



Dear Director or Principal:

Adam Clinch requested I write a letter recommending him for a teaching position. I am honored to write a letter on behalf of such a talented young man who is so passionate about starting a teaching career.

I had the fortune of directing the UM Upward Bound program for 30+ years. Through interviewing hundreds of teachers and counselors, followed by employing the best in each year's pool of finalists, I gained a clear sense of the qualities that characterize a "gifted educator." Uncommon passion for the satisfaction of helping others, alluring character, collaborator, compromiser, uncommon intelligence—those traits epitomized the best teachers I employed, and they barely scratch the surface when describing Adam.

I worked extensively with Adam during the summer of 2011 through his role as one of Upward Bound's eight summer residential counselors—a responsibility that required he "supervise" 55 high school students who resided in dorms while they completed six weeks of intensive college-prep academic instruction.

"Supervise" is a general term that included several tasks: living in dormitory residence with students and staff, establishing student behavior expectations, teaching healthy choices and coping skills, mentoring, tutoring, personal counseling, planning and facilitating activities, assisting instructors with class projects, transporting students on field trips, and promoting a safe environment. Inherent in the position demands, counselors were expected to develop professional relationships with students and contribute to their personal, academic, and social growth.

Every day for seven weeks (from morning until dark), I observed, guided, and learned from Adam and the seven other counselors as they interacted with the students. By the end of the summer, I gained a clear sense of everyone's drive, ability to handle stress, team skills proficiency, professionalism, etc. More importantly, they became my friends who shared their diverse personalities, varied interests and goals, and exceptional interpersonal skills.

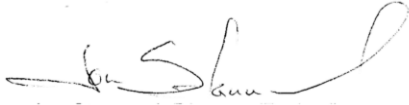
Adam was a standout. He proved to be incredibly brilliant, yet humble; delightfully friendly and considerate; and he truly valued the "real world" education experience he was gaining. It was not until halfway through the summer program that I learned Adam was a high school valedictorian, had earned a 4.0 GPA in a combined math and physics double major, cared less about money and more about family and friends, and dreamed of being a high school teacher.

I admire Adam's uncommon interest and appreciation for working with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Upward Bound attracts a multicultural staff of residential counselors, instructors, and students. People who have worked in Upward Bound consider the daily interaction with American Indian, Hmong, Hispanic, and Anglo students and counselors the most rewarding aspect of their job. Adam relished the experience and saw the value it would lend to his teaching readiness.

Almost daily, Adam shared his dream to teach math and/or physics at the high school level. I have absolutely no doubt he will excel as a teacher...and a gifted one at that. It is the perfect fit—it draws upon all of his wonderful character qualities, intellectual skills, passion for work, and personal challenge to help others.

In summary, I have been blessed to work with a person of Adam's caliber. He has my highest recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Stannard", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Jon Stannard, Director (Retired)
Upward Bound