

February 25, 2026

Sarah Jill Foy - Challenge A Director, Classical Conversations, Inc.

Dear TCI Foundation Scholarship Committee,

I have known Aylin Ballard for over thirteen years and was the director of her Challenge A year at our classical education homeschool co-op. I led her classroom of twelve students each week for thirty weeks. I facilitated discussions in Latin, Research, Cartography, Exposition, Math, and Reasoning. During the year, Aylin demonstrated strong academic qualities and admirable character traits.

Aylin consistently demonstrates perseverance and intellectual curiosity as witnessed with her Science Fair project. During her exploration of the scientific method, her project encouraged personal growth over competition with her classmates. In Challenge A, students invest three months on background research and experimental trials to test a scientific hypothesis they have developed. The Science Fair project culminates with a competition where students present their research paper and presentation board to a panel of judges.

Aylin is driven in her pursuit of excellence in both scholastic and extracurricular activities. Aylin's Science Fair project demonstrated this pursuit. She meticulously completed the elements of her project while working through the scientific method. While analyzing the trials and results of her experiment, she realized her findings were inconsistent with her background research. After reflecting on her procedure, she found a possible explanation for her inconsistent results. This was realized late in the three month process. We discussed presenting these initial results and simply explaining her suspicions for the probable cause of the inconsistencies. This option would have satisfied the expectations for the Science Fair project. However, Aylin pursued excellence in her results, sacrificing sleep and personal time, to repeat the trials with an improved procedure. Her decision advanced her understanding of the scientific method producing results that aligned with her background research. With this Science Fair project, she exemplified her desire to not only complete her work but to go above and beyond to better understand the science. These skills - perseverance and intellectual curiosity - will make her an asset to any college or university. In the end, Aylin did not earn a Science Fair award from the judges, but I was impressed with her work ethic and the sacrifice that yielded more personal growth than a blue ribbon.

Beyond academics, Aylin possesses admirable character traits. She is by nature a congenial and engaging student who seeks to befriend and draw out others. She encourages and elevates peers boosting their confidence and self esteem. Yet, she is humble about her many natural gifts and talents. Aylin was by far my top Latin student, and she excelled in writing as seen in her essays. She could have easily dominated the conversations each week in both Latin and Exposition; however, I regularly observed her uplifting and inviting her classmates to participate in discussions. She sincerely valued their opinions and observations during conversations about assigned novels. She utilized her strengths in Latin to assist her classmates in better comprehending the patterns and connections to English grammar. Her sincerity and compassion supported and inspired her fellow classmates each week.

Because Aylin consistently displays perseverance and curiosity with academics and humility and kindness with peers, I am confident she deserves the recognition of a scholarship from the TCI Foundation.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah Jill Foy