

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to recommend that Kendall Gomez be given strong consideration for the scholarship opportunity connected to the Trib Total Media Outstanding Youth Citizen program. I first taught Kendall when she was a freshman in my Communication Skills class and then again, as a sophomore in Honors World Literature. In both courses, she was engaged in the activities and cheerful throughout the year, always smiling. However, I really got to know Kendall outside of class, when she came to me for help with her PJAS projects each year as we worked together to perfect her speaking and presentation skills. Additionally, I worked with Kendall throughout her junior year, as we worked on her writing skills as they related to applications for summer educational opportunities.

As her teacher, I would describe Kendall as a quiet girl who works really hard. Initially struggling in class, especially on writing assignments, Kendall kept plugging away in order to catch up with her peers, most of whom came into the class with more finely tuned skills. However, Kendall never gave up and continued to refine one draft or another, sometimes working with me outside of class, until she had successfully completed the assignment. While she struggled a little more with in-class timed essays when she did not have the opportunity to revise, she did much better when given more time. In particular, her final research paper which required students to coordinate a wide variety of resources associated with the Carnegie Library databases and JStor, she did her best work. Her focus on the people of Afghanistan as related to the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, was her best work all year. Working diligently until she had a cohesive, well thought out and well organized paper required a great deal of work on her part and with each new draft she turned in, I was able to see improvement.

Finally, I'd like to comment on Kendall's efforts last spring to get into summer educational programs at a number of prestigious colleges. Even though I was not her teacher last year, I worked with her to polish essays she had written with the intent of extending her learning into the summer months. Extremely interested in both the environment and her Latino heritage, she completed one essay after another that spoke to these passions and her goals in life. While most other students were counting down the days until summer break, Kendall was working hard to continue her studies through the summer months. Not satisfied to simply answer questions quickly, she wanted her writing to stand apart from others and we worked together to put her dreams and desires into words. I give her a lot of credit for her perseverance during these months, as she took the time to make sure she was doing the best work she could do to ensure that her summer months would be fulfilling.

For these reasons, I hope you will seriously consider Kendall for this scholarship opportunity. Should you have any additional questions or like to speak to me further about Kendall's work in my class, feel free to contact me via email or by phone at 412-523-4442.

Sincerely,

Heidi Rinkacs  
Oakland Catholic English Teacher