STORY SQUAD

LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT FOR AARON BURNS

"We have so much time, and so little to do. Strike that, reverse it." — Roald Dahl

No one has done more to bring my startup's mission to life than Aaron Burns. He designed and built out an intricately complicated backend that supports our entire working app.

As stakeholder for Story Squad, I have been making distinct release canvas schedules for two different teams of Lambda Labs cohorts working on this app: one basic, the other wildly ambitious. The reason for the disparity is that Aaron is on the latter team. This man's brilliance, leadership, and razor sharp focus allow me to aim for technological heights rarely reached in a Lambda Labs project build. None of this programming sophistication would be possible had Aaron not been there to lead his teammates through nebulous and heady topics like our app's backend running Python scripts in a secure local environment to integrate with Story Squad's data science modules for handwriting recognition & transcription, content moderation, NLP scoring and a recommendation engine. Aaron was always eagerly there, functioning as our team's air traffic control tower by incorporating our various and complex feature-set to ensure that integration is maintained and everything functions as it should. He is Atlas-like figure able to hoist the Story Squad codebase on his shoulders.

Aaron's intellectual curiosity has the intensity of a flamethrower. It lights up everyone on our Zoom calls by forging the kind of non-obvious, counterintuitive connections that electrify a team. Crucially, he has enough self-awareness to make sure that it's never his show. He listens actively and builds on the ideas of others with an intuitive spontaneity for rapid-fire association. His genuine interest in his peers' ideas creates an infectious sense of impactful collaboration and his exceptionally strong communication allows him to organize information and technical details in such a way that all sides (i.e., BE, FE, Data Science) can make actionable changes in their respective local branches.

Aaron's gift for elevating a discussion and synthesizing the various feature ideas that emerge into a coherent argument derive from his instincts to think across disciplines and languages. He can take ideas raised by other students who may be stronger in data science or UX and integrate them seamlessly into our complex codebase, all while maintaining a laser sharp and unrelenting focus on maximizing user value. Whether it be the perfect configuration for a call-response request for our robust front-end, his fluency in AWS deployment or his strong documentation, Aaron brings the entire network of his Lambda School education to suffuse everyone's experience on the team as vital, collaborative, and urgent. Aaron, in short, makes what we do at *Story Squad* matter. He foresees downstream design flaws and corrects course before we scale. He has earned the trust of his peers and team leaders to do this in a way that's not ostentatious or aimed at fueling the petty narcissism of an insecure programmer. He actively seeks out constructive criticism to make sure that he is always sensitive to the mood of a group. He is idealistic, but not naive, ambitious, but never abrasive.

Our mission is to provide kids with a creatively-enriching, fun alternative to the video game Fortnite. Aaron's administrative energies, strong esprit de corps, and collaborative spirit has been instrumental on every level of the project: from clarifying the build framework to handling logistics to presenting in front of key stakeholders, Aaron has done it all. Wonderfully, Aaron is also a warm, poised and mature individual. His analytical chops, singular drive and eloquent way with words combine to make him the single strongest software engineer I've ever worked with. Hire him immediately and thank me later.

Sincerely,
Graig Peterson (cell: 414-520-1844)
Story Squad Founder