

December 9, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I strongly recommend Lauren Burns-Coady for employment. I worked with Ms. Burns-Coady for over two years while she was Director of Operations at the Jain Family Institute, where I am Managing Director and Chief Research Officer. During that time she evinced an unfailing commitment to our work, and performed her role exceedingly well.

Even more impressive, however, is her tremendous capacity for effectively tackling complex and often inchoate ideas, regimenting them into clarity, and developing them into fully-formed, functional projects. This, in my experience, is an ability that is as invaluable as it is rare; it requires flexibility, resilience, insight, intelligence, leadership, drive, and an uncommon willingness to learn. Lauren has all of these, in spades.

Lauren took on the role of Director of Operations when JFI was still a startup — we had around 10 staff and affiliated scholars, our projects were only partially defined, and our operational infrastructure was haphazard at best. Today, we have quadrupled in size. We are widely respected as leading experts in our projects' fields. We work on the frontiers of applied social science research as partners to organizations including the American Bar Association, UN Global Pulse, and the NYC Economic Development Corporation. It is an understatement to say that Lauren was instrumental in helping us grow into the organization we are today. She went beyond expectations in far too many situations to enumerate, ranging from the creative (developing our visual identity by pulling in stellar artists and designers), to the organizational (streamlining our hiring process and crafting clear policies for unique situations), to the banal (handling insurance, payroll, and audit headaches), to the foundational (clarifying our mission and building our institutional culture).

And she didn't stop there. In addition to all of this, she stepped up to co-lead our Guaranteed Income Initiative, building and deepening our relationships with partners as diverse as the Economic Security Project, the Chicago City Council, the Stanford Basic Income Lab, and the Magnolia Mother's Trust. This relationship development with stakeholders from wildly different milieus — non-profit foundations, local politicians, grassroots organizers, academic researchers — required unflagging attentiveness, agile responsiveness, imperturbable grace, fierce intelligence, and no small amount of political instinct. This would, in lesser hands, have been at least one full-time job. She managed to do it while still handling our operations during a period of rapid expansion.

In short: Lauren was an employee of absolutely astonishing talent, and I consider us extremely lucky to have had her on our staff. I recommend her without reservation.

Sincerely,



Jerome Hodges