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To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of recommendation for Karen Hagerman and DJ Jennings. I've known Karen for fifteen years, as a coworker, our house/pet sitter, as a volunteer in her programs for people with developmental disabilities, and as a close friend. I've known DJ for five years as a friend and husband to Karen. Both Karen and DJ are special people who one feels lucky to know.

I met Karen in 1995 when she applied for the Socialization/Leisure Programs Coordinator position at The Arc of Benton County. I was in charge of conducting preliminary phone interviews for the position. We were scrutinizing candidates closely as we were looking for someone very special. The job called for drive, resourcefulness, creativity, flexibility, organizational skills, the ability to manage oneself, and work well with others in a diverse population. Even over the phone, it was obvious that Karen was the perfect fit. I wasted no time in transferring her to the woman who would be her supervisor.

Karen excelled as the Recreation Coordinator. She brought a vitality to the position that had not been seen before. She even pioneered an adaptive/therapeutic horseback riding program for individuals with developmental and/or physical disabilities. She also worked closely with other organizations, like the Boys and Girls Club, and Corvallis Parks and Recreation, to promote community integration programs.

The ability to make something out of nothing – this is one of Karen's strongest abilities. I recall one instance when she fashioned a movie projector out of an ordinary television! She can build anything, from large wooden loft beds to fine delicate jewelry. She even went back to school for a second degree in Graphic Design. I have friends who have her art hanging on their walls, and her jewelry around their necks and ears.

She works on cars and art projects with the same vigor. One year we were spending my birthday together browsing through antique stores. I came across this "thing" it was hard to identify what it was – it turned out that it was the handle and top of an antique hinge purse. It had lost its fabric somewhere along the way. I looked at it, I really wanted it; but, I knew that there was no way I could make a purse out of it. It looked impossible. Four hours later I opened a birthday gift from Karen. She had, on the sly, purchased the purse handle and then turned it into a beautiful black velvet evening bag! Nothing is impossible for this woman!

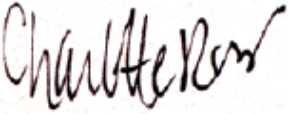
Karen's creativity and design skills are amazing. She turned an old rusty volkswagan rabbit into a beautiful art car. When she went to register the car in the local daVinci Days art car parade and discovered that there would be no parade (because there was no organizer that year). Well, Karen decided to organize the event. She makes things happen.

I met DJ five years ago as Karen's new boyfriend. DJ is one of the kindest men I have met. Although I don't have the fifteen year history with him that I have with Karen, I know him to be genuinely warm, honest and creative. He and Karen are the perfect match.

They have both cared for my home and cats on more than one occasion, for which I am very grateful. They are both very conscientious, reliable, and very loving to our cats. They were diligent in taking care of our gardens and lawn. One time, after they had house sat for us, we came home to a kitchen faucet which had mysteriously stopped dripping. We found out later that it was because Karen and DJ had fixed it by replacing the O ring. My husband and I always rested easy when we had to be away because we knew that Karen and DJ would take care of everything.

I am honored to recommend Karen and DJ and feel that any home/pet owner would be lucky to have them take care of their home and/or pet. They are both very special people who you will be grateful to know. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss Karen and DJ with me personally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlotte Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlotte Ross
Director, Scholar Services
International Student & Faculty Services
Oregon State University
School of EECS