Linda K. Likins

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Valencia, CA. 91355

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to nominate and endorse Karen Cairone as an “Emerging Leader” candidate. It is wonderful to have an opportunity to properly identify and encourage young leaders in our field. I knew from the first moment that I met Karen that she had the potential to be a shining star in the field of early childhood education.

Our first meeting occurred when I was interviewing her for the position of trainer for the Devereux Early Childhood Initiative. The Initiative was just getting started and I knew whomever we hired for the position was going to have to do far more than just train. In addition to training, the candidate would have to help with research, do some resource development, travel to all parts of the US, spend time working in classrooms, conduct parent meetings, and be willing to be flexible and accept assignments unknown at the time as we built this new program. I was impressed with Karen’s poise during this interview as she was only 24 years old. (Not even old enough to rent a car.) She was well educated, had some experience in Head Start, and also had extended her knowledge base by participating in an additional national Head Start certification program. I was impressed that she recognized her education was very important but she was eager to experience and work with all types of early childhood programs including Head Start, Child Care, mental health facilities, state funded pre K as well as other agencies and organizations that provide advocacy for young children.

I have watched her through the years and have been so impressed as she embraced her program responsibilities, and sought out the wisdom of seasoned leaders and professionals. I was always delighted to send her to national conferences. First, she would represent our organization well, she would take advantage of every learning opportunity, and she would network with her peers as well as those she felt could help advocate for the mission of promoting social and emotional health to all children. She was responsible for forming many valuable partnerships with other organizations as well as connecting folks she was meeting as she performed her training duties across the country.

Karen also keeps her priorities in the right perspective. I saw her grow into the role of wife and mother. She was always able to maintain a good balance of work and home life. She is a wonderful mother and has used her experiences and knowledge of early childhood to provide a nurturing wonderful environment for her three girls. She has always taken time to volunteer at their school, coach sports teams, and support other moms who may not have had as much knowledge in the area of child development.

As I look into the future, I see an overwhelming need to strengthen and nurture young leaders. I believe that Karen has the potential of being a national spokesperson advocating for young children. The support Karen would gain as a result of being recognized as one of Exchange’s emerging leaders would help her build a stronger base to speak out in behalf of children and the adults that care for them. I sincerely hope that this nomination will receive strong consideration. I would be happy to help in any way possible to provide my support or time to answer questions or clarify any information.

Sincerely,

Linda K. Likins