



McMINNVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

615 NE 15th St. McMinnville Oregon, 97128

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www.msd.k12.or.us/schools/MHS

August 24, 2015

To: Mr. Tom Welter, OSAA Executive Director
From: Mark Hinthorn, McMinnville High School Athletic Director
Re: Hardship Request for Antonio Cabrera (12th grade)

Dear Mr. Welter,

This letter is in support of Antonio, who is in need of a hardship in order to participate in Fall Sports at McMinnville High School for the 2015-16 school year. Antonio is an incoming senior who is credit deficient, however this situation is one where participation in sports is changing his life in a positive way. Simply put, without soccer, Antonio is at very high risk of being swept full bore into gang affiliation which would lead to him poor attendance, grades and likely result in him dropping out and never graduating. For this reason, participation in soccer has the chance to save him, motivate him, keep him connected with the a peer group that is focused on succeeding in the classroom and on the pitch, and contributing positively to our school, community and society.

Antonio played soccer in 9th and 10th grade, but fell victim to the influence of older students and young adults who were no longer in school. His grades and interest in school fell, while his feeling of belonging with this new peer group grew. This has been the pattern for Antonio the past few years. However, last February, at the start of 2nd semester, Antonio came to me for a serious heart to heart talk. He divulged that he was scared of the types of actions that his new peer group were engaging in (hard drugs, violence, weapons) and that he was scared for his life. He wanted to find a way out, but one that was with dignity that would not compromise his safety or well being. We talked at length about getting back into soccer and immersing himself in that realm and just being too busy for anything else. Antonio did this successfully by joining a club team in the spring and by participating in open-drop-in training sessions with his soccer teammates every late afternoon and evening during the summer.

We also talked about how he needed to pass a minimum of 5 classes and take summer school courses to credit recover. Antonio did the former, but the latter was not possible, as his mother (migrant farm worker) gave birth to her 6th child enter the world in early June. She could not continue working (her income is the only source of money that the family has) so Antonio stepped up and worked her job in the fields from 6am - 5pm all summer long. Then, after work, he would ride his bike to the stadium and train with his new friends and ex-teammates. For this reason, Antonio was not able to credit recover via summer school.



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This past Thursday at registration, Antonio sat down with his mother, myself and our alternative education program coordinator to map out a plan that would allow him to graduate by the end of the school year. This plan includes full time placement in our credit recovery program and in addition, Saturday school all year long. It is a lot, but we are dedicated to supporting him day by day, week by week, all year long...tracking his progression towards the micro goals established by and for him. Antonio is committed and determined to accomplish this goal, both for himself and for his mother and family. He is the oldest sibling and wants to be the first to graduate from high school so that his younger siblings will follow in his footsteps. Part of his motivation stems from the hope and desire to play soccer this fall and participate on the team his senior year. The structure of after school practice and games every week is what will provide Antonio with the support and motivation he needs to reach his goals. His teammates are committed to helping him stay on track too...offering tutoring sessions or study groups to Antonio throughout the entire year. Also, it is important to know that Antonio came up with the idea that if he had any unexcused absences or discipline referrals, that he'd sit out the games that week. Knowing that he doesn't want to miss a single moment of any possible playing time, he feels that this potential consequence will help keep him focused on his education.

In my years as Athletic Director, I have never been faced with a situation where I concretely know that participation in sports will save a child from the evils of society. I'm not sure if you heard, but this summer there was a non-life threatening gang-shooting in McMinnville. While at school the following evening for drop-in training, I spoke with Antonio about it and he said that if he knew all the parties involved and was so thankful that he had become so involved with practicing soccer after work rather than hanging with this other peer group, for if not, he likely would have been a part of something extremely serious and dangerous.

I know that by granting a hardship to Antonio, he will have a positive, productive senior year that will lead to graduation. Without it, I fear the absolute worst for him and his family. For the aforementioned reasons, I humbly submit this hardship request to you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Hinthorn

MHS Ass't Principal / Athletic Director