

12 April 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to support Colorado Lady Lightning and its exceptional basketball program. Our daughter Nella is a very competitive athlete with a natural athletic ability who has gravitated to multiple team sports. To our delight, it quickly became evident basketball and soccer were going to be her focus.

We nurtured her commitment and passion, and she excelled as a dual-sport athlete. Over the years, including many coaches, clubs, and games, she pursued basketball as her primary sport. I was Nella's Jr year of high school when her passion waned, and she became dissatisfied with the game. The coaching and club we had joined did not provide Nella with a high-quality program.

Then we heard of Sandy Zimmerman and her family of coaches. We found a basketball club that put our daughter first. Nella, and our family as a whole, were no longer a number. We could not have been happier. Once under the wing of Sandy, Nella's energy, passion, and devotion to basketball returned. The young lady who had become disheartened and happy with 'being present' was now alive and talking about 'crushing it.' Sandy brought a much-needed balance of coaching to improve her skills and tough love to get her focused. I can say without hesitation CLL breathed life back into her. We also found welcomed support from the extended family of players and their parents, with whom we bonded and became friends.

Nella was now looking forward to playing basketball at the collegiate level. As parents, we did not know what to expect or where to start. Then, along comes Gerry Zimmerman, who guided us as a family into a situation we could not have ever imagined. He quickly became her (our) off-court coach. Starting with understanding Nella's academic and athletic expectations, we soon went from a blank sheet of paper to a professional highlight reel(s). Gerry became a great advocate and champion, opening communications (and ultimately opportunities) to coaches across the US. He mentored her along the way, instructing her on dealing with coaches and presenting herself as a player. He also educated us, as parents, on what to look for and how to get the "best offer" for Nella.

Before we knew it, and after many school visits, Nella had multiple offers (8) to NCAA DIII and NAIA schools accompanied by high-dollar scholarships. Ultimately, the most challenging part was deciding on which to choose. We proudly announce that Nella will attend and play for Luther College in Iowa starting in 2023, and plans to study Nursing (BSN).

It's hard to express how indebted we are to Sandy, Gerry, and the extended CLL family. We, without reservation, highly recommend this program to everyone we meet.

Sincerely,  
David and Liinu Castaneda

Bert Murphy  
7801 Windwood Way  
Parker, CO 80134  
11/19/19

Colorado Lady Lightening  
Coach Sandy Zimmerman  
President Gerry Zimmerman  
RE: Kate Murphy

Dear Colorado Lady Lightening:

I wanted to touch base and pass along our sincere appreciation for all that your club has extended to our daughter, Kate Murphy, this past summer and fall seasons. Kate has recently signed her letter of intent to begin playing for the Regis University Rangers starting in her freshman year of 2020. It has been Kate's dream to play at the collegiate level for years. She has played for a variety of different clubs over this time but really found a home with you guys at CLL. The leadership and mentoring from Coach Sandy resonated very early in the season for Kate and she strove to work hard and was determined to be both a team leader as well as part of the family culture embraced by your club. The strong leadership and determined spirit helped Kate step up to the level necessary to be recognized by the college recruiters she wanted to make an impression upon.

Additionally, Gerry, President and recruiting manager professionally recorded and developed footage of Kate's performance on the court and reached out to a broad selection of Universities to distribute this and ignite the necessary interest to get the ball rolling. Gerry, tirelessly worked toward the goal of identifying the schools we felt were a good fit for Kate and was able to get many of these recruiters to attend the showcase tournaments that we participated in during the season. The ultimate goal was to secure a verbal commitment before the end of the summer season which was accomplished. The efforts extended by Gerry afforded Kate the opportunity to not only receive an offer but literally a multitude of them and allowed us as a family to find the very best fit for Kate.

Kate will be pursuing her degree in nursing at Regis University and will be part of what we feel is another excellent family environment within the women basketball program. The goal of having the opportunity to play basketball at the collegiate level as well as achieving her dreams of becoming a registered nurse are immensely rewarding and we feel that the coaching and management of the Colorado Lady Lightening played an integral role in helping Kate achieve this lifelong dream.

Sincerely,

*Bert Murphy*

September 10, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Colorado Lady Lightning basketball club. In doing so, I would like to share our experience with CLL.

My daughter, Abbey, grew up dancing (began age 3) and playing club soccer (began age 5). Though she was a talented dancer, her boisterous personality and energy made her even more talented as an athlete. Once she began middle school, she decided to go out for every sport the school offered...track, volleyball, and basketball...just because she could.

Much to my distress, in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (despite the investment and years spent dancing and kicking a soccer ball), Abbey announced one day that she believed in her heart that basketball was "her sport". Um...really?? Well, for a beginner, she wasn't too bad at it. But did she really think she was going to be able to play in high school? I wasn't thinking so. But we committed to giving her a shot at "her sport".

Enter Coach Sandy Zimmerman, head coach and owner of Colorado Lady Lightning. After being referred by a friend who played for the club, Coach Sandy invited Abbey to a private lesson and apparently saw some potential in the kid. From that day forward, Coach Sandy took Abbey under her wing and worked with her consistently for 4 years. Coach Sandy, along with her team of coaches, taught Abbey everything she knows. Moreover, Coach Sandy never, ever, not for even a single second gave up on her, even at times Abbey stopped believing in herself. By her third season, Abbey was playing on CLL's top team (Gold) and was also on the Varsity Roster at Cherokee Trail High School for her junior and senior years.

Upon entering her senior year, Gerry Zimmerman (Coach Sandy's Husband and CLL co-owner) began the recruiting procedure on behalf of Abbey, as she desired to continue her sport at a collegiate level. Gerry created Abbey's showcase video and pushed hard to get her video seen by his extensive network of college coaches.

After 4 years of playing with Colorado Lady Lightning, and many private lessons with Coach Sandy and other members of the CLL coaching staff, Abbey received (3) solid high dollar offers from different colleges across the country. Several more coaches (from Junior Colleges up to Division II) expressed interest after seeing her play, but the schools were not a good fit for Abbey logistically and/or academically, so were not pursued.

I am so proud to share that Abbey just began her Freshman year at Johnson and Wales University in Denver, where she will continue pursuing her love of basketball as a JWU Wildcat.

I know Abbey would not have made it if it were not for the belief, training, and expertise of Coach Sandy and Gerry Zimmerman and the rest of their wonderful coaching staff. I HIGHLY recommend Colorado Lady Lightning for any young girl who wants to grow in the sport of basketball or dreams of pursuing basketball at a collegiate level. (BTW...High school basketball is NOT the best path if a girl desires to play at a collegiate level. I will leave it at that.) They need to play club ball, in addition to high school ball. Colorado Lady Lightning will provide the dedication, skills training, discipline, and encouragement needed to get each young woman as far as their potential and willingness to work will take them.

Sincerely,

Kristina Paré  
(303) 588-4144