



February 10, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Izadora Lopez-McGawley as a supplement to her application for the ACLU Summer Advocacy Institute. It is difficult to find ways of describing Iza and the work that she has done because there are few words that can truly do justice to her and to everything that she has accomplished. She is a poised, mature and grounded young woman who constantly seeks to challenge herself while finding ways of enriching, sharing with and advocating for her community at large. She is unafraid of pushing herself to confront the challenges in our world and to do the same for others through positive engagement and community action.

In the two years that I have known Iza as her Spanish teacher, I have seen her apply her fierce determination to authentic discourse and action on countless occasions and in a variety of settings, from Socratic seminars surrounding the issues of illegal immigration to discussions with local officials about the role of youth in community improvement. Her work as an Education Liaison in our community action project is a perfect example. In collaboration with her peers, Iza identified a need in one of our local communities (National City) and reached out to community members to develop a program that could help address that need. She pushed beyond the stated expectations and developed a program that not only addressed the need of literacy improvement among young students, but also served to connect youth in National City and build a stronger community. Throughout the process, it was clear that Iza's peers looked to her as a leader and a role model because of the dedication that she demonstrated towards the community they were serving and to the mission that they had committed to. As an educator, it was not only inspiring to see students working to help others in the realm of education, but also to witness how Iza's example in particular served as the catalyst to make that work possible within her group of peers. From project development to implementation, Iza was integral to the success of that project.

In my years as a high school teacher, I have only come across a handful of students who are as engaged and perceptive as Iza. She is acutely aware of the issues facing our communities (local and otherwise) and fully committed to finding ways of addressing those issues. Her passion for bringing an Ethnic Studies course to our campus highlights this combination of awareness and commitment to action. In collaboration with a teacher and fellow peers, Iza developed an Ethnic Studies curriculum that she is currently co-facilitating for students across campus. The course touches upon current and historically relevant issues, providing a necessary space for Iza and her peers to engage in meaningful discourse about topics that affect them both

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directly and indirectly. The fact that Iza has helped make this happen as a Sophomore in high school is impressive, and it is exciting to think about all that she will accomplish as she grows as a learner and an agent for change in her communities (school and otherwise).

Being familiar with the ACLU's mission and the purpose of the Advocacy Institute, I know that Iza is a perfect fit for such an opportunity. She is open to learning from and about different perspectives, especially in the context of community engagement. Her previous work speaks to her dedication to and passion for this work, and I know that she will take full advantage of the opportunity to engage in discourse with students and professionals that share said dedication and passion. Iza will not only be there to learn and grow in her understanding, but also to add to her toolkit as a nascent community change agent. She will use this experience to further inform the action that she will undoubtedly continue to take to address the needs of her various communities.

Iza Lopez-McGawley is more than deserving of the opportunity to participate in the ACLU Summer Advocacy Institute. I am positive that Iza would work to not only ensure that her experience be personally meaningful, but also that her presence be one that enhances and pushes the conversation forward. If you have any further questions regarding this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me at (949) 295-5248 (cell) or via e-mail at mfranco@hightechhigh.org.

Sincerely,

Marisol Franco
Spanish teacher
Summer Bridge Coordinator
High Tech High Chula Vista