

To Whom It May Concern:

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "The Artist of the Beautiful"—one of the denser texts I read with the juniors and seniors in my 19th-Century American Literature elective—the protagonist, Owen Warland, sacrifices all worldly attachments in his monomaniacal pursuit of a purely abstract conception of beauty. In some ways, I understood why Kareem DaCosta became so captivated by Hawthorne's story when we discussed it in class. I could see Kareem's intensity, curiosity, and determination in Owen—no obstacle seemed too daunting to either of them. But, unlike Owen, the word that describes Kareem best is *balance*, a balance that seems purely innate if you aren't looking for tiny traces of the countless unglamorous hours Kareem dedicates to his growth as a thinker, writer, and citizen. Thankfully for your school (and for ours), Kareem DaCosta isn't a fictional character—he's a charismatic student with a deep intellect and an equally capacious heart. Please accept this enthusiastic recommendation on Kareem's behalf.

I first met Kareem when he was a student in my 8th Grade English class. Even at that age, Kareem made an impression with his insightful observations and lightening quick sense of humor, qualities that made our class more rigorous and, honestly, just more fun. As a junior in my English elective, Kareem still carried his characteristic intellectual intensity, curiosity, and humor with ease. Regardless of what we were discussing—whether it was Emerson's "Self-Reliance" or Poe's "The Black Cat"—Kareem's persistent focus on the intricacies of language helped make our discussions more collaborative and analytically refined. His excellent research paper on "The Artist of the Beautiful" was a fitting culmination to the semester: the prose itself was crisp, compelling, and tightly constructed and his ability to weave together relevant language from the story with key pieces of secondary criticism made it a pleasure to read. The essay, like Kareem's performance in my class overall, was the perfect union of natural talent and sustained, conscious diligence. Kareem DaCosta works hard and has fun doing it—he has all the making of a fine scholar . . . and it's almost frightening that he could surely excel in whatever field he chose to enter. Simply put: Kareem will make a difference wherever he goes.

I'm fortunate to know Kareem well, yet I fear no letter of recommendation can capture just how much fun he is to work with. So, if you're looking for intellectual intensity, curiosity, empathy, and humor in a student, don't miss out on Kareem DaCosta. He has made our school a kinder and more engaging space—no doubt he will do the same for even the most rigorous academic institution. Please accept my most enthusiastic recommendation on his behalf.

Sincerely,
Dr. Eric Conrad, Prep School Assistant Director