

February 25, 2019

Dear Scholarship Committee:

It gives me great pleasure to write on behalf of Ryan Setzenfand. Ryan has been a cornerstone of my orchestra for the past three and a half years. Ryan is a bright and conscientious student. He is not gregarious but is a natural leader. Students respond strongly to his incredible integrity and kindness. Ryan is meticulous in everything that he does. He has a sharp analytical mind and a natural curiosity. He absolutely devours information about current events and is my "go to" for fact checking claims and articles. Added to this curiosity is an innate and deep care for others; those immediately around him and those in far reaches of the globe.

Two years ago, students from Ryan's class "staged a revolution" in orchestra. They went to our administration and requested that they be let out of the only rehearsal we had with the entire orchestra the evening before our final concert. It was also the evening before the World History AP test and they wanted more time to study. It immediately divided the orchestra as other students were angered about how this would impact the quality of the performance for the entire orchestra. Ryan came to speak with me. He was planning on going to rehearsal but wanted to make sure that it would be okay for him to leave if rehearsal ran over so that he could get a good night's sleep before the test. I thanked him for thinking of a reasonable solution and said that I wish his classmates had done the same. Without skipping a beat, he told me that obviously, he personally would not have made that decision, but that his fellow classmates clearly felt a lot of pressure about the test and perhaps I needed to understand it from that vantage point. This 16-year old sophomore boy quietly and calmly refused to get caught between his teachers and his classmates but instead built a bridge, starting at the most challenging point, the adult authority figure in his life. This is Ryan. He does the right thing and makes it possible for people to hear what is right through a lot of noise by staying true to his beliefs and quietly offering solutions.

Between then and now, Ryan has managed to leave a mark on a number of teachers in our building and organizations, such as Ambassadors for Children's (a group that fundraises for oncology research at Children's Hospital). Over the course of the past two years Ryan has raised thousands of dollars for this cause by diversifying fundraising opportunities and being persistent in those efforts. No opportunity is too small or too large for him to tackle. He has been equally as dedicated to our Global Outreach Club, collecting hundreds of books and shipping them to a library in Africa.

Ryan is proof that leadership comes in many forms. He is quiet and gentle but persistent and strong. He is a bright, warm, caring student leader. He has consistently and patiently helped other students reach their own potential. He is truly one of a kind and will be sorely missed here.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mairi Cooper

Orchestra Director and Music Dept. Chairperson, Fox Chapel Area High School

2015 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year

Fox Chapel Area School District

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