



Sonoma County Sheriff's Office

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September 27, 2017

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in reference to Emily and Tom Iland and their Be Safe The Movie program. The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office recently partnered with Becoming Independent (a local service provider for individuals with developmental disabilities) to bring Emily and Tom to Sonoma County to present their Be Safe The Movie program.

Emily and Tom presented a Certificate Course on September 20, 2017 and an interactive Be Safe The Movie screening on September 21, 2017. Prior to presenting each training, Emily and Tom also provided their Experience Autism training to the law enforcement officers attending each day. Over 100 people were in attendance during these two days including local educators, local service providers, parents, students/individuals with developmental disabilities and representatives from every law enforcement agency in Sonoma County.

Emily and Tom made an outstanding team in presenting their training in a way that everyone participating felt comfortable and engaged. I have been in the public safety field for the last 30 years and have been a parent of two children on the Autism Spectrum for the past 21 years, so I attended both days with a dual perspective, looking for training that addressed my concerns through both a parental lens and from the public safety lens. Emily and Tom's training delivered that and so much more. During the interactive screening on Day two, it was amazing to see the level of interaction between law enforcement officers and those attending from the community. You could see true community relationships and bonds being built and misconceptions being erased between all in attendance.

The feedback that I have received during and since the training has been phenomenal. I have personally received feedback from educators, service providers, parents, law enforcement officers and individuals on the spectrum who either attended the training or heard about the training through the local Press or social media. The training was not only educational, it was an amazing community building event for all. All the feedback has been extremely positive, encouraging and supportive of this training and for continued training like this, to give a few examples:

- A local educator shared that, "This was the best training I have had in my 20 years as an educator."

- A local police chief I spoke with is planning on having all of his officers participate in this training.
- A young man on the autism spectrum, who recognized me from the training, approached me at a community fundraiser to tell me what a great time he had at the interactive screening and how great his law enforcement “partner” was.
- A mother, whose son is on the autism spectrum, and who has always had fears of her son having a negative interaction with law enforcement told me that the training “met and exceeded” all of her expectations with training that would help her son. She had very positive comments regarding all of the law enforcement officers in attendance.

Our goal here in Sonoma County is to continue to have interactive screenings of Be Safe The Movie at least annually to continue to educate all in our community.

My heartfelt thanks to both Emily and Tom for their on-going dedication to bringing law enforcement and those on the Autism Spectrum together to learn so much about each other from each other.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information at david.house@sonoma-county.org .

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave House', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lieutenant Dave House

Administrative Lieutenant – Detention Division