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Dear Flyin Ryan Scholarship Selection Committee;

I am writing this letter of recommendation to support Lev Ibson's application for the Flyin Ryan Scholarship.

I think Ryan and Lev would have been good friends. Like Ryan, Lev possesses not only a love of the outdoors, and skiing but also dedicates himself to his education, his family and his community.

I have known Lev since he was in first grade. I was his Hebrew school teacher. Since then I have watched him grow up in the Jewish Community of Greater Stowe community and over the years find his place in it. I observed not only his curiosity about his Jewish identity, and his keen understanding of the liturgy and history but his capacity for kindness, courage, caring and collaboration. This past year I had the honor of being his Hebrew tutor as he prepared to become a Bar Mitzvah. We spent a lot of time together as he prepared for his Mitzvah ceremony that took place last May and I got to see him grow into one of the loveliest teenagers I know. .

While he had a basic background in Hebrew, preparing for the ceremony required him to step it up a notch. He had to learn how to chant a portion from the Torah, lead the service, deliver a speech that teaches the congregation something meaningful about his Torah portion and complete a Mitzvah project which required him to do something significant on behalf of others.

He took this challenge very seriously. He practiced on his own between tutoring sessions so that he could make the best use of our time together to get better, and he participated in the weekly Mitzvah classes where he was the only male in his cohort. Watching how he managed this gender imbalance was a thing of beauty and gave me such hope for what is possible in terms of male/female interactions. He treated all of his fellow cohort members with the utmost respect and they learned a lot about what is possible in terms of male female relationships. He set a very high bar for the men that they will encounter in the future.

His devar torah - his speech- centered on the concept of what it means as a Jew to be part of a treasured people. After researching what the Rabbis thought about this concept, he did a deep personal dive into what it meant for him. What he came up with was the thought that everyone is treasured and that we need to value our differences as much as we value the ways that we are the same.

His Mitzvah project involved work with High Fives, an organization that supports adaptive sports. He volunteered at a fundraising event at Mad River Valley in addition to raising money to support their work.

Now that his Mitzvah ceremony is behind him, Lev wants to refocus himself on his skiing. When I asked him what his goals were for this scholarship his response was “I just want to get better at it”. This last year I saw him “get better” at something he put his mind to, and I am sure with the support of this scholarship, this will just be the next thing he puts his mind to and masters. I strongly recommend him for this scholarship. He embodies the spirit of Ryan Hawk and will do his memory proud.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Amy Rosenthal, MSW, MAPP