In the sometimes exhausting daily slog of fighting relentless nonsense belief, it is good to just stop and acknowledge the good work skeptics can

accomplish. Skepticism is motivated not just by a desire to be right but to do good, to help people avoid the harm of unfounded belief. Tim Crookham of North Texas Skeptics recently had a minor victory as a “citizen skeptic” in this regard. Here’s Tim giving the details:

On Saturday, March 9th, I went down to the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. It's a new museum that opened in Dallas in December of 2012.

At the end of my visit I stopped by the gift shop. While looking around the museum store, I saw a necklace in a box with the words "Titanium Sport Energy Necklace" printed on the box. It looked like the braided necklaces I’ve seen baseball players wear. I picked up the box and the description on the back read something like "works with your body's energy field to increase energy and promote well-being." It also had things like "good for those with back pain and poor circulation". I've seen enough Randi talks, Penn & Teller B.S. shows, and Richard Saunders clips that the skeptical alarm bells were ringing loud and clear. I was both shocked and disappointed that this found its way into the museum. I tried to find an employee to tell, but the

store was packed.

I went back to the store the next day and talked to an employee and the store manager and told them this necklace was pseudoscience and doesn't belong in the museum. They told me that the buyers for the store are in California and that they would pass along my concern. They were nice, but didn't seem to understand that this was not a good thing to have in a science museum. I went home and drafted an email to the museum in which I included some web links such as one from sciencebasedmedicine.org regarding the unscientific nature of the product. I remembered Eugenie Scott saying that it's important to copy knowledgeable people and organizations on emails and the two that came to my mind were the JREF and the Skeptic Society. I also copied the museum's PR director since the email address for the museum was just a generic info@ email address. Below is my email:

Dear Perot Museum Representative,

I came across some alternative medicine pseudoscience being sold at the Perot Museum Store and was shocked and disappointed. The item that caught my attention was the Titanium Sport Energy Necklace. This item claims to work with the body's energy field to increase energy and promote health. There is no scientific evidence to support those claims. As a member of the Perot Museum, I request that Titanium Sport Energy Necklace and any other pseudoscientific merchandise be removed from the museum store so as to align the store with the scientific mission of the rest of the museum. Below are articles regarding energy necklaces and their lack of scientific support.

http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/index.php/pseudoscience-sells/#more-15791

http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-500368_162-4525964.html

http://www.wired.com/playbook/2010/11/baseball-phiten-neckwear/all/

Regards,

Tim Crookham, Perot Museum Member

The next day I received a formal response from the museum saying, "Thank you so much for your input. We will coordinate with the Museum Shop to effect removal as soon as possible." Yay for science and skepticism!!!

I'll second that, Tim. Score one for the good guys.

Do you have any other examples of how simple acts of skeptical activism at the local level have led to such positive change? Let us know in the comments below.

D.J. Grothe is president of the James Randi Educational Foundation.