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July 29, 2013

To whom it may concern:

I am the deputy director of the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, a nonprofit law firm in Honolulu that engages in systemic advocacy on behalf of low-income and marginalized people in Hawaii. Matt Justice is one of our 2013 summer clerks, and we have been incredibly fortunate to have him.

We are very selective when choosing our clerks because we rely heavily on their work. It was apparent when reading Matt's resume that he was an accomplished, creative, and intelligent law student; he has proved to be much more than his application could show. He is one of the hardest workers I've seen. I have never hosted an intern who was in the office when I arrived at 6:30 a.m. He went well beyond what was expected of him, both in the amount and the quality of his work. He has done an exceptional job working on a difficult and complex project to improve conditions in Hawaii's child welfare system. I also relied on him for legal research, both for his project and ongoing litigation. His responses were prompt, well-written, and on point.

In the early weeks of Matt's time here, I met with him regularly to supervise his work, but it was not long before I felt comfortable cutting him loose. The project became more and more ambitious throughout the summer because he discovered numerous issues beyond the scope of what I had initially envisioned. I have been tremendously impressed that he has been able to handle this expansion on his own, tackling an amount of work that could easily require two or more interns. Additionally, he presented himself professionally outside of the firm when meeting with other parties and agencies. His efforts have already laid the groundwork for some important litigation and advocacy that we expect will produce tremendous benefits for children in foster care in the future.

In addition to Matt's remarkable capacity for the work, it has been a pleasure to have him as part of the office. He is a natural leader, even outside of work. He frequently united staff and interns for social events, making sure to include everyone. This has been our most successful summer experience that I can recall, which I largely attribute to Matt's presence.

I am quite sure that Matt will go on to do great things, no matter which specific avenue he decides pursue. I am happy to speak further about his qualifications. Feel free to contact me at (808) 587-7605 or gavin@hiappleseed.org.

Sincerely,

Gavin Thornton
Deputy Director