

Amy Thomas

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To whom it may concern,

I have enjoyed the privilege of knowing Katerina since she was a college student in Belarus, part of the former Soviet Union. I kept in touch with her as she became a young wife and mother, and was there as she acclimated to a new life in America and became a mother for the 2nd time to a daughter with special needs. Soon after, she became a single mother and sole provider and parent for her teenage son and young daughter. This, by far, has been her greatest challenge; but rather than feeling sorry for herself, she has risen far above her circumstances. She works full time as a high school ESL teacher, where she is loved by her students. Her son, now in college, is on the honor roll. And she makes sure that every day is an adventure for her daughter. There is nothing that she hasn't done with her and done for her – ballet, swimming, therapy horse riding, and so, so much more. If there is an event in town that her little girl might benefit from, then she will move heaven and earth to get her there. Rest? She knows little about it. But love? Sacrifice? Joy? She is all about those things.

For all she gives her children and her students, she gives little to herself. I would love to see her take a moment and do something that would benefit her physically and mentally - to see and experience something beautiful, to move in nature, to rest when she's tired, to make a lifetime of memories that she can carry back home with her. This grant would make that possible. Please consider sending Katerina on the adventure of a lifetime. She is a worthy candidate.