

10 September 2013

To the Sentencing Magistrate
Sunshine Magistrates' Court

Your Honour,

I am writing a character reference for my younger brother, Jessie Hartford, who is pleading guilty to the charge of "Use of a Drug of Dependence". He first informed me of his offending three weeks ago when he sought help finding a lawyer to represent him in court.

Our entire family was taken aback at the news of my brother having committed a drug offence. He has never been the type of person to do anything that would cause our parents any significant disappointment. As Jessie's older sister, I lived closely with him growing up and I can say that he has always led a very positive lifestyle; graduating with honours and earning the respect not just of my parents and all of his three siblings, but that of many people in our neighbourhood as well. He provides free Math tutorial lessons to elementary students in the summer and is currently an assistant coach to a high school baseball team. He is also a very devoted brother who sacrificed almost half of his allowance when growing up so that our younger brothers could join non-compulsory school field trips.

Jessie has never previously been involved with drugs and certainly does not have any criminal record. We understand that he lost his girlfriend of four years approximately two months ago in a car accident and that he is still trying his best to cope with the grief. However, he has made clear to me during our conversations that such an event is not an excuse to resort to drugs and that he wouldn't approve of his younger brothers resorting to the same measures to combat grief or emotional pain.

My brother has been very cooperative with the Police and deeply regrets the offence he has committed. He is presently attending grief and drug therapy counselling and hopes to be able to move on as quickly as possible. As he graduated from college this year, he is especially troubled by what this charge can do to his employment prospects. He is also worried by how this charge might affect the name of the school for which he serves as an assistant baseball coach and by how the children and teenagers he coaches may lose confidence in him as their mentor.

I am confident that this will remain a one-off incident for Jessie from which he will learn lessons that he will use from here onwards. Our entire family loves Jessie and we will continue to support him and wish him the best outcome for this case.

Should you need to verify any of my statements above, please feel free to call me at (03) 5555-5555.

Sincerely yours,

Jessica Hartford, Sister
354 Kensington Avenue
Sunshine VIC 3020