

Date: May 26, 2011

Re: Sarah Behm

To whom it may concern,

Sarah joined the Community Matters team as a contract trainer in August of 2006. Since then, I have been impressed by her warmth and approachability, her ability to listen with her heart AND mind, her intelligence and ability to understand, her passionate belief in the innate goodness and abilities of youth, and her deep alignment with our mission of empowering and equipping young people to be capable and compassionate contributors to their schools and communities.

The majority of Sarah's work with Community Matters has been delivering to groups of 25-45 youth (plus some adults sprinkled in) the 2-day trainings that serve to launch our Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program. It is a complicated training, but from the beginning, Sarah was committed and relentless in her own professional development to learn the material and perfect her delivery, and was receptive to feedback offered.

As a trainer, Sarah must quickly:

- establish behavioral norms for the training and gain students' support of them,
- build a trustful working relationship with the very diverse participants,
- adapt delivery of content to meet students' learning needs,
- facilitate discussions about often-difficult or taboo subjects,
- provide precise coaching as participants learn and practice new communication and intervention skills that have many subtle keys to success, and
- inspire them to use their learnings to reduce student-on-student mistreatment in their school and community.

She has done all that exceptionally well, and consistently receives high marks on the evaluations completed by participants in her trainings – a wide and diverse variety of elementary, middle and high school students throughout the United States. She sets them at ease, and calls them to be their best (academically and behaviorally) with her positivity and high expectations. She can manage a classroom well, earning and maintaining her students' respect and trust.

Sarah has worked with our organization in other capacities. As an Outreach Coordinator, she had to quickly learn about all of our programs and services so she could help school-based decision-makers (mostly site and district administrators) determine if and how what we offer could meet their needs, and she demonstrated her excellent communication skills. Working with me on the development of new programs and services, Sarah has repeatedly demonstrated her knowledge of core principles of youth development and education. As a member of our internal team, Sarah brings a positive attitude and enthusiasm, creative ideas, and willingness to be a team player.

In sum, I believe that Sarah would be an outstanding counselor, and would be a credit to your program. If you need any information beyond what I have written, please feel free to contact me.

Chris Pack, Program Director, [REDACTED]
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