



**Letter of Recommendation and Support for
Toni Shinn and “My Rules My Reality”**

September 21, 2014

To Whom This May Concern:

It is my privilege to write this letter of support and recommendation for Ms. Toni Shinn. I met Toni in 2006 when I became the evaluator for the Parramore Kidz Zone initiative in Orlando, Florida. Parramore has been identified as one of the most dangerous areas in the United States. The Parramore Kidz Zone (PKZ) initiative aims to reduce juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, and high school drop-out rates in the community through a variety of programs and services. I was charged with evaluating the entire PKZ program and its many moving parts, but it became evident to me in a very short time that Toni Shinn was the heart of the program. She knew the community, its needs and the best way to address them. She had the respect of the Parramore residents, because she had earned it through her work, her faith in the community and her persistence in pushing everyone to work past their barriers and do their best. This is a community that had a long history of programs and services coming and going with no lasting impact or continuity. Toni and her outreach and mentoring team provided consistent support and direct impact.

Although Toni no longer works for PKZ, she continues to work tirelessly with the kids in this troubled community through her program “My Rules My Reality.” Her philosophy is sound and effective - “we build, we empower, we discipline, we love...it works.”

Changing these kids’ lives is incredibly hard work and Toni has persevered at the neighborhood level with the children, teenagers and their families through her mentoring and outreach. Her work and her influence have resulted in many Parramore teens becoming successful, healthy, well-educated adults despite all the odds being against them.

Much of Toni’s work has been uncompensated and unrecognized. She is a special person who does special things for “her kids.” Toni is a strong leader who has helped mold hundreds of youth. Her dedication to the Parramore community is awe-inspiring.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information about Toni Shinn and “My Rules My Reality.”

Regards,

Karen van Caulil, Ph.D.
President/CEO