



# Multnomah Playschool

A COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

October 13, 2013

Greetings,

It is my great pleasure to recommend to you Nicole Olszewski for consideration as a future employee/colleague.

For the last four years, Nicole has been a parent volunteer in my classroom and on the board of directors for Multnomah Cooperative Playschool. As a co-op school, parents take responsibility for many aspects of the program with some serving in minor roles and others taking on major projects. Nicole volunteered for leadership roles each and every year.

Her experience with the school included serving on the board all four years. Her first job was to be the parent representative from her child's class to the board. After that, she served two years as our Auction Coordinator and then finally as the President of our board.

Our annual auction is our one and only fundraiser each year. We are dependent on this event to raise approximately 50% of our annual revenue. The auction helps keep the cost of tuition affordable for all and funds our scholarship program. In taking on this job, Nicole was responsible for creating all the systems and protocols that would support a \$50,000 event. She was the project manager, overseeing a team of leadership volunteers in the organization and completion of the necessary tasks. She was the person who researched, located and negotiated contracts with all of the vendors needed to put on the event including an auctioneer, venue, caterer, data management and processing, sound systems and more.

During Nicole's tenure as auction chair, we exceeded our fundraising goals significantly. Also of particular note, Nicole created a manual for future auction volunteers that has greatly enhanced their experience and ability to be successful in their efforts. She created a flow chart and timeline, thorough documentation for each function that needs to be completed, detailed task lists, sample documents for procurement and for contracts and more. Prior to her work on this manual, we were starting from scratch each year and relying on oral history to recreate what needed to be done. She has taken the guesswork out of the equation and given us the tools for many years of future success.

In her last year in the school, she served as our board president. This put her in a position of working directly with me on a very routine basis on issues of management and policy. I cannot think of a time when I felt more supported in my role as head teacher and director of the school. Nicole is extremely organized and detail oriented. She was responsible for organizing and leading board meetings, leading the full parent community in addressing issues and fulfilling their

co-op responsibilities and assisting me as we worked through confidential issues regarding school policy and individual family situations. She is uniquely able to synthesize information from a variety of sources and then crystallize the issues in such a way as to allow all parties to move forward in an appropriate manner.

During Nicole's time as board president, she decided to take on a project which had been on my wish list for many years – the redesign and construction of a new, nature-scaped playground for our students. This project had been on the drawing board for many years and needed someone to step forward to bring it to fruition. Nicole was that person.

She managed this project from start to finish, taking it from a loosely formed idea in my head all the way through implementation. After getting sign off from the community and our landlord to begin an exploration phase, Nicole located potential design contractors. After our selection, she personally guided the process through each and every step. Once our design was in hand, she led the negotiation with our landlord for plan approval, created a multi-phase plan for implementation, located and secured the resources needed, created and directed the teams to complete the work, organized and supervised the community build day, expedited materials and more.

What we thought might be a multiyear project that would cost us a significant amount of money and would require some special fundraising became a project that was physically completed within 5 months. This has been a dream come true for our school and was only possible because Nicole worked tirelessly to find the resources to make it happen. She researched possible community partners who could help us and in doing so formed a relationship with our local Lowe's store. Through her advocacy and professional representation of our goals and mission, they agreed to adopt us as a Lowe's Heroes Project. This distinction brought with it significant amounts of donated materials and the added bonus of skilled volunteers who joined us for our community build day. Through this relationship she also procured the donation of the Trex decking materials needed to fully replace a failed staircase – something that was not possible within our original budget.

No project is ever without setbacks and ours was no different. At one point we reached a point of disagreement and conflict with our landlord regarding a particular part of the project. Nicole was a consummate professional in mediating this situation and bringing about a solution that was fair and satisfactory to all.

Because of her tireless efforts and abilities she brought a project that was estimated to exceed \$60,000 and last up to two years to full completion from design to implementation in just one year and for less than \$45,000.

I cannot think of a project that would not benefit from her skills and abilities. She has great clarity in her ability to plan, manage and implement large scale events and projects. She has a superior ability to work with the many personalities and agendas that are a part of doing business while keeping the project goals in the forefront.

I recommend Nicole to you with the highest confidence that she would meet and exceed your expectation and needs. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance or answer any questions.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marty Peterson  
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Multnomah Cooperative Playschool

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