



**Department of Public Health Education  
437 Coleman Building  
PO Box 26170  
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170**

December 30, 2022

Dear Committee:

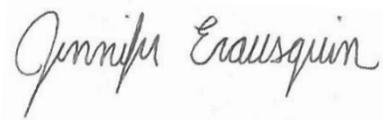
It is my pleasure to write this letter in strong support of Mae Ria's application for the Foundation for the Advancement of Health Education Dr. Becky J. Smith Undergraduate Scholarship. Mae's demonstrated excellence in undergraduate public health education courses, her volunteer experience as a summer camp counselor with Refugee Community Partnership (RCP), and her personal and academic journey have provided her a unique foundation for a future professional career in health education. The financial assistance provided by this scholarship will be critical to supporting Mae's next academic steps.

I have worked in health promotion research and practice for over 15 years in academic, community, and government healthy agency settings. Based on this experience, I am convinced that Mae is on her way to becoming a skilled leader in health education. She has demonstrated academic aptitude, a strong work ethic, and critical thinking around challenging health issues. Mae's family came to the U.S. as refugees in time of conflict, and she maintains strong ties to the refugee committee in which she grew up. Her experiences of assimilation, maintaining intergenerational cultural knowledge, and overcoming financial challenges have all forged Mae's curiosity, passion, and dedication – key characteristics for a health educator.

I first came to know Mae in the Fall of 2022 when she was a student in my HEA 315: Introduction to Epidemiology course. The course is centered on an application model of epidemiology, including team-based cooperative teaching-learning activities. In this course, students work together to determine what they know and what tools or approaches are best suited to solve problems at hand. Mae was organized and detailed in her work, but more importantly, she showed ease and comfort with the co-learner/co-teacher role. Her participation in cooperative learning groups around homework problems demonstrated enthusiasm for the tools of public health and a desire for continued growth. She became skilled in explaining complex concepts in lay language. She demonstrated this especially well in final assignment, an analysis of a book about the Flint, MI water crisis called "What the Eyes Don't See" by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha.

I have found Mae to be a passionate health educator-in-training, a driven student, a strong organizer and communicator, and a careful thinker. Her combination of talents and skills will allow her to make great contributions to her community and the field of health education. I offer Mae Ria my enthusiastic recommendation to this program. If you have any further questions regarding her application, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Erausquin". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Jennifer Toller Erausquin, PhD, MPH  
*Associate Professor*  
*Associate Chair of Public Health Education*