



Beijing  
November 25, 2016

Dear Colleague -

I'm writing in support of Maryann Chatfield, a reading intervention specialist whose work is, in my experience, absolutely superb.

I was going to write the word "miraculous," because that is how it felt as a parent to see the turnaround my son George ~ who has dyslexia, slow processing speed, and ADHD ~ achieved in working with Maryann. However, I didn't want to diminish the amount of learning, skill, patience, savoir-faire, humor, and commitment that went into Maryann's work with George: it wasn't a "miracle," it was top-notch teaching that completely transformed my son's relationship with written texts, and subsequently his self-perception as a smart, able student. Maryann was able to produce those kinds of deeply meaningful results in this case, and I strongly suspect she has the ability of work that same alchemy with other students.

Some specifics. Maryann worked with my then 8-year old son in an individual tutoring relationship two times a week for about 2 ½ years. She was exceedingly flexible, meeting him at our home on Saturday mornings and in her office one day a week. She has a warmth and delight in each kid (I noticed the way Maryann would greet each student she tutored: like they were the most special kid in the world) that invites students to engage their session with energy and good will, even though the sessions were working on precisely what my son found most challenging. She employed George's intelligence as a "way in," even as she deftly managed his wiggleness, and George came out of his sessions with her feeling smart and affirmed. He also came out of them with the tools he needed to be an independent reader. To this day (George is now 14), George loves to point to his Greek and Latin cognates, prefixes and suffixes, and other reading strategies that have their roots in those Saturday morning sessions. Maryann has the complete tool-kit, and knows when to employ a particular strategy to maximum effect. She hits the sweet spot of high expectation and high support, and kids respond.

Maryann is also excellent with parents. She is reassuring without being pie-in-the-sky, and inspires confidence. She speaks authoritatively, minus the condescension, and is able to discuss the subtleties of a sophisticated approach without resorting to professional jargon. Indeed, Maryann was so impressive to me as an educator, and so important to my son as a teacher, that I have been calling her each year in the fall to see if I can get her to come to our school in Beijing. So far, I have not been successful. I will be jealous if you are.

With warm professional regards,

David J. Beare  
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