convince the companies that I worked with to sell to them. This kind of activity would never even be considered by Therapy.

As for Therapy being a “formula” store, that is the last adjective that I would use to describe this business. The owners are constantly seeking to promote and establish business avenues for creatives of all types, but especially small businesses and especially those based in Northern California. Jing, Wayne and Ava spend enormous amounts of time and energy seeking out the best product mixes for their stores. Not something I can say about every retailer.

There is one other thing that I think you should know about the owners of Therapy. And that is the extent to which they have always gone to take care of their employees. This is truly a family business in every sense of that word. The first thing they did when the pandemic caused a shut down was to go out and buy two weeks of groceries for each and every one of their employees. You don't see that level of humanity very often in business.

In summation, I believe that there is nothing to fear but everything to gain from allowing THERAPY a place in downtown Placerville.

Sincerely and with best regards,

Nancy Prickitt  
[nancyprickitt@gmail.com](mailto:nancyprickitt@gmail.com)  
415-309-9891

October 27, 2020  
Chrystal Quartermaine

To whom it may concern,

My name is Chrystal Quartermaine and I have been employed by Therapy Stores Inc since 2018, and a customer since 2013. I grew up in Perth, Western Australia and moved to San Jose, California in 2013 with my husband. We wandered down Castro St, exploring Mountain View as new residents of the town and happened across Therapy Stores inc for the first time, from that moment I was hooked.

One of the really wonderful things about Therapy Stores Inc is the propensity for inclusion and representation. There is something for all ages, ethnicities, genders and identities, leaving no-one behind. Anytime my husband and I entertain visitors, a trip to therapy stores is right at the top of sightseeing lists. In fact, we regularly have customers drive down from Seattle just to come to our store in Portland. A visit to a Therapy Store can make any day better.

Jing and Wayne have a great reputation and are known for their generosity as they donate money to local charities/organizations and schools. Wayne particularly has a reputation for donating time and man hours to businesses in the area that need help, advice or simply an ear. Jing has an uncanny ability to make you feel like you've known each other for years, a mere 5 minutes after meeting. Nearly everyday there is an email from Jing to the stores encouraging staff to do our best, and be our best, whether it be personally or professionally.

I feel so lucky to know the Chen-Whalen Clan, they are truly and deeply lovely people and will be an exciting addition to any community they are apart of.

Sincerely yours,

Chrystal Quartermaine

Gayle Rohl  
4581 Ridge Drive  
Shingle Springs, Ca 95682  
10/26/2020

Dear Placerville City Council:

The Combellack's Building at 339 Main Street in Placerville was owned and operated by myself and my family for over 130 years. During that timespan we have helped to make Downtown Placerville the shopping destination it has become and contributed to many fundraisers and charities.

The purpose of this letter is to request that you grant a conditional use permit to the new owners of the building, Jing Chen and Wayne Whalen.

During the process of selling the building, I went out of my way to find a buyer who would fit in well with Historic Downtown Placerville. I think the Therapy Store is a great fit for downtown, and will help bring in more shoppers for all of the downtown merchants. They are a family owned and operated business. Ava Chan-Whelan is Wayne and Jings Daughter, she also works at the Therapy Store. They have been in business for 26 years and have a proven track record of success. They understand the long hours, worries and commitment it takes to be a business owner. Their mission is to serve the public, and they will continue that mission in their new Placerville location. In conclusion, I believe that granting a permit for the Therapy Store to operate on Main Street would have a positive effect on Main Street and Placerville as a whole.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gayle Combellack-Rohl".

Gayle Rohl

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Alice Ruiz and I am no longer an employee at Therapy Stores but working for them is a time of my life that I truly cherish. Jing Chen and Wayne Whelan treat everyone who works for them as whole individuals who deserve to be fostered just as much as their family business. This attitude extends to the communities in which their stores inhabit. Each store is tailored to that neighborhood's needs as well as donates specifically to organizations that will have an impact in those very communities. Jing, Wayne, and their daughter Ava Chen-Whelan work incredibly hard and while to the outside it may appear to be a chain of corporate stores due to the number of stores, I can tell you first hand that they have a personal hand in every location. Jing Chen still works in every location behind the register alongside her employees and she personally conducted my interview. The number of stores Therapy has been able to establish is proof of hard work and a family's personal devotion to reaching as many communities as they can, in hopes to bring small makers, talented artists, and a unique selection of items to their doorsteps. Their goal is to uplift their employees, the communities they work and live in, and the artists/makers they employ and showcase in their stores.

To me and many, Therapy represents community. The character of Therapy is unmatched by any other employer I have ever had. When COVID hit and the news that we may have to shut our doors on March 17th, they personally made sure that groceries to get each employee by for a Shelter In Place order were delivered to all locations. They set aside 2 weeks of pay for every employee in an incredibly unclear time and Jing used her personal savings to pay out the vendors the store orders from to make sure that nobody was going to be left high and dry. Jing and Wayne care deeply about each individual store, from the way a customer feels walking into our store and on the larger scale through donations and community outreach. They are an incredibly humble family operated business that have managed to maintain small business roots while growing and have always kept their core values. I sincerely hope that Placerville allows the city to have the chance to experience Therapy first hand because from the first hello when you walk in the door, you will know what kind of business owners Jing and Wayne are.

Thank you,

Alice Ruiz

## Letter about Jing Chen and Therapy Stores

I met Jing professionally and learned right away the story of this incredible hard working, passionate, Asian American female business owner. That was my first impression I sought out her rich benefactors and I found there aren't any. She isn't a huge corporation with layers of management. I met many in business who spout things like customers first, customer centric, customers are job 1! I get that but in Jing I know who tells stories about her customers and employees. She is sincere in her care about products from producers of all sizes not just the same stuff I see at big stores. She brings products that are playful, important, whimsical and useful for individuals, couples and families. She sees products with her customers because she knows her customers.

Business owners got crushed through Covid those who can pivot and can adapt can survive. Jing thinks and spends energy in planning. Her care for her employees is impressive. She was able to take would many would say is high exposure during Covid and strengthen online as a way for her customers to shop safely. She is part of many downtowns throughout our State. Her feet are in and out of stores, meeting with community leaders. She puts immense energy into sourcing from vendors with products she believes in completely. This focused incredible business acumen, energy and skill is rare. She invests in her employees and the communities where her stores are located. She has been in some locations for years and is a fixture. She collaborates so many folks believe any competition is bad. She sees that no one store or owner can serve everyone's needs. This is refreshing in financing I meet many who talk about themselves and she will bring the conversation back to others or even me a subject I adore. She would admit freely not every decision is perfect and desire to try and to invest in communities is everything that is our Country.

In closing very impressed with Jing as a well-rounded, bright, energetic, caring, passionate business owner on a path of service and delivering products that surprise, make you laugh, get you to think and bring people together. I don't think she likes labels too much and I try to avoid saying what a successful Asian American female business owner, community leader. I think she would say I really care about customers, employees and products and can tell you why, She has been through multiple financial challenges business owners face. She doesn't see herself above the rest tries to learn from experiences and move forward towards helping more people now!

Professionally I want to recommend Jing Chen as (I am using titles) a community asset, employer, proud store owner, guardian of her customers and loves to hear others laugh and see smiles in her store.

Thank you

Alan Russell

Loan Advisor

Golden1 Credit Union

880 East Campbell Ave ste 104

Campbell, Ca. 95008

Received by Development Services Dept.  
October 27, 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

Just over a year ago, I began working at Therapy. I had just graduated from UC Berkeley and quit my job at Target which I had for five years throughout my schooling. It was an incredibly challenging time as I began transitioning into the next phase of adulthood and really working out what I wanted to do. One afternoon while wandering around downtown Alameda where I live, I stopped in front of Therapy which I had been in many times before and thought, "hey, I love shopping here and the people who work here, why not apply." Within a couple of weeks I was sitting down for an interview which felt more like a conversation with a friend I hadn't seen in a few years, but nothing really changed when we got together again. I began work the very next day.

That is truly the best way I can describe what it's like to work at Therapy, and Therapy as a company. There is a comfortability there that can only come from people who care deeply for what they do and the people they serve. Jing and Wayne have never been faceless entities at the helm of a corporation as some are trying to paint them; they are in the stores, they are building relationships with their customers and employees, and most of all, they are still loving what they do even 25 years on. The reason they have seen so much success is because of their core values, ones that are instilled within the company and the people who work there. We are taught to have compassion, to understand the values of our customers' time and money, and how important it is to be thankful for their business, no matter how small.

We are in an age of rapidly developing and changing technology that has been the cause of many smaller businesses shuttered windows and doors. It is hard to compete with the instant gratification that a computer screen and quick click of a mouse brings; but it is something that Therapy has continuously evolved and grown with. However, I would like to acknowledge that although Therapy has grown, the heart of it has remained; and that is the initial spark that started the company many years ago. Building connections with the community and customers has been at the forefront of Therapy's success. The loyalty that Therapy has garnered from consumers as well as employees is evident from the moment you walk in and felt long after you've left that can only come from the heart of a small business. Although I have only been with the company for a year, I have a fierce loyalty and gratitude for the people I work with and the owners who have shown me what it is like to work for and with someone who cares for you not just as an employee, but as a person. They have always encouraged growth and new opportunities, but have never forgotten where they came from and who helped them along the way; and that is what makes them so special.

Thank you for your time and heartfelt consideration,

SHR

To whom it may concern,

I have worked for Jing and Wayne at the Therapy store in Portland, OR, for 3 1/2 years and they have welcomed me into the small Therapy family with open arms. I have worked at big box chains in the past (Levi's, Paper Source, The Body Shop) and have never seen these businesses participate, become part of, and care for the community they're a part of anywhere near the level Therapy has. As one of two employees in Portland, I have experienced first hand how Jing and Wayne have positively impacted the St. Johns, Portland community. They are not looking to run anyone out of business but rather join and grow with everyone else. I truly believe Therapy will be an excellent addition to the Placerville community.

Ashley Shubin

To Whom It May Concern,

As we all know the retail landscape is facing challenging times and small businesses especially are having to reinvent the wheel in order to survive. I am writing this letter in support of Therapy Stores being permitted to open in downtown Placerville. Therapy Stores is founded on entrepreneurial spirit and a sheer will and desire to make a living doing something that brings joy to others. Jing Chen and Wayne Whelan started selling used furniture out of the back of a truck in the Mission District of San Francisco over 30 years ago. They had a vision to one day open a store and be able to bring their passion for furniture and retail in general to the community. At that time the Mission District was not what it was today. Jing and Wayne worked day and night to be able to open a small community based business which formed strong relationships with its customers and resulted in lifelong friendships. I hope that you will be able to see why you would want Therapy Stores to be a part of the Placerville community, because in essence Jing and Wayne have created a family of stores that have become deeply invested in the community. They are authentic, caring and always give back. They carefully choose where they would like to open a store, knowing that it isn't just a space to sell goods, it is a place for people to come and find something that they love, make a new connection and bring joy in their lives.

I can speak to how much they care about their employees as I was first a loyal customer and then an employee. I worked for them over the course of 4 years in a critical time in my life and they guided me to find my own career path. I admire and respect them even more after becoming an employee which isn't always the case with a job. Seeing first hand how involved they are with every aspect of the business, they are not absentee owners. They know their business and every employee who is lucky enough to become part of the Therapy family is shown the opportunity to learn, grow and evolve on a professional and personal level. That's the thing with knowing Jing and Wayne, the more you get to know them, the more you will understand that they are hardworking, inventive and truly inspiring small business owners which bring something incredibly unique and refreshing to the table. What you see is what you get and at face value they are an asset to any downtown business area with their carefully curated product assortment and creative merchandising. Beyond face value, the city of Placerville will be welcoming a small business owned by two incredibly qualified, honest and caring individuals who understand what it takes to make a small business work and be successful.

Last but not least, I want to take a moment to note the comments that have been made by another merchant in the Placerville community. It is disheartening that in these times that social media is ultimately a tool to continue to denigrate others and not promote small business in a positive light. While I understand that other small business owners may be concerned about Therapy taking away business from their own, that fear is ultimately a concern for any business at any time. Fear cannot be a reason to drive a small business out of town. Every business owner must take accountability for how they run their business, treat their employees and identify and retain their customer base. To use Therapy as a scapegoat for a reason as to why they may not be able to continue to operate is unfortunate. The saddest part about some of the comments received is that subconsciously or consciously there is an underlying tone of racism involved. This is an incredibly challenging time for everyone and I am grateful that you have taken the time to read this letter. Please welcome them to Placerville, please do not let fear, competition and for some racism become the reason to deny a viable family owned business the opportunity to be a contributing member of the community.

Best Regards,

Ashley Smith



October 27, 2020

---

St. Johns Boosters  
Business Association

---

PO Box 83291  
Portland, OR 97283

[info@stjohnsboosters.org](mailto:info@stjohnsboosters.org)

---

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today in support of one of our local businesses, Therapy, and our experience with them being a part of our community in St. Johns, Portland, Oregon. St. Johns is a vibrant business district with a distinct small town feel, and the association has been around since 1926, making us the second oldest business association in Portland. We are a mix of legacy businesses, long-time building and business owners, and new businesses.

Our experience with Therapy:

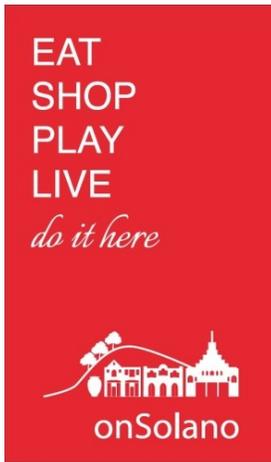
- They moved into the St. Johns Neighborhood in 2015, and bought their building, and being there for 5 years has allowed them to be a part of that neighborhood and build relationships with neighboring businesses.
- They joined the business association to be connected with other businesses through membership.
- Their team has worked hard to reach out to the community, get to know community members and their business, and recommend local businesses to others.
- They actively participate in events in St. Johns contribute to the fundraising needs in the neighborhood, as well as hosted a Night Market for over a year to promote local makers. They donate 1% of sales from all of their locations and a large portion of that donation goes into local school districts. They also donate to the Portland Food Bank every year.
- They have been around for 26 years but continue to run like a traditional mom and pop store. The owners' daughter had worked for the company since 2016.

The marketing and messaging of Therapy is very specific to St. Johns and our community, being very positive and sharing a passion for living in St. Johns.

We think they would be a great addition to any community!

Best regards,

Liz Smith  
President, St Johns Boosters  
website: [stjohnsboosters.org](http://stjohnsboosters.org)  
email: [info@stjohnsboosters.org](mailto:info@stjohnsboosters.org)



The Solano Avenue  
Association

SolanoStroll.org  
info@SolanoStroll.org

**510-527-5358**

1569 Solano Avenue #101  
Berkeley California  
94707-2116

President  
Jennifer Hansen-Romero  
Winkler Real Estate Group

Vice President  
Jason Bellevue  
RAF Investments

Second Vice President  
Tod Abbott  
Full Orbit Web and Marketing

Treasurer - Jason Alabanza  
Mechanics Bank (Albany)

Secretary  
Janet Snidow, The Mane Alley

Ge'Nell Gary  
Albany Resident

Peggy and Richard Smith  
Allstate Insurance

Rafael Rangell  
YMCA – East Bay Area

Robert Abrams  
Abrams-Claghorn Gallery

Shannon Beatty  
Paychex Systems

Tod Abbott  
Full Orbit Web and Marketing

**Allen Cain, Executive Director and  
Events Manager**

10/28/2020

Regarding Therapy Store(s)  
339 Main Street  
Placerville, CA 95667

(on Solano Avenue in Berkeley, CA since 2013)

Hello:

Solano Avenue is a mile-long commercial district with over 250 ground floor businesses. We are proud of the fact that over 90 percent of commercial enterprises on Solano Avenue are independently owned.

Our commercial district (much like Placerville's) does have less than a dozen tenants that would be considered corporately owned; they give our district credibility and a higher profile. These include the usual such as Peet's and Starbucks; a Safeway... Solano Avenue also features a dozen businesses that are independently owned and operated, who also, however, have the fortune of having several locations throughout the region.

Therapy is one of them. Expansion is a bi-product of a successful enterprise and we are happy, and proud to see Therapy grow. They have an extremely polished appearance and top notch merchandising and showrooms. On Solano Avenue, they have successfully attracted a younger audience which is what Solano Avenue needed (and still needs today). Though they have a sophisticated operation, they continue to run like a traditional "mom and pop" behind the scenes. Their daughter has worked for the company since 2016.

Being on Solano Avenue for 7 years has allowed them to be a part of the neighborhood and build relationships - they purchased their location in 2013. They have worked hard to achieve a positive rapport with neighbors, get to know them and their business. Therapy actively participates in the events on Solano and has even helped with local fundraising: they donate 1% of sales from all of their locations - mostly to local schools.

Knowing what we desire on Solano Avenue, it is safe to say that we support their location in Placerville and think it is an excellent opportunity for all parties. Thank you for your consideration.

<https://www.solanoavenueassn.org/solano-avenue-directory/>



Development Services Planning Division <pv.planning@gmail.com>

---

## "Therapy" chain store on Main Street

1 message

---

**scott sowa** <s\_sowa@hotmail.com>

Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 3:12 PM

To: "pv.planning@gmail.com" <pv.planning@gmail.com>

"Therapy" is a Bay Area based formula chain store and should not be allowed to occupy the old Combellack's building on Historic Main Street. This one retailer will destroy several local merchants who have fought hard to stay open during the shutdowns and are desperately relying on this year's holiday sales.

Scott Sowa  
991 Oak Terrace Road  
Placerville  
Mobile/text: 916-799-5101

Sent from my iPhone

**Laurel District Association**  
**Laurel Business Improvement District**  
**Oakland, CA**  
***Grow the Laurel!***



October 27, 2020

RE: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 20-04, Site Plan Review (SPR) 20-04 – Therapy Stores

Esteemed Members of the Placerville Planning Commission;

I want to strongly recommend Therapy Stores as a positive addition to your downtown. I serve as the Executive Director of the Laurel District Association, a property based Business Improvement District, located in East Oakland's Laurel District and comprised of approximately 80 commercial property owners and 100 businesses ranging from a few national brands to a large percentage of locally owned mom and pop businesses (about 30% having been in operation in the commercial district for 10+ years). I have been working with Therapy since they moved to our neighborhood in 2015. They were an excellent addition as we try to grow the district as a destination for shopping and dining. Therapy immediately took the needs of the neighborhood and area residents into account and have worked hard to bring their customer following to increase the foot traffic to the district. They participate in district events, use social media to call attention to their location, and actively support initiatives of the District Association. The team at Therapy earnestly promotes the business around them, and proactive in ensuring a safe, clean, and vibrant commercial corridor. I believe Therapy would be a great addition to any downtown, small or large. And as a person who makes a point to stop in Placerville on my travels to the Sierras. I would love to see how they feature local artists and artisans, and the many area makers with their inventory at the Placerville Therapy.

Feel free to call or email with any questions or follow up, and thank you for considering the recommendation.

Sincerely,

Daniel Swafford  
Executive Director  
Laurel District Association  
LaurelDistrictAssociation.org  
M: 510-452-7392

**Laurel District Association**  
**Laurel Business Improvement District**  
**4222 MacArthur Blvd.**  
**Oakland, CA 94619**  
**LaurelDistrictAssociation@yahoo.com**  
**LaurelDistrictAssociation.org**

John Tranchitella  
336 Wayne Avenue #7  
Oakland CA 946060  
[jtranchitella@gmail.com](mailto:jtranchitella@gmail.com)  
502-526-6178

---

To whom it may concern:

It is with great pride that I discuss my relationship and experience with Therapy Stores Inc. I first met Wayne in 1980, when we served together in The United States Air Force at Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino CA.

I moved to San Francisco in 1997 and went to work for Wayne and Jing. At the time they had one store on Valencia Street in San Francisco. Their Daughter Ava Chen Whelan had just been born and they were opening a second store.

At that time the business was mostly used furniture and collectables. The entire company consisted of Wayne and Jing, me and I think maybe two other employees. Wayne and Jing did everything and worked incredibly hard to build the business. They had a dedication to their customers and community that continues to this day. It is amazing what they have achieved.

What impresses me the most about Wayne and Jing is their dedication to ethical practices, both in employment and in dealing with customers. They have customers who have been shopping with them from the beginning.

They are very "hands on," and have managed to continue the "family" atmosphere and culture of their business. Although they have more employees than they did at the beginning, they make it a point to know all their employees. Therapy is like a big family. In my experience, a lot of companies say that—but Therapy is the real deal. Having started with nothing, Wayne and Jing make it a point to pay above market wages and to provide the best benefits possible. They also promote from within and stress having a positive work environment. They have long term employees who have progressed into management. One of these is Ava Chen Whelan, their daughter who has carried on the culture of fairness and engagement that permeates the experiences of employees at Therapy.

Wayne and Jing are an American and Californian success story. They did it one customer at a time. They are generous. In addition to creating jobs, they become a part of the community. They are very philanthropic and give back quietly.

They have managed to grow their business and not lose sight of how they started and where they came from. They are a great example of what I call "compassionate capitalists." They really understand that owning a business in a community, gives them an obligation to that community.

I wish Therapy Stores nothing but continued success and am grateful to have been a part of it at the very beginning. It is my honor to know them.

Sincerely,



John Tranchitella, MSHRL, PHL

Human Resources Professional Consulting



Development Services Planning Division &lt;pv.planning@gmail.com&gt;

---

**Formula business on Main St**

1 message

---

**Elena Tucker** <esbtucker@gmail.com>  
To: pv.planning@gmail.com

Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 10:19 PM

Hello,

As a property owner and business owner on Main St, I am very concerned and disappointed that a conditional use permit is being proposed for a formula store. Formula businesses have no place in the historic district and will destroy what makes downtown Placerville unique and a destination. People come to Main St now because we offer something they can't find in their own towns. They stay at the Cary House or stop on their way to and from Tahoe because of the charm and uniqueness of Main St. This company already has a store in Folsom, as well as 9 stores in the Bay Area. Main St is not a mall. It's identity and unique character need to be protected and preserved.

I strongly object to a formula business in the historic district of Main St.

*elena tucker*

*360 Main St*

*Art Studio 360*



October 27, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I have an interesting perspective on Therapy Stores - that perspective of a competitor.

During the beginning of the Covid shutdown we were navigating (*and not very well*) our new role as an online retailer. Our inventory was off and we were getting orders for a puzzle that we were out of. There was no product left from the publisher or even Amazon. Obviously - we were desperate.

Therapy Stores sold us some inventory (*at wholesale, mind you*) to bridge our inventory gap. This was incredibly generous. This sort of kind gesture is very rare in the retail community. I am forever grateful.

Therapy Stores are owned by a family. They have wonderful, long-term relationships with their staff. They give back to their communities and they treat suppliers, competitors and their communities with respect and kindness.

They work hard. They are creative and nimble. These are the qualities that American towns and cities need on their shopping streets. I truly say to any street - if Therapy decides to be your neighbor - it's your lucky day. There aren't many family run retailers that truly love their communities left.

I applaud Therapy Stores and their passion and their commitments to their suppliers, neighbors and communities.

Best,  
Nathan Waldon

10/28/2020

To whom may concern,

I have worked at Therapy Stores for Jing and Wayne since I was 18 years old. I have worked at their San Francisco locations on Valencia and Grant St, and I was always well taken cared of by this company. I have previously worked at more corporate companies, and there is no comparison when I talk about how well both Jing and Wayne take care of their employees and treat all of us like family. Therapy Stores always welcomed me with open arms as well as every customer that enters our doors. Their mission is to provide the best experiences for each and every customer. Despite all the hardships Therapy Stores has faced through the pandemic that affected us all, Jing and Wayne still put everyone else first despite every obstacle they are facing due to the pandemic. I have met some of the most genuine, down to earth, and kind people through this small community, so I believe that Therapy Stores will have a huge positive impact on the Placerville community as they did for many communities in the Bay Area. I'm extremely thankful for all the learning opportunities that Therapy Stores has provided for me and I genuinely think they can have such a positive impact on the Placerville community!

With love,

Mavis Wen

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ava Chen-Whelan, and I'm the daughter of Jing Chen and Wayne Whelan, and also an employee of Therapy Stores. My parents started their business just shortly before having me 25 years ago, and have worked tirelessly to get to where they are today. Prior to starting Therapy Stores in 1994, my mom immigrated to the United States at 18 and worked at Burger King, before meeting my dad who had received his GED and joined the Air Force. Growing up alongside Therapy meant the world to me, as I'm an only child, but it never felt that way growing up as I had all of these adopted older siblings that my parents and I truly treated like family. None of what Therapy has become today would have come without some sacrifices, and for me that meant spending my first days of school with my grandmother, while my parents were away at trade shows, and many *many* hours spent in the car when we would commute from Templeton up to the Bay Area, and learning to use the register in second grade-it's still where I feel safest!

Truthfully, my parents do not have a lot in common, but their work ethic is truly unmatched. For as long as I can remember, there have been no days off, unless someone is sick, which is a rare occurrence. I've always been incredibly lucky to have such hardworking parents, because it meant a life of privilege, but furthermore they have taught me and surrounded me with so many hardworking, intelligent individuals that I am so grateful to have. I recall the exact moment my sophomore year of high school when I realized how lucky I was to have so many people in my life from different walks of life, that I had to look up to.

I'm so proud of my parents, not only for what they have accomplished, but also for what they have given others. They have created an environment of generosity, by donating to local charities in each of the communities that we are in, and fostering an environment in which everyone is able to participate in their giving, from matching employee donations to donating to causes that are personal to individuals. Whenever someone at the store is sick, my parents have taught me to get them soup and tea delivered, and ensure that everyone gets anything they may need and that everyone always feels cared for.

No one has seen the level of personal sacrifice that my parents have given more than myself, from putting all of their savings into the business just a few months ago when COVID-19 hit, to the personal sacrifices that they made when missing family dinners and birthday parties. I could go on about what kind of people my parents are, but at their core, they are not business people, they are parents. Anyone that has worked at Therapy has probably been around when either of my parents or I have had an uncomfortable disagreement, but at the end of the day, it's all a part of being a family business. I hope that the Placerville community is lucky enough to get to know the kind of environment that my parents have worked tirelessly for the last 26 years to foster.

Thank you for your time,

Ava Whelan  
[avachenwhelan@gmail.com](mailto:avachenwhelan@gmail.com)  
(805)234-7286

October 27, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Jing Chen, the owner of Therapy. I met Jing in November 2019 when I walked into her store in Downtown Livermore. Our conversation started casually enough, as one would, when you are out shopping and an employee checks to see if they can help you find something and welcomes you into their store. Jing was welcoming and so pleased that my family and I had come in. After talking to her for a while, I learned that she was the owner of the store and she was so excited to be in Downtown Livermore. When Jing found out I was a teacher, our conversation turned to how she could support local schools and how her store donates to many different local organizations. The more I talked to Jing, the more I was impressed with how she wanted to get involved with Livermore and to support the community in any way she could - and she has done just that!

Her store was open in our town less than a year when COVID 19 hit. Jing's first concern was not for her business, but for her team members and their well being. She continued to provide medical benefits to her team members. She paid her makers and vendors on time. Jing is someone who knows that it takes more than an individual to be successful - it takes a community and Jing is a person who always puts others first.

When you walk into Therapy, you are always greeted with a warm welcome. The people who become members of Jing's team always talk about what an amazing person she is to work for. Many of her team members consider her family - because that is what they become when they join her team. How lucky for a town like ours to have an employer who supports and respects her employees!

Having Jing and Therapy in Downtown Livermore has brought more foot traffic to our town. My friends and I go downtown to shop at Therapy and always end up shopping in our other local stores as well. I grab a coffee and ice-cream, or sometimes both and walk around. It is wonderful to have a store like Therapy in our community - I have spent more money at our downtown businesses since Therapy arrived than I ever did before!

Jing Chen is Therapy. She is in her store, she greets her customers and cares about them, she engages in conversations to support her community and she makes a difference no matter where she is. There is no huge parent company backing her business. Jing is backing her own business that she built with family from the ground up, with dedication, hard work and compassion and care for the community that she is in. Our town is better because she is here.

Sincerely,

Anne Colby Wisner

October 27, 2020

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing in response to Therapy Stores going into Placerville, Ca. I am here to write in my support of Therapy Stores going into Placerville. I know Wayne and Jing personally from shopping in their stores. I am a born and raised Bay Area resident and have been shopping with them for 15 years. I have known about 20 of their staff members and therapy takes care of their staff like family. They travel with them to do buying trips and Jing cooks meals for the staff. Their daughter Ava also works in their stores.. This is truly a family owned business. When I left an abusive relationship I had to start my life over 5 years ago and because Therapy Stores offers no interest layway plans I was able to have a nicly furnished home and the owners even helped deliver it. Over the years Jing and Wayne have been there for me when I needed support and advice. They love what they do and offer incredible support to the teams they create. They also donate money to local causes. I can't say enough good about this family run business.

Tamara Young

[tamarakay.young@gmail.com](mailto:tamarakay.young@gmail.com)

October 27, 2020

To The City Council of Placerville or Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter of recommendation for Therapy Stores with utmost respect and dedication as I have been fortunate to be a long-standing customer, employee, and now sales rep for this amazing company.

I first discovered Therapy as a college grad. I was wandering in the Mission District of San Francisco and happened upon this lovely boutique that was truly a schoolgirl's dream. It was the kind of store where you didn't know where to start because you didn't want to miss anything! There were racks of amazing (yet affordable) clothing, jewelry, adorable trinkets, and a cheerful yet uber stylish salesgirl who brought outfits to my already packed dressing room. What an experience!

A few months later I was surprised to find another Therapy Store in downtown Burlingame. It was there that I met the owner, Jing Chen. Immediately, we struck up a conversation and instant kinship. I ended up working for the Whalen-Chen Family for 4yrs. The time I spent at Therapy Stores was a whirlwind of personal and professional growth and I reflect fondly on being a part of such a strong, smart, and talented group of individuals. The employees of Therapy work just as hard as the owners and it's because of the fun and creative environment that Jing and Wayne provide.

Lastly, I write this letter as a sales rep. As I read some of the remarks against Therapy opening in Placerville, my heart drops! How can people say such negative comments about a family owned business that is only going to draw more excitement and customers to their downtown area. Further, Jing and Wayne have worked tirelessly to open stores that mean something! I am in stores constantly and retail is becoming ever more generic and soulless. It is rare to find stores where the owners still care and are scouring the earth to curate the best for their customers, or have salespeople that are engaged! You will not find a rude or bored teenager on their cell phone at a Therapy Store! Therapy has accomplished so much in 20+ years from weathering the rise of e-com and Amazon to something as unprecedented as COVID-19 yet they are still thriving because they continue to evolve and most of all LOVE what they are doing. They should not be punished for being successful. Therapy will be a wonderful addition to Placerville.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Zweig  
Northern CA Territory Manager for Stance and Herschel Supply Co.