

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Betty Louise and Susan Davis, with their award-winning project, *A-Place-To-Call-Home*, are Nevada County, California leaders who have driven the successful implementation of EL Education pedagogy and culture, and have consistently strived for the continuous improvement of both through their contributions to the SAEL 10th Grade 2018/19 *Surviving & Thriving Expedition*.

For three years, they have partnered with the SAEL 10th grade teacher team, especially the English and Art teachers, to develop and implement meaningful curriculum, in-class instruction, and assessments in which students improve the quality of their work through models, reflection, and critique.

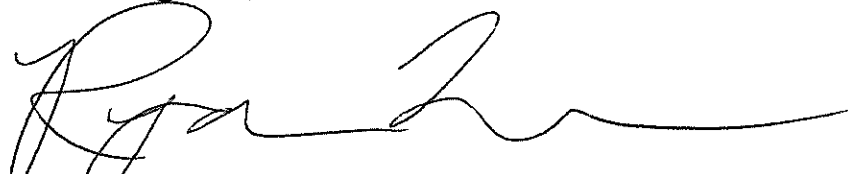
Their work specifically focuses on how Story, communicated through multi-media arts, can shift perceptions toward inclusion, common humanity, and inspire compassionate action regarding homeless people. Susan and Betty Louise have created impactful experiences for the students in the beginning of the Expedition, bringing three or four homeless community members into the classroom to share their authentic stories and answer questions.

In 2019, they introduced the addition of facilitated "*Story Circles*" in which the students and adult community members, in groups of ten (seven students/three adults) had the opportunity to share personal Stories in response to prompts given by the Circle's facilitator. Creating an inspiring and safe space to listen to people's experiences helps humanize complex issues, nurture empathy for each other, build bridges across differences, and generate local solutions.

The resulting student work showcased in the *Surviving & Thriving Celebration of Learning* is proof of the excellence and high-quality learning experience SAEL students have in this expedition. The response of the parents and community members attending the CoL, and the article written in the local paper, reinforces that all the students have excelled in the *Surviving & Thriving Expedition* of 2018 and 2019 .

We look forward to the continued collaboration and participation of these leaders in the new youth focused project “Voices of our Story” for 2020.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Love', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. To the right of the signature is the date '1/22/20' written in a similar cursive style.

Ryan Love, *SAEL English 10 Teacher*