



*Letter of Recommendation for:
Anna Sohn*

In both a figurative and literal sense, Anna does not mind getting her hands dirty. In fact, that is her preferred mode; being knee deep, surrounded by concepts and challenges that are like puzzles for her to connect and proceed. She is the inquisitive student who seeks the level of understanding that goes well beyond the traditional classroom lecture. Anna's genuine engagement is evident across all academic disciplines with virtually straight A's in every course. Those stellar achievements are noteworthy given the exceptionally rigorous nature of her curriculum choices. While her natural talents certainly come in handy with such heavy academic demands, it is her tenacity that is her calling card, defining her character in all her endeavors.

Anna joined Francis Parker School for the start of ninth grade. In this case, her time of arrival is noteworthy. The vast majority of Parker students have three to ten years of experience within the school by the time they join the Upper School community, so they tend to be well aware of the heightened demands and expectations. On the other hand, the two dozen students transferring into the high school for the start of ninth grade can face periods of adjustment at the academic and social levels. Thankfully, no such bumps got in Anna's way. From the outset, she demonstrated a curious maturity that would usually describe students nearing graduation as opposed to those still a year or more away from earning a driver's permit. Comments from her ninth grade teachers would be the first of a string all the way to the current day that focus on Anna's proactive style, positive classroom contributions and ability to build on previously learned material. In classroom discussions she is known to routinely reference previous comments from her peers in making further points, and her thoughtful contributions often elevate the discourse to consider possibilities not yet mentioned. Anna is truly a scholar who loves to question.

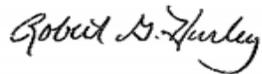
In a junior year academic schedule that was as demanding as I have seen at Parker over the last 16 years, Anna not only kept her achievement bar high, but she also discovered a discipline that she can see pursuing at the next level. Typically, we only have seniors enrolled in our AP Economics class, but Anna was one of just a few juniors who elected to take the course a year ago. She was not at all intimidated by classmates with more experience. In fact, she often led the charge in class discussions. Most importantly, Anna appreciated the 30,000 foot view of economics while seeking ways to apply course theories to daily business practices. For some time, Anna has been in the business of reselling popular and limited editions of footwear. She studies the market and invests in the product when she anticipates great demand and solid return. Whenever Anna can see math at work, she is in her happy place.

For as much as she engages with her studies, Anna's efficient manner has also allowed her to dedicate time to pursuits outside academia which she values just as much. In the next month she will embark on her fourth season as a varsity basketball player. Although she had played the sport since her early childhood, she feared that her lack of size could hurt her chances of earning playing time. The last three years saw three different head coaches for the team, so the hurdle was always there in Anna's mind. However, each coach could see and greatly appreciate Anna's work ethic. Where other players sought the limelight of offensive statistics, she truly enjoyed playing defense. The aggressive style it took to take a charge and cut off passing lanes fit Anna perfectly. For her commitment to the program and leadership, she has been designated one of two team captains for the upcoming season.

Anna's other primary extracurricular commitment is different from any I have heard in my sixteen years at the school. A number of previous students have worked with animals in different capacities, but Anna is my first student to raise fainting goats through a local chapter of 4H. As a youngster, she raised chickens, but approximately five years ago she switched to goats. Star, Comet and Pearl are her three goats who live in an enclosure that Anna built in her backyard. A wood working class she took as a sophomore has come in handy as she has made upgrades to the roughly 600 square feet home. Make no mistake. These animals are solely Anna's responsibility. Her parents admire them from afar, but it is Anna who is up before dawn, cleaning the habitat, feeding the trio and conducting training exercises before she leaves for school. She shows the goats at the annual county fair held in nearby Del Mar where the animals are judged on their grooming and agility. This quasi farm girl is proud of her calluses and scrapes that go with the territory of raising these animals and her recent return to barrel racing! Yes, any ranch wear in her closet is part of a legitimate uniform for her time outside of the traditional school day.

It is with great pleasure that I enthusiastically recommend Anna for your consideration as a candidate for scholarship. Her academic prowess and mighty work ethic are made for future challenges, and she knows no other way than to rise to the demands of the occasion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert G. Hurley".

Robert G. Hurley
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