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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a sociologist and senior lecturer in the Public Policy Studies program in the College at the University of Chicago. For many years I've taught a "field research practicum" course that requires students to undertake social, policy, and client-oriented research in the nearby low-income neighborhoods of Woodlawn, Englewood, and Washington Park. Our research is available at: <http://cppt.uchicago.edu>.

Since January our class has worked with the Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance and Woodlawn Battle on Wax for Peace. We've examined how the program operates, interviewed key stakeholders, and explored comparable models that use music and the arts for engaging "at risk" youth. We most recently reported to Demeatreas Whatley and the Woodlawn Public Safety Alliance in early March. Mr. Whatley has been very generous with his time. He has given interviews to my students, appeared on a "crime, youth violence, and public safety" panel in my class, and has appeared as a guest speaker in other classes of mine as well.

My students have been both intrigued and impressed by this innovative program that is obviously very attractive to Woodlawn youth. Just as impressive, in our view, is the leadership of Battle on Wax. Mr. Whatley and Mr. Floyd Davis both know how to reach out and mentor youth vulnerable to the streets and offer up alternatives that are not only enticing, but offer skills-building activities as well. We are excited to continue to work intensively with the good people at Battle on Wax through spring quarter (April and May) and hopefully well into the future as they build capacity, expand programming, and come up with metrics to evaluate their progress.

As this letter suggests I am very enthusiastic both about Woodlawn Battle on Wax for Peace and our evolving and mutually enriching relationship. The future is very bright indeed for this energetic and pioneering youth organization.

Sincerely,



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