

East Side Union High School District
Calero High School
420 Calero Ave. San Jose, CA 95123-4240
Robert Ibarra, Principal



1.408.347.7600

July 23, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my sincere pleasure to present this letter of recommendation and commendation to Pastor Sonny Lara and The Firehouse Team. The Firehouse Team is comprised of supreme professionals dedicated to the betterment and empowerment of our youth.

The Firehouse Team partnered with the Calero High School campus this past school year. From their first moments on campus, Firehouse began making an impact on our students. The Firehouse Team spoke to our students at an assembly and shared their stories of struggle and how they now lead driven and productive lives. Our students sat up and took notice as they too are dealing with many of the struggles articulated by the Firehouse Team. Students were engaged, listening attentively and actively participating in the open forum. After the assembly, many students waited to speak to the Firehouse Team and expressed their desire to change their destructive behaviors and their excitement about having partners on campus to help them on this journey. Our staff immediately recognized that Firehouse was going to be a benefit and a blessing to our students' lives.

Our school year with Firehouse was a tremendous success. Firehouse established a physical presence on our campus with a room dedicated to social interaction with the students. Students congregated to this room at lunch to dialogue with each other and the Firehouse Team. Firehouse provided sustenance, games and overall, a safe and inviting place for all students to interact. I observed the Firehouse Team developing bonds with our students and engaging them in powerful dialogue. This dialogue was developed through casual interactions during lunch and passing periods, but also through carefully planned group sessions and one-on-one rap sessions during our Advisory period. Students were challenged to carefully examine their experiences both positive and negative and the emotional impact of these experiences on their daily lives. Firehouse encourages students to channel their anger and sadness over past events into positive energy for the future.

Firehouse also asks students to reflect on whether their daily choices will help them achieve their goals for the future. As a school, our disciplinary infractions decreased and our overall morale reached new heights. This is most certainly due to the efforts of Firehouse.

Every member of the Firehouse Team is dedicated to improving the lives of our youth. They are respectful, polite, compassionate and truly gifted at communicating with young adults. Firehouse models the path to success in spite of real struggle. They provided many opportunities for our students to improve their self-esteem and confidence whether through playing sports at lunch with Firehouse team members, a school-wide Firehouse sponsored barbecue or through motivational interviewing.

It is my distinct privilege to welcome Firehouse back to our campus for the coming school year. I strongly encourage any fiscal support for Firehouse from the community. They are a valuable resource for our students and the youth of our community at large.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance in helping Firehouse maintain its viability.

Sincerely,

Thomasina Goltzer
Student Advisor
Calero High School
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