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Reference in Support of Rachel Ward

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to have the opportunity to recommend Rachel Ward to you. Rachel would be a very effective and positive asset to your program. She is a fine thinker, an excellent researcher, and she is already an insightful and sensitive practitioner of visual anthropology and has the qualities required to become a very high calibre anthropologist.

Rachel worked with me here in the Anthropology Division at the American Museum of Natural History from October 2012 to June 2013 as a volunteer on my research project on the cultural impacts of climate change in the Pacific. I set her research projects, gathering and synthesizing information for me. She has demonstrated impressive capacities as a thoughtful and effective researcher, locating and drawing insights from a wide range of pertinent sources. She is also remarkably productive and well organized, achieving a great deal of high-quality work very quickly and efficiently. She clearly enjoys the process of engaging in a subject thoroughly, and she derives particular satisfaction from working with objects and using visual methods of analysis, documentation and communication.

Rachel has impressed us here at the AMNH with her intelligence, commitment and energy. She is also very personable, cheerful, and a pleasure to work with. Over the time that Rachel was here, we had a group of very good interns and volunteers in the Anthropology Division, many of whom are graduate students. Rachel is distinctive within that group, and I would rate her performance in the top 5%. She has the verve and capacity to work through the PhD process, from designing a significant, innovative and captivating project, carrying out the hard work required, solving problems and working exceptionally well with colleagues and supervisors, communicating well, and keeping going at a good, solid pace, completing the project and producing superb results.

Her main strengths are her brightness, drive, creativity, and capacity to create effective engagements with the participants in her documentaries. Another strength is her capacity to shape documentary projects that are not just documentaries but full projects, in collaboration with the people in view. She will always be sensitive to the people she is working to represent, and be open to learning from them, including how they wish to be represented. Her warmth, integrity and generosity of spirit mean that she has the ideal qualities for these engagements with individuals and communities.

Rachel Ward is exceptionally well suited to postgraduate work. I am confident that you would be as delighted to have her as a part of your institution as we have been. Please contact me (voicemail +1 212-769-5866; fax +1 212-769-5334; email jnewell@amnh.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Newell, Ph.D.