

To: Flyin Ryan Foundation
From: Dan Gardoqui
RE: Jonathan Shapiro Recommendation
Date: 25 April 2025



Dear Flyin Ryan Team,

In the decade that I've spent getting to know him, Jonathan Shapiro has proven to be an exceptional human being - something I'm guessing you folks know a lot about. This letter is in support of his application to be an Adventure Scholar.

Jonathan first showed up as a student in a week-long bird language course I was running on the Maine coast. From the start, I could tell this was a very intelligent, very capable, and very unique young man. Soon after, Jonathan signed on as an enthusiastic member of my Wildlife Tracking Apprenticeship - a monthly program spanning three seasons with rigorous field learning in all conditions. Jonathan chose to participate at the most challenging level and exceeded my expectations (which were rather high). The following year, he applied to serve as a teaching assistant for the same course - and also impressed me with the growth he's made over the summer - not only in his own field craft - but in his teaching as well. That year I served as his mentor as he designed and launched his own tracking and nature connection organization - Fox Paw School.

It's not lost on Jonathan that he's been very fortunate to have a handful of dedicated mentors in the world of wildlife tracking. Via his work at Fox Paw, he's been mentoring dozens of students each year while also pushing his own skills by taking multiple rigorous evaluations via Tracker Certification North America. I've attended some of those with Jonathan and his conduct and results were top tier. So now, he's hoping to make an educational pilgrimage to the central Kalahari of Botswana - the birthplace of wildlife tracking and the human race. While this would serve as an absolute benchmark in his own journey, he's looking at this trip as a pinnacle experience he can add to his deep well mentoring tools that he'll bring home to share with his students and communities throughout the region. Jonathan knows how vital building ecological literacy one family and town at a time truly is to the health and well-being of not only the human world, but to the more-than-human-world that we all rely upon.

I'm guessing you've got a slate of pretty amazing candidates for this funding. I'm also guessing none of them are doing the vital work Jonathan has been doing. Please help him to further refine and share his work at a time when it's truly needed.

Dan Garodqui - Founder & Director