Dear Flyin’ Ryan Board,

Over that past few months, I have been lucky enough to work with and train Emily DesMeules as a heli-rappeller and as a wildland firefighter for the US Forest Service. Emily is a powerful inspiration to know and to work with. She constantly amazes me with her ability to walk into a stressful situation and become excited to help in any and every way she has to offer. Emily is a humble and powerful force who focuses on educating and including those around her as a way of leading in an efficient and effective manner. Emily is eager to learn, share, and step up to any challenge that faces her. She is one of the rare people that has the perfect mix of intelligence, compassion, humbleness, leadership, and determination. It is without a doubt in my mind that Emily will be successful at anything she chooses to do in this life.

I was blessed with the opportunity to train Emily from her first day with Price Valley. I watched as she consumed every piece of knowledge we had to offer. I witnessed as she was faced with physical challenges of strength and endurance. I was impressed with her knowledge, skill, and action during night time medical scenarios. I got to be there when Emily pressed fear and self-doubt aside to rappel off towers and out of helicopters. Watching Emily learn and adapt so quickly in such a unique environment gives me full confidence in her ability to adapt, learn and grow to be a crucial member of any team.

Emily approaches all situations with a unique calm curiosity and discipline. She has quickly become someone I call upon to help me with tasks and assignments of organization, documentation, communication, and education. Her perspective and feedback are both things I have quickly come to value. Emily is someone who possesses true potential to lead and strong skills to follow. Both characteristics are critical in our line of work. Emily has a complete understanding for the Incident Command System and understands the value of filling the role to which you are assigned and allowing others to lead when it is their turn to do so.

The fire season offers ample opportunity for discussions on life plans, and when I heard that Emily is hoping to pursue a career in medicine in “unconventional situations” (as she put it) I was thrilled. I cannot imagine a better fit for her. I know that Emily will take her education, her job, and her practice seriously and passionately. It is rare to find someone who can combine that academic and professional aptitude with the athletic ability and desire to put themselves in trying outdoor situations. While Emily is realistic about the fact that much of her work would be in hospital settings, she is quite ambitious about becoming involved with search and rescue programs, the medical tent at Everest Base Camp, the US Antarctic mission, and perhaps even the military or other similar applications of wilderness and non-traditional medical environments.

Emily understands the importance of constant professional and personal education and growth, a characteristic that cannot be taught, yet is immeasurably valuable when perusing any profession, especially one in any medical field which will continue to grow and change. An opportunity to expand her horizons and high-altitude knowledge through this trip will not only provide Emily with an understanding she will need should she wish to pursue high altitude medicine in the future, but I believe it will also serve to further ignite her passion for this field.

Wildland firefighting is an incredible field, but unfortunately it doesn’t pay particularly well, and given her student schedule I don’t believe Emily will have much time to be earning the type of money she would need to cover this trip as well as the gear, airfare and medical/travel insurance. Once she enters medical school, her schedule won’t likely won’t allow for any trips of this magnitude for several years, and I would love to see Emily pursue this passion of hers while she still has time in her year for it. Any investment made in Emily and her education is a small price to pay when compared to the effect Emily will be able to have on hundreds of lives within her career.

I cannot wait to see what Emily chooses to do with her education, career, and life because I can guarantee that her choices will make those and the world around her a better, healthier, and kinder place as she continues to give back. She is a clever, hardworking, compassionate young woman and I believe she would be an excellent choice for your foundation. I don’t doubt that she would become involved and continue to give back to the organization in future years.

Please feel free to contact me of you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rita Krantz

Senior Firefighter, Price Valley Rappel Crew