**FORMAT FOR LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT**

Salutation: Let's address all the letters to Kathryn Martin, President, Potomac Art Therapy Association.

Paragraph 1: Introduction and Support - Have the person introduce their organization and state their support for " a professional art therapy license in the District of Columbia"

Paragraph 2: Briefly Introduce the Organization - Paraphrase the mission statement, who is primarily served and key services offered.  Make sure it is clear that DC residents are among the clients.

Paragraph 3: Describe how art therapy is utilized or integrated into the agency.  Give an example.

Paragraph 4: Describe how a professional license in art therapy would benefit the organization (easier to hire, increase service offering to more clients, ensure quality...)

Paragraph 5: Close with an additional statement of support.

Try to keep the letter to a single side of paper.  Make sure that the letter is on letterhead and signed by the highest ranking official who is willing and able.  I will need a color scan and the original.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR AGENCIES THAT RECEIVE FEDERAL FUNDING: If you are in an agency that receives federal funding and are prohibited from engaging in lobbying activity, you can still offer your support. You can still say how art therapy has benefited clients in your agency. Just leave out any lines about endorsing the licensure efforts.

**LETTERS ARE DUE TO JORDAN POTASH BY APRIL 15, 2015.**

**SAMPLE ENDORSEMENT LETTER**

Kathryn Martin, President

Potomac Art Therapy Association

Dear Ms. Martin:

On behalf of the Wendt Center for Loss and Healing, I want to express my strong endorsement for the efforts of the Potomac Art Therapy Association to secure legislation for the establishment of a professional art therapy license in the District of Columbia.

Our organization provides mental health and social support for residents of the D.C. metropolitan area who are bereaved. We offer individual and group therapy for children, adolescents and adults, as well as, support for those who have to identify the bodies of their loved ones at the medical examiner’s office. We also provide crisis support for traumatic incidents. As part of our youth programming, every summer we run Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC. This free weekend sleep away camp mixes traditional camp activities with grief therapy to help campers in their healing process.

Art therapy has played an important role in all of our programs. Art making and the creative process has long been recognized as an integral component to healthy grieving. Camp Forget-Me-Not/Camp Erin DC has had a resident art therapist for 13 years. The art therapist provides crucial opportunities for campers to express and work through their grief. The art therapist has facilitated the production of meaningful activities, such as memory boxes. By carefully selecting colors and images that represent the deceased, the youth are led in a supportive process to create a lasting object in which they can gather items to aid their remembrance. We have found it to be crucial that an art therapist work with the children given their keen understanding of how the creative process complements psychological processes. In addition to camp, we have hired contract art therapists and art therapy interns to aid in our year-long programs.

Although we are attentive to only hire trained art therapists, the fact that art therapists are not licensed limits our ability to provide this service to all of our clients. Only licensed professionals are eligible for third-party reimbursement, which reduces the financial burden to our clients and our organization. Further, a licensed art therapist would be able to take on the responsibilities of supervision for both interns and new professionals working towards obtaining professional credentials.

I sincerely advocate that the District of Columbia government initiates a professional art therapy license so that more of our clients can benefit from art therapy and be assured that they are working with a highly qualified professional.

Sincerely,

Michelle Palmer, Executive Director