



Townsend Harris High School, Brian Condon, Principal

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT

Rafal Olechowski, Assistant Principal

2006 NYTimes-Teachers Who Make a Difference Award

2011 Milken Educator Award

2018 Williams College-Olmstead Teaching Award Finalist

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Dear Selection Committee,

I am delighted to write this letter on behalf of Nodi Khan, a highly creative, passionate, and unique Townsend Harris student.

I first met Nodi through our summer enrichment program, here at Townsend Harris HS. I offered a course for incoming freshmen called I ❤️ NYC. Nodi simply showed up one day and became the most devoted participant, older sister, and guide to other students. Most importantly, this course offered no tangible benefits, no credits, no extra points, no requirements of some sort; Nodi became the most devoted member out of pure and innate hunger for a more interesting life.

Since the course was (in its conception) an incoming freshman course helping students get to know the school and our city, Nodi, being a rising senior, was an interesting and serendipitous intermediary between these fourteen year-olds and a teacher in his forties; she acted a bit like a older sister to the younger ones, helping them manage their anxieties about attending this new environment, co-create, help travelling during trips, and be a teaching assistant to me.

However, the most important aspect about Nodi is her innate need to be like this every day: creative, engaged, insatiably curious, intense and playful. She has devoured books, videos, poems and always asked for more. The knowledge that then resides inside her is quickly transformed into a creative energy that will manifest in asking for more, helping others understand and be like that, deep reflection, or a creative moment that will amaze all. Her inner being is best expressed through Tibetan buddhism analogy of the diamond mind, where the light that gets in it, does not simply reside there, it is reflected outwardly to brighten everyone else's lives as well.

I am confident that Nodi's blossoming intellect will only become more nurtured at your institution. I cannot give a more enthusiastic recommendation to a student.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Rafal Olechowski