

January 17, 2022

To whom it may concern,

It is my pleasure to offer this letter of support for James Fortier. I have known James for greater than 10 years, and I believe he has the skill, empathy, care and dedication to be a great substitute teacher in your school. I had the privilege of working with James Fortier on our documentary film "Gifts From the Elders," from 2010-2012. Funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, this film was a community driven, community led initiative that coincided with a multi year health research project focusing on Indigenous health and the environment.

James was responsible for mentoring two First Nations film students from Confederation College (Thunder Bay, Ontario) as they documented the stories of Anishinaabe Elders through audio and video interviews completed in two First Nation communities along the north shore of lake Superior: Biigtigong Nishnaabeg and Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways. Specifically, James worked with these students to support effective planning and communication with communities, as well as building rapport and connection with the Elders themselves. Aside from the highly detailed work of filming and producing the work, this sort of community engaged research requires a great deal of cultural humility, patience, and respect. To support young people to come into the work in meaningful and skillful ways takes an extra gifted level of dedication.

Completed in 2012, our film was screened in various communities and Universities across Canada and the U.S. James' passion for our Anishinaabeg (Ojibway) culture, history and communities was clear in this project, and it exemplified by the dozen other documentaries he has produced over the past 25 years.

James brings this experience and passion to every project he undertakes. He is an effective listener, but also a skillful, empathetic teacher whose love for his students shines brightly.

I would highly recommend him for a substitute teaching position.

Miigwetch!



Chantelle A.M. Richmond, PhD

Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Health and the Environment
Member, The College of the Royal Society of Canada
Leader, Ontario's Indigenous Mentorship Network
Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Environment
Acting Director, Indigenous Studies Program
Western University, London, Ontario, Canada