

# Personal letter of reference for scholarship



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

December 6, Re Cambridge Gates Scholarship To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Sir or Madam, I am pleased to submit this letter in support of Sahar Zohouri's application for the Cambridge Gates Scholarship. I have known the applicant for the past seven years as she began her teaching career at the same time that I was concluding my teaching practicum. I have worked with Sahar as an English teacher for two years. This gave me the opportunity to observe Sahara in a professional capacity. During this time Sahar demonstrated her commitment to education, learning, excellence, achievement, and to improving the lives of others while developing her leadership skills.

One of Sahar's strengths is her dedication to education and lifelong learning which she models by her constant attention to research, analysis and literacy. Her many achievements include qualifying as the youngest Ontario certified fitness instructor in 1998, a Nationally certified gymnastics and trampoline coach, and an Ontario certified teacher with a Masters in the philosophy of education. She pursued these qualifications with her goal in mind to be an advocate for education as a solution to global problems and problems with humanity. Consequently Sahar's aims fit perfectly with the Cambridge mission to contribute to society through education. She embarked on her path to give back to society very early in life when at the age of 19 she began attending the University of Toronto both as a student and as a teacher of fitness classes there.

Sahar is an incredibly well-rounded individual who does not limit herself in the areas of her pursuits. She displays expertise in poetry, athleticism, art, and mathematics. She is a very creative, emotionally intelligent, physically fit, and logically astute individual. She has won the Sir John A MacDonald

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Fitness Award, the Environmental Art Award, and volunteers for Amnesty International to promote human rights and political activism. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle became one of her practices that students aspire to. In addition, she was a very vocal and recognized feminist, trying to bring awareness and understanding to this often misunderstood term. Her varied, eclectic, and unique passions and perspectives bring new insight to any educational discussion she engages in.

Sahar's passion and creativity are not confined to the cognitive aspects of education. She also contributes to the social aspects of any environment she works in. While working at A. Y. Jackson, concerned by the fact that there wasn't any celebration commemorating the Persian New Year, especially considering the huge Persian population there, Sahar took the initiative to create a school-wide New Year's Bash for everyone. The event gave others the opportunity to become informed about this culture while celebrating and enjoying great food and music. Presently at her new school, Sir Oliver Mowat C. I., she is taking on the challenge of raising awareness of diversity since she noticed that they only celebrate "Christmas Cheer" and that Kwanzaa and Hanukah are not recognized.. She single-handedly set up a debate between the administrative team and concerned minority students at her school to share ideas on what needs to change and why. She was not deterred by the social backlash she suffered, and has continued to move forward with her efforts to protect minorities and to get her school culture more inclusive. Sahar demonstrates courage and determination when she pushes forward with a just cause.

Sahar is committed to improving the lives of others not just on a day-to-day basis with simple gestures, but also on a long-term basis. In her personal life,

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she is committed to taking care of her mentally ill mother who has schizophrenia, and committed to financially taking care of her family who couldn't afford housing when she was in school. Sahar has a desire to contribute to creating healthy societies by improving the mental health of individuals. She fervently believes schools and education play a great part in developing emotionally intelligent individuals who will help to create a mentally positive and healthy world through their ability to love and be compassionate to others and to themselves.

Sahar's philosophy is: there is no higher calling than serving one's society and making it better. Her research interest reflects her philosophy. In addition, her aspiration to research the issue of creating ethical and emotionally stable human beings who will have the capacity to be heroes is also in line with the Cambridge mission of contributing to society through research. Sahar lives her philosophy in her hard work to impact positively on the lives of everyone she is in contact with.

. It is my pleasure to recommend Sahar Zohouri for the Gates Cambridge Scholarship as she fits the four criteria and I can't imagine a more deserving and grateful recipient.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at [lisamccalla@yahoo.ca](mailto:lisamccalla@yahoo.ca) or at 1-416-258-3117.

Sincerely,

Lisa McCalla-Grigorian

TDSB Teacher

Entrepreneur