

March 30, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to have the opportunity to recommend Erika Jones for the Eli Segal Award.

First, please know that I worked directly with Eli Segal, because I headed the National and Community Service Coalition when he was heading the Corporation (which Shirley Sagawa started). I knew the leadership, commitment and integrity Eli brought, and I am proud to put forward Erika's name in his honor. Also, given that you are judging, in part, based on entrepreneurial spirit, please note that I am very familiar with identifying the qualities and characteristics of social entrepreneurs – I used to run the Echoing Green Foundation, identifying and supporting social entrepreneurs around the world, and I still help them with their selection process. From these experiences, I am confident when I say that Erika is an outstanding, entrepreneurial leader.

I have known and worked with Erika for approximately two and one half years. I met her when I began my tenure as the Executive Director of Hands On Bay Area (HOBA), a San Francisco based non-profit. (I was lucky enough to come on Board when Erika was already on staff.) Recognizing how lucky HOBA was to have Erika, after her tenure with AmeriCorps, she was offered a full-time position.

Erika is truly a joy to work with, not just because of her talent and her intelligence, but also because of her passion about service. Erika demonstrates her leadership skills not only in her specific job function, but in her willingness to help out any of her colleagues and to do what it takes in service of the community. The best way for me to articulate her contribution to Hands On Bay Area is to talk about her role in the creation of one of our most successful programs, LIFT.

LIFT stands for Leadership Institute Fellowship Teams – it is a new year-long fellowship program for individuals who are ready to take the next step in their commitment to the community. The fellows deepen their knowledge of the nonprofit sector and grassroots community organizing by committing to monthly team meetings, intensive leadership training every other month, an annual retreat, and a service-learning component where they commit to 5-10 hours of monthly service to apply what they have learned. This program prepares them for board service or other leadership in the non-profit world. LIFT is now entering its second year and will graduate 20 fellows this May.



Headquarters	South Bay
330 Townsend St., STE 16	514 Valley Way
San Francisco, CA 94107	Milpitas, CA 95035
(415) 541-9616	(408) 956-1448



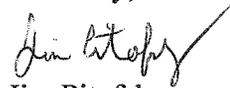
Erika contributed to the creation of this program in several ways. She leveraged her experience as the Hands On Bay Area TeamWorks coordinator; she connected with other Hands On Network Affiliates to learn from their experience and she fought tirelessly to ensure that the program would have truly concrete ways to provide the leadership training that the members of the program desired. By utilizing her experience, her passion, her humility, and her intelligence she contributed greatly to the success of the program.

Outside of Hands On Bay Area, Erika has taken a powerful leadership role in the creation and development of the Bay Area chapter of the AmeriCorps alum program. She recognized early on that the geographic size of the Bay Area is a challenge in bringing the chapter members together. To counter this, she recruited three other AmeriCorps Alum members to create a regional leadership structure and regional meeting structure. Through this and other efforts the Bay Area chapter has become increasingly active in continuing the spirit of service that is a hallmark of the AmeriCorps program. In fact, the chapter has gone from meeting once in 2006, to monthly meetings now, rotating throughout the various regions in the Bay Area.

The examples above are representative of the broad array of gifts that Erika possesses and has given Hands On Bay Area and the Bay Area community. I will close with one final thought. I was impressed recently by Erika's willingness to take on a job that will be quite challenging. She eagerly volunteered to be the programming lead for our "Be The Change Day" (formerly Hands On Bay Area Day), engaging about 1,500 volunteers. This is a demanding position and is often a thankless role. She did not hesitate to take the role, because she saw the possibilities of having a huge impact on the community. To me, that is truly the hallmark of a leader in this field – a person who can see the potential, who is truly committed to impact people and communities through service, and who is willing to take a risk to make it a reality.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is further information that I can provide.

Sincerely,



Jim Pitofsky
Executive Director