

Air Academy High School

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www.asd20.org/aahs

Dan Olson, *Principal* • (719) 234-2400

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To whom it may concern,

It is with great pleasure that I write this recommendation for Tom McNulty for New Coach of the Year. Tom joined our coaching community this year, joining his wife in coaching. While some might think that Tom joined simply to help his wife, this is not the case. Tom has jumped into coaching with both feet, embracing this activity with everything he is, becoming one of its biggest champions to his students and students across our district.

While the program Tom works with has been around for a number of years, the last few years have been a struggle to get students involved. However, from the moment Tom came onboard, with his enthusiasm and passion for speech, the program has grown tremendously; last year, the program gained only 13 new degrees, but this year, with Tom's involvement, the program has earned 48 new degrees so far. That's a gain of more than 250%! However, Tom has not only spurred the program on to growth in degrees; he has also inspired the program to grow in events. While last year, the students at Pine Creek only competed in a few different events, Tom has championed events his students have never tried before, top among these new to his team events has been World Schools Debate and Big Questions Debate. In fact, Tom's team had more teams than any other at our district's second "Out of this World Schools Debate" Round Robin, and he even provided the clever name for the event! At our district's Big Questions Invitational, one of Tom's students placed 2nd, despite it being a new event for their team.

However, Tom does more to inspire his team than simply championing events; Tom encourages his students to get involved and give competition their all in unique and unconventional ways. One of our local tournaments chooses a theme each year, and then hosts an optional congress the night before the tournament where students are encouraged to wear costumes to match the theme. This year, Tom made a deal with his students that if they all wore costumes to the congress, he would wear a Poodle Skirt to the entire Saturday tournament. His students all costumed, and Tom was true to his word, even wearing the Poodle Skirt on stage to accept the team's 1st place Congress Sweepstakes Award.

Tom is so deserving of the New Coach of the Year award because of all he's done to promote and grow this amazing activity. However, what amazes me even more is that Tom has done all of this at a time in his life when most people would draw into themselves, take care of themselves, and not reach out beyond themselves. Because of some very serious health issues, Tom should probably stay home and rest, focus on himself, but that's not Tom. Since discovering his current health issues, he hasn't once missed a tournament or stayed home. Despite feeling terrible, he continues to coach his kids and continues to judge every round and continues to keep all of the coaches and kids laughing. He constantly tells us how lucky he is to be part of the speech and debate event and community and to have found one of his greatest passions in life, but really, it is us who have been lucky to have him. I give Tom my highest recommendation for New Coach of the Year.

Sincerely,

Renee C. Motter

Colorado Grande District Chair

NSDA Board Member