



UTAH NATIONAL GUARD

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS
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August 7, 2017

To the Board Committee,

It is my pleasure to recommend SGT Cameron Ashdown to your Social Work Internship Program. In my interaction with Cameron, I have witnessed exceptional contributions and passion towards the art of social work and towards our Veterans. Not only is he an excellent social worker, he is an outstanding learner. Cameron has dedicated himself to enriching the lives of Veterans in his clinical work at a Veterans substance abuse residential treatment center, at the VA, and with his National Guard unit.

Cameron has committed himself specifically to Veterans by aligning his career in order to best support them. During his deployment, one of his comrades unfortunately took their own life. This tragedy provided a motivation to intervene and assist Veterans who struggle with their respective illnesses. In order to best prepare himself, Cameron sought out a myriad of both military and civilian trainings to aid Veterans, as well as break the stigma attached to psychological distress. SGT Ashdown is his military unit's Resiliency Trainer, which he takes great passion in as he trains his comrades with skills to combat mental stressors. He practiced with Veterans in his first clinical internship in order to reduce substance use, decrease counterproductive behaviors, and guide Veterans in realizing their potential. In Cameron's second internship, he aided the Veterans Association in their Suicide Prevention department, where he reached out to at-risk Veterans and provided an intervention that potentially guided clients away from completing suicide. In Cameron's regular job, he is a Case Manager with Veterans who struggle with mental illness, homelessness, and substance abuse. In this setting he provides skills, education, and hope for a better future for Veterans who have lost many of their friends, family, and resources.

Cameron has dedicated his life to serving Veterans. As a Veteran himself who has served in a deployment, he understands his comrades and has a unique way of aiding them when they are in a state of psychological distress. His academic accomplishments are impressive, boasting a 4.0 in a rigorous graduate degree program resulting in being nominated for the MSW Student of the Year award in 2016, in addition to bachelor's degree where he obtained a 3.85 GPA.

SGT Ashdown has my enthusiastic recommendation. He is compassionate, intelligent, and most importantly, passionate about serving Veterans. I am confident that he will bring warmth, support, insight, and hard work to the Social Work Internship Program and to a renowned community of Army Social Workers.



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