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**Letter of Recommendation for Lisa Baldwin
From Neva J. Specht
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Appalachian State University
27 July 2010**

To whom it May Concern:

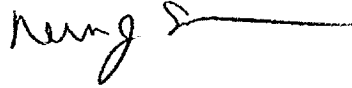
It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Lisa Baldwin. I have known Lisa for four years in a couple of different capacities. First, I recruited Lisa in 2007 to be one of my master teachers on an NEH Landmarks in American History and Culture grant. She was set to do it again this summer but her move to South Dakota unfortunately came before the workshop took place. She was a talent hard to replace and I missed her greatly! Secondly, I have seen her work in a variety of settings with children in the community including my own eight- year-old son.

I cannot say enough about Lisa's creative approach to teaching, which is informed by a dogged need to learn as much as possible about a subject and then to turn that information into truly original lessons and activities. I sought out Lisa to be a part of the NEH grant because I had heard great things about her teaching. Most NEH grants use only Master teachers from secondary schools, but I wanted someone with an elementary background because I knew that we would likely recruit more elementary teachers if we had Master teachers from all levels. Lisa agreed to come on the grant and turned out to be one of our greatest assets. She brought so many good ideas about how to present material about our subject, the Blue Ridge Parkway, to a wide variety of teachers. She used her knowledge of Appalachian music, as well as her strong interest in literature to shape the final program. She also took it upon herself to read all of the assigned readings, find other readings for her and the NEH teachers, and to suggest important ways we could make the workshop better. During the two-weeks of the workshop, Lisa worked in small groups with the teachers, leading them to look at the Blue Ridge Parkway in a variety of ways. The evaluations from the workshop acknowledge Lisa's dynamic role and upbeat attitude in making the workshop a great experience for the teacher's involved. I saw first-hand her skill in research and writing sample lesson plans as well as her extraordinary communication skills with all the teachers. Many of her suggestions she made following the workshop were incorporated into the NEH this year, and I can say made it even better.

I have also seen Lisa's work with young children. Two year ago she was one of the counselors at ASU's Camp Invention. She taught a variety of songs to the 100+ children and developed fun activities for all the campers for a week. My son could not say enough about how wonderful she is. She also performed regularly at the public library and Playhouse (a local non-profit that provides programming for young children). Her philosophy of learning through song captures the imagination of both young and old alike. During her library sessions, she reads a story and then sings a song or more often, gets the kids to sing the song with her. At certain performances, I've seen her become the pied piper with children following her around and singing and dancing. It's great fun to see and I know, as an educator, how much learning is going on.

Before returning to graduate school in 2009 and receiving her MA in Appalachian Studies this past May, Lisa was an award winning elementary teacher. She taught in Watauga and Ashe Counties schools where she took part in many activities outside her normal teaching load, including working with science fairs, Battle of the Books, and directing school plays. Her abundant enthusiasm for teaching needs to be seen to be believed.

Lisa Baldwin possesses a number of skills that make her great at whatever she takes on whether it's teaching in a traditional classroom, on a grant, or some other non-traditional setting. Those qualities include enthusiasm for the subject, creativity, analytical thinking skills, and the ability to communicate affectively. Lisa Baldwin has all those and more. She has demonstrated to me in a variety of ways that she is a hard worker and will no doubt give her all to whatever her next endeavor may be. I recommend her to the search committee with much enthusiasm and hope that the committee will give serious consideration to her application. She will make a wonderful addition to any school faculty and North Carolina's loss is certainly South Dakota's gain. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if I can provide additional information to the committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nery S", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.