



July 14, 2011

Dear Sir or Madam,

I enthusiastically support the application of Ms. Paulette Reed. I had the pleasure of working with Mrs. Reed from September 2008 through July 2011 in my capacity as both the U.S. Ambassador to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau and as a parent of teenagers who participated in her programs. Ms. Reed was an invaluable asset to the U.S. Embassy community throughout her time in Senegal, consistently volunteering her services, first as a diplomatic spouse and as an independent U.S. citizen resident in Dakar. She is an innovative self-starter who excels at bringing diverse groups of people together through activities that encourage educational awareness for a wide array of issues, fellowship and team building that have served the needs of the families within the Embassy, the International School of Dakar, the American Chamber of Commerce and the Dakar community as a whole.

Paulette Reed was responsible for spearheading several educational and cultural programs, including annual Breast Cancer Awareness luncheons; two Embassy-wide "Welcome to Dakar" events; and the first Christmas party, for teenagers from the Embassy's locally hired and American communities.

Ms. Reed is a certified etiquette instructor, who has successfully shared her knowledge and passion of the conventions governing correct behavior with adults and teenagers from many nationalities and several professions, including training my and other ambassadors' household staffs.

Combining her unique love of etiquette with a particularly special community service project, Paulette Reed initiated the first Junior Ambassador Program in Senegal. This Program is a consortium of twelve select middle and high school students from the international, diplomatic, and local communities, who receive highly sophisticated training to strengthen their communication, networking, problem solving and conflict resolution skills. She also instructs each student on cultural diversity, fine dining and etiquette. The students employ these skills in real life social settings, including organizing and hosting welcome events and serving as hosts at official U.S. Embassy functions to earn community service credit. As my teenage sons graduated from the Junior Ambassador Program, I can personally attest to the fact that Ms. Reed is indeed an outstanding protocol instructor and life coach who brought an exceptional service to our community by providing such advanced training and service opportunities to our teens.

Paulette Reed's talents have also been sought after by other diplomats and professionals in Senegal. Ms. Reed was invited to speak on the "Power of Effective Networking" at the American Chamber of Commerce. She also worked closely with the Senegalese Ministry of Education, as a special events planner and logistics coordinator. In 2009, in partnership with the Minister of Education and me, she organized a first – Senegalese and American teens held a cultural exchange program to celebrate breaking the traditional Islamic Ramadan fast known as an "iftaar." This event also served as a "Celebration of Excellence" recognizing the top seven academically successful students from one of the most impoverished regions of Senegal with plaques, full media coverage, dinner, and a host of social events conducted by her Junior Ambassadors.

Ms. Reed is a highly skilled and creative events planner, logistics coordinator and interior decorator, who organized conferences involving African women entrepreneurs and members of civil society. She regularly decorated my official residence for private and official events and, for the past three years was been chosen by the U.S. Embassy staff to serve as the lead decorator for our official July Fourth events.

Paulette Reed is a woman of strong character and determination whose love of people and culture infuses her every effort. She is a loyal, intelligent, consistent, trustworthy and hard working organizer of many talents who repeatedly achieved her goals with confidence and professionalism. Ms. Reed is a team player and works well with even the most difficult people. If you have any questions regarding this reference, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following e-mail address: bernicatms@state.gov.

Sincerely yours,



Marcia S. Bernicat
Ambassador of the United States to
Senegal and Guinea-Bissau