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To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to write a letter of reference for Ms. Erin Threlfall. I had the pleasure of working with her on the Buduburum Liberian Refugee Camp, located in Ghana, during in early 2006. I have continued a working and personal relationship with her via online communication as a means of helping her maintain her dedication to helping Liberian refugees.

Ms. Threlfall led the group of international volunteers and helped them all succeed in their working and living situations. She particularly got along well with her local colleagues by working with them to plan any improvement project from workshops to lesson plans to discipline techniques. Ms. Threlfall taught me, as well as the scores of other volunteers, how to live and work in another cultural setting. She adapts extremely well by adopting and embracing other cultures while maintaining a firm understanding of whom she is and where she comes from.

Ms. Threlfall is able to respond to emergency and pressure filled situations in a calm and reassuring manner, even in an unfamiliar setting. Ms. Threlfall is always eager to learn and experience various aspects of other cultures. I have nothing but respect for her in this regard.

I have observed Ms. Threlfall in a non-traditional classroom setting where I saw her teach a range of ages and education levels. Most notably, we worked together to teach Liberian refugee adults (some of which were unable to read and some of which were considered educated for a refugee population) how to apply and write grant proposals for funding their projects. In her preparation, Ms. Threlfall focused on building from lessons already taught. She researched what previous teachers taught and incorporated those lessons into new lessons without being repetitive. She wanted the students to progress forward in their learning rather than merely repeat what 5 previous teachers had already done. Considering we only had 3 months for this class, she worked to ensure all the necessary lessons were included and the students had a complete understanding of the subject matter. She did this by planning all 3 months in advance and making necessary adjustments along the way. Additionally, Ms. Threlfall made time to meet with the students outside of the classroom to help them work on their grant proposals to ensure they had a good grasp on the material. She also worked with all current volunteers to develop a method of "handover" to ensure all those following in our footsteps would have a curriculum to follow and would be able to move in a forward direction.

As for classroom management, Ms. Threlfall is very dynamic and no situation arose where she was not holding the attention of the class. She was highly respected among the teachers and administrative staff and was often sought out for advice and ideas. Liberians have their own way of using the English language and many older adults' first language is tribal. Ms. Threlfall typically adopted Liberian phrases, and then "translated" these phrases into standard American English to effectively and accurately portray her thoughts to others. If an older adult did not speak English very well, she spoke slowly, used her hands, used words she knew the adult would understand, and used other means of communication as necessary.

Overall Ms. Threlfall has the delicate balance of strength and tenderness. She works to get things accomplished and jumps over obstacles as though they were merely pebbles. Yet she carries a certain warmth throughout the process, always working for a greater good and thinking about the individual she is trying to teach, raise, coach, or help in any way.

Should you have any further questions regarding my past working experience with Ms. Threlfall, I welcome the opportunity for a more direct discussion either via email or telephone.

Sincerely,

Marlee Furman
Co-Founder MAY