

September 2, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter of reference regarding my friend and colleague, Ms. Dawn Setford – founder of “Pass the Feather” and “ Pass the Feather to Me”. I have known Ms. Setford for some 30 plus years and during this time she has remained a loyal and trustworthy friend and mentor to me. I have known Ms. Setford prior to her knowledge that she was of First Nations descent and I have observed her passion and commitment in embracing her aboriginal heritage and recognizing the need to not only establish her own cultural identity but create awareness and honour other First Nation, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) peoples personal struggles with identity, healing and resurgence..

Ms. Setford has chosen to honour and facilitate this through her initiative, “Pass the Feather to Me”. This project is unique because it utilizes the arts as a venue, a place where FNMI people can celebrate their cultures and heal in the process. “Pass the Feather to Me” is an incredible way to connect young artists from aboriginal communities/schools with other young artists in a public school setting- to connect and share their artistic endeavours in a thoughtful and respectable manner.

As an educator myself, I see this method of uniting children through the arts as a wonderful way of teaching peace and aboriginal ways of knowing into the traditional classroom context. I also believe this work is highly relevant and necessary in the public school community based on the recent recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, tabled in Ottawa in June of 2015.

It is through Ms. Setford’s hard work and commitment to this project that “Pass the Feather to Me” has been initiated. She is passionate about this project and has demonstrated that she has the knowledge and discipline required to make this project a success. She works tirelessly to encourage the production of endangered traditional arts and is relentlessly involved with promoting Aboriginal arts.

Furthermore, Ms. Setford hopes to provide logistically and financially challenged artists and students with art supplies, on an individual basis as well as a classroom setting. Ultimately, she has plans to establish an online market where Aboriginal artists can teach, practice and sell their artwork without charge to them. It is all about finding them a 'place' that is safe and profitable.

I am a huge promoter and advocate of this project and have begun promoting this work at the many speaking engagements and workshops I present to educators on reconciliation and Indigenous education. I have spoken with aboriginal and non- aboriginal artists, teachers and other professionals regarding this initiative and have received such positive feedback.

As a result, I would highly recommend this project for funding and can also recommend Ms. Setford as a strong leader and professional committed to making this project a successful endeavour.

Sincerely,

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