



March 7, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I have been fortunate in encountering inspiring individuals throughout my adulthood, but none more so than Dr. Litchke. From the moment that I stepped foot into her classroom in 2006 at Texas State University, I knew that she was an agent of change. The spirit and energy that she possessed was contagious and I needed to be a part of whatever she was doing. Her ability to take academia and present it in a practical manner for college students is amazing. That ability, combined with multiple community involvement opportunities for multiple populations, truly prepares one for the real world.

I have been in the Recreation Therapy field for 9 years, with the last 7 focused in the field of Dementia. I can truly say that I found my niche and I owe it all to her. In all honesty, had it not been for her, the position that I currently hold within my company would not exist; the two leaders that occupied this position prior to me, were pupils of Dr. Litchke. Their work established the foundation in which my program stems from. With that, I cannot tell you how many Person's with Dementia (PWD), family members of loved ones, and employees of Sodalis Assisted Living that she has impacted. Dr. Litchke has provided intergenerational opportunities for our residents through fieldwork and internship opportunities with undergraduate and graduate students of the Texas State University Therapeutic Recreation program for more than 10 years. She has created a learning bridge from her classroom to our communities by providing case studies each semester (that span 6-8 weeks at a time) for her students to better understand communication techniques and approaches to care for PWD for 4+ years. What's even more amazing is the research that she has done with adaptive chair yoga and PWD. Our residents have shown family members and team members their abilities to not only shown physical improvement, but the emotional connection that can be made through yoga.

As I have grown as a professional, she has continued to support me in many aspects of my life. On behalf of Dr. Lyn Litchke, please accept my letter of support for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Service.

Sincerely,

Marcus Mercer, CTRS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marcus Mercer".