



Wednesday, November 28, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am happy to write about my teacher, Mr. de Meij, in support of him being nominated for CTCOLT Teacher of the Year. Mr. de Meij is an inspiring teacher to me and to other students. He is always ready and willing to help, support and encourage his students to work harder and to achieve more. He works with students, one on one, when necessary, and is one of the teachers I can always count on and go to when I need help with my work; especially my Spanish work.

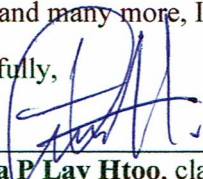
I would like to share a little about myself. I was born in Thailand, in a refugee camp. While living there, I never thought of myself ever having the opportunity to go to high school. I never had thought of having a bright future for myself. Then my family and I moved here in 2011. At that time, I still believed that I would not have a bright future even if I managed to go to a high school and complete it. When I entered my sophomore year here in high school, I became a student in Mr. de Meij's Spanish Level 1 class. Spanish was added to my schedule because it is a graduation requirement in my school. In the beginning, I did not care about having to learn to speak Spanish. I thought that it would be a waste of my time. After all, I already spoke two languages. I wanted to ask my school counselor to switch me out of Spanish. But Mr. de Meij had something to say.

So Mr. de Meij spoke to me and insisted that I should stay in the class, and that there was much value in learning new languages and new cultures, and that he would make it fun and interesting for me and the other students. He also said that it would be challenging, but that I should "... *just give it a try*." I decided then to "... *just give it a try*" and challenge myself. Mr. de Meij often tells us how amazing it would be if my classmates and I learned to communicate in Spanish at a highly proficient level. He also, on many occasions encouraged us to consider becoming a Spanish teacher, or a teacher of another language. At first, I did not take his invitation to consider becoming a teacher serious. I thought he was joking. But he still continued to share about how amazing it was to make an impact on a new generation of children.

As time went on, I found myself liking Spanish more and more. Then recently, I finally decided that I too wanted to become a Spanish teacher. I decided to "... *just give it a try*," as Mr. de Meij often says. I, a person from a refugee camp in Thailand, will become a Spanish teacher! I am now thinking that I would like to attend CCSU to get my degree in teaching Spanish. I now know that I too want to be an inspiration to the next generation of students, in the same way Mr. de Meij is an inspiration to me and to others. I too want to be able to tell the next generation, when it comes to learning languages and cultures, "... *just give it a try*," and it will be worth your time and effort. Learning a new language and culture adds value to your life, and it is fun and interesting.

In conclusion, I have learned, and I am still learning a lot from Mr. de Meij. I have been inspired by, and continue to be inspired by Mr. de Meij. I am going to walk out of high school in the year 2020, speaking Karen, English, and speaking Spanish at the novice-high or intermediate-low proficiency level. I too plan to inspire others to learn new languages, and to consider becoming a language teacher, the way Mr. de Meij inspired me. For these reasons and many more, I believe strongly that Mr. de Meij deserves the title of CTCOLT Teacher of the Year.

Respectfully,



Ta Mala P Lay Htoo, class of 2020,
Future Spanish Teacher