



December 4, 2017

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Teacher of the Year on behalf of Mr. Tom Torrento. I've been in the field of education for almost 30 years, and I've learned that the very best and most impactful teachers share the same characteristics. Impactful teachers are: passionate about their content area, driven and self-motivated, dedicated, resourceful, committed, and most of all they see the best in every student. Mr. Torrento embodies all of those characteristics and more. He deeply wants every student to succeed and leaves no rock unturned to ensure their success. Many teachers like Tom who teach in underserved communities are faced with the fact that some of their students come from difficult family situations. They also have budgets that don't allow for the purchasing of materials to place their students, many of whom live at or below the poverty level, on the road to success. Faced with these challenges, I've watched Tom work tirelessly to raise funding from outside sources to get his students the necessary tools required to perform. He has received grants and awards from the prestigious Mr. Hollands Opus Foundation, Music Rising, Donors Choose, Target Foundation, Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, and several local music stores!

Over the past 6 years I have watched Tom build a successful child-driven band program. Every time that I visit I am impressed with how the skill level of each band has improved from the year before, which is evidenced by their superior ratings at local and state festivals. I am equally impressed at how much each kid loves playing in band and how they are enjoying making music. His band is not a program, but more like a family and it has grown from average to excellent because of Tom's dedication and hard work. He is without question a master teacher and I look forward to hearing one of his ensembles performing at the state conference in the future.

William Ward said "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." Tom Torrento is that great teacher who is inspiring his students to be the very best that they can be. It is an honor to know him!

Sincerely,

Damien Crutcher
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