

January 9, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in reference to Chase Young, community member and United Way of Central Iowa Employee. It is my understanding that Mr. Young has been nominated for his work and advocacy within the greater Des Moines area, both as a community member and as a business professional. In my opinion, Mr. Young is an incredible example of how one person can create change and impact many by maintaining a community centered priority, supported by a tenacious work ethic.

I was first introduced to Mr. Young in 2009. Mr. Young was the Community Schools Coordinator at North High School in Des Moines and we were introduced through my work as Vice Principal at Harding Middle School. From our first introduction, I knew that Mr. Young was all about creating positive change within, at that time, the North Side community. Mr. Young worked closely with Harding to ensure student programming could flourish, which allowed hundreds of student's lives to be enriched. Mr. Young was very responsive to the needs of the North Side community and approached every obstacle with integrity and passion.

More recently, Mr. Young continued his career with United Way of Central Iowa and transitioned his passion for the community to a much large scale. Mr. Young single handily saved a student leadership program at Harding Middle School by leveraging his position with United Way. Because of Mr. Young's effort in saving the leadership program at Harding, the same Leadership Program now exists in 5 other Des Moines Public Schools, allowing hundreds of students to experience school in a more positive way. In addition, Mr. Young has allowed RUN DSM, a Des Moines Public School Program, to flourish and expand to all most the entire district. RUN DSM uses student empowerment fused with urban arts to encourage and enhance student lives.

Within the past two years, I have transitioned to a District level position for Des Moines Public Schools and now can see even more of the impact Mr. Young is having on the Des Moines Community. My role as Director of School Climate Transformation allows me to see how the community and school interact to make a meaningful and positive school climate. Mr. Young and the United Way of Central Iowa support these efforts to the fullest. Without this partnership and Mr. Young's vision, students within the Des Moines community would not have the large amount of opportunities and supports allotted to them.

Please accept this letter of reference as a statement of sincere regard for Mr. Young's work and effort towards positive life outcomes for the Des Moines Community. Without Mr. Young, the Des Moines Community and Des Moines Public Schools, would be less equipped to make positive change within the lives of the people we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Troja". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial "J" and a cursive "Troja".

Jake Troja  
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Des Moines Public Schools  
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