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To Whom It May Concern:

Try engaging an audience of 12-18 year olds at 8 am on a cold January day in Vermont. This would be a daunting task for most anyone, but it is right up Lida Winfield's alley. This January 29th, I watched from the side aisle of the Ludlow Town auditorium as Lida began her story, "In Search of Air," after a brief introduction by Principal Jim Frail. Her's was the "key note" or kick off activity for a day we call, "Life is Good" at BRMHS. The day is intended to promote healthy habits, develop relationships and provide an active break in the normal schedule of the school year. The students of Black River Middle/High School were her audience. In the back, dozens of students seemed barely awake when the program started, but from the very beginning, Lida drew them in, perhaps at first in a bit of shock. The intensity of her movement and emotion threw some of the students off at first. A little giggling and some nervous commentary ensued, but five minutes into the story, these same students were leaning in with rapt attention. The quiet commentary between students ceased and an electric silence engulfed the auditorium. Her story of love, struggle, failure, personal danger, survival, and deep satisfaction with her life path presents a compelling example to students of every gender, status and situation.

Small of stature, lithe and bold, Lida Winfield draws an audience in, no matter the time of day. She also presented the key note address to the Two Rivers Supervisory Union on our initial in-service day on August 26, 2013. On this occasion, the most common feedback went roughly along these lines, "I have never in my life been more engaged in a professional development activity." This comment, or ones very similar to it, was common among our faculty and administration. Moreover, with both students and faculty, the quality of the questions in the follow-up question and answer session were impactful. This question and answer session is almost like improv theatre. Lida is open, honest, authentic and very thought-provoking. Her performance represents the best in education. The learning that occurs is truly memorable and serves as a metaphor for developing meaningful and engaging learning opportunities throughout our curriculum. It helps us genuinely focus on each child or learner and leaves us sensitive to great possibilities no matter the circumstances. Perseverance, optimism and an understanding of genuine accomplishment shine through Lida's performance and serve her audiences well no matter their age.

I recommend Lida to your school or learning community with a sense of gratitude for her visits with us and deep belief in what she is doing with kids and adults alike.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Bruce Williams".

A. Bruce Williams
Two Rivers Superintendent of Schools
Ludlow, Vermont