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Re: Recommendation in support of **Clare Titus**

It is with the utmost enthusiasm and respect that I recommend Clare Titus for consideration for the Tall Clubs International scholarship. TCI requires applicants to be at least 5'10" in height, and at 5'11", Clare meets this eligibility criterion. While height may be the qualifying standard, it is Clare's character, intellect, and generosity of spirit that truly distinguish her. As her AP Biology and Biotechnology teacher, and an informal mentor during her senior capstone, I have had the privilege of witnessing Clare's evolution into one of the most intellectually driven, technically capable, and ethically grounded students I've encountered in my 25 years of science education. Her academic achievements are impressive, but it is the depth of her curiosity, the sophistication of her scientific work, and the grace with which she engages others that truly set her apart.

In AP Biology, Clare consistently demonstrated strong analytical thinking and a deep understanding of complex biological systems. She approached each topic with genuine curiosity, often seeking connections between ideas and asking questions that opened up new avenues of discussion. Her contributions elevated classroom dialogue, not only by deepening the content but by inviting others into the conversation. Clare's ability to engage collaboratively, listen actively, and build on others' ideas made her a quiet catalyst for learning in our community. Her score of 5 on the AP exam reflects her mastery, but more importantly, it underscores a learning process driven by inquiry, reflection, and shared exploration.

Clare's work in our Biotechnology program is equally remarkable. She has developed laboratory skills that not only exceed that which is typical of high school students, but approaches the expertise expected in undergraduate research settings. She has demonstrated proficiency with micropipetting, serological pipet use, microcentrifuge use, and solution prep, and will apply these skills in advanced procedures including PCR, DNA transformation, gel electrophoresis, and spectrophotometry. Clare will soon expand her training through focused work in plant tissue culture and microbiology, including cloning African Violets under sterile conditions and performing streak plating, Gram staining, and biochemical testing. These investigations will deepen her understanding of aseptic and sterile technique and reinforce her ability to apply it across diverse experimental contexts. What sets Clare apart is not just her competencies, but her ability to connect technique with theory, to reflect critically on error and design, and to document her process with integrity.

Her Senior Capstone Project is a testament to her ambition, independence, and resilience. Inspired by her participation in the USDA-funded AgroTek Innovation Summer Academy, Clare designed and executed a comparative study of microbial soil supplements versus chemical fertilizers. She built professional relationships with researchers at the UConn Soil and Nutrient Analysis Lab and a Vermont-based biologics startup, IMIO—collaborations she initiated and sustained with maturity and professionalism. When faced with financial constraints, she negotiated reduced researcher rates to make professional testing feasible. She converted part of her home into a functional lab, adapted equipment for microbial biomass testing, and collected over 300 soil cores across 60+ hours of fieldwork. Clare is now analyzing her data and preparing both a scientific paper and poster presentation, work that mirrors the rigor and independence of university-level research.

Beyond her technical and intellectual strengths, Clare brings exceptional people skills to every setting. She listens deeply, supports peers with empathy, and fosters inclusive collaboration. In group work, she provides a calm and positive influence, ensuring that all voices are heard and that the final work reflects shared understanding. Clare's integrity is unwavering, her humility genuine, and her reliability unmatched. She leads not by assertion but by example, and she consistently chooses the path that demands more of her because she values growth over ease.

When Clare graduates in June, our school will lose one of its brightest minds and kindest spirits. Clare consistently demonstrates intellectual curiosity, integrity, and a genuine commitment to those around her—qualities that make her especially deserving of scholarship support. I am confident that she will bring the same enthusiasm, dedication, and compassion to her future academic community that she brings to every endeavor here. It is with my highest and most enthusiastic recommendation that I urge you to consider Clare Titus for this scholarship. She will not only excel academically, but will also use the opportunities afforded to her to positively impact others.

Respectfully,
Matthew J. Savoie
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