

**Letter of Recommendation for: Mr. Matthew J. Lanke**

**Letter of Recommendation by: Mr. Paul Konichek**

**Date: 11/03/2013**

**Mr. Matthew J. Lanke was one of the first to request a reference from me this school year. Many teachers may have turned down his request but I see greatness in this young man that I believe only an institution of higher learning can confirm.**

**NASA saw an ability in me to see gifts in others in that they chose me to represent all the high school teachers in the nation on a special 'K-16 Blue Ribbon Panel' to write the criteria that NASA would use to choose the next teacher in space.**

**When I first met Matt he was a sophomore in a study lab and was driving the study lab teacher crazy. Matt was bored as he was already taking AP Calculus at the time and the school required him to sit with a room full of students who had a hard time with remedial math or the norm for math at this age, Geometry. This alone should tell you something about this boys' genius. I've had 10<sup>th</sup> graders in my Pre-Calculus classes but never in my Calculus class as a sophomore. At that time I had a discussion about a social topic that we had to agree to disagree on.**

**Matt's junior year found Matt in my Physics class. I had my reservations about teaching Matt because of our disagreement with the social topic the year before. However, Mr. Lanke turned out to be the opposite of what I expected. Matt was extremely respectful of me the entire year, volunteered for every demonstration, was the most active participant in the class by far, and was instrumental in his class getting more out of Physics than any class I've had in my 38 years of teaching for high schools, colleges, and even NASA. Matt thinks outside the box and is quick at understanding higher dimensions of thought. I still find it refreshing to be able to converse with him at levels with a minimum of words needed to be spoken.**

**Matt has an anxious curiosity to find out and know things. Matt gets bored easily with the mundane, whereas has a spontaneity with the difficult, challenging, and insightful. All the perfect scores of 36 on the ACT is proof of what this young man is capable of if given the chance.**

**I have no doubt that Mr. Lanke will thrive at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His choosing MIT is just another example of how insightful and prudent this young man is.**

**Matt has vision. He is exceptional in his resourcefulness and his passion for learning at the higher levels of thought. Like Einstein, Matt has little patience with wasting time in**

**regimented, military like educational situations. He is a hands-on kind of person and excels in high level thinking skills. Matt's time has finally arrived when he can enter the ivory tower. It is in the ivory tower he was born for and will finally discover himself.**

**Matt's life is an occasion that is just waiting to happen at MIT. Matt will rise at this juncture of his life to new heights as has never been seen before. I beg you to be the institution that is willing to take a risk on this young man. He does not look good on the paper, like the majority of superior students I could have filled the form out for, but he is heads and shoulders above these students in the ways MIT is looking for.**

**I see a spark in this young man that will blaze at MIT. It is in taking risk that science arrived at where it is today. It is being willing to take risk everyday that makes me a standout in the field of education. Now I am asking you to take a risk on this young man's behalf and on MIT's behalf. Give him the chance to start the chapter of his life he was born for. Once this chapter is started you will no longer be able to put the book down. MIT and Matthew J. Lanke is a win win combination.**

**For all the above reasons I firmly do give my highest recommendation to this elite, anxious to be challenged at MIT, individual.**

**Sincerely,**

**Mr. Paul Konichek**

**NASA Blue Ribbon Panel (2003)**

**NASA Teacher Liaison (Flight 2)**

**Summited Mt. Aconcagua (22,837 feet) (2005)**

**Portage County Business Partners Golden Apple Award Winner (2006-2007)**

**SPASH MATHEMATICS, ASTRONOMY, PHYSICS (1996-present)**

**Monthly Portage County Gazette Science Writer (2004-present)**

**Mt. Fuji, Japan (summer of 2012)**

**Mt. Pico, Azores; Coma Pedrosa, Andorra (summer of 2013)**