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October 26, 2014

Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs
PO Box 7843
Madison, WI 53707-7843

To whom it may concern:

Mollie Manhattan asked that I write a letter of support to accompany her application for a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs.

I met Mollie and became familiar with On Purpose Journey, Inc. a year ago. The soldier who was driving the HUMVEE and was severely injured when our son was killed in Iraq was invited to attend a function sponsored by Mollie's group. When he shared his story with her, he mentioned the Castners. Mollie contacted me and invited us to attend as well. Although her organization had not previously been involved with families of fallen soldiers, she reached out to us in a unique way. She managed to create a very special evening at a Milwaukee Admirals hockey match that included us, two Wounded Warriors and other veterans. The Admirals organization honored our son and the Wounded Warriors that evening. Since then that soldier, Jeff Vorpahl, has become actively involved in On Purpose Journey, Inc. by writing articles for the website sharing his experiences in Iraq.

Fast forward to this fall. Mollie asked me to speak at the dedication ceremony for her book, *The Little White Truck With The Big Mission*, at Milwaukee War Memorial Center. I was honored to participate to share my son's experiences on 9/11 as well as what had transpired in our lives since that fateful day. I had met Joe Campbell, one of the people involved in the story, seven years ago through his involvement in Being There – Reaching Out, Inc., an organization of Wisconsin families who have lost military members since 9/11. The dedication was very special to say the least. So many groups were brought together to remember what has happened since 9/11. Memories and experiences shared by firemen policemen, businessmen, veterans, and others were recognized. All of this is part of *The Little White Truck With The Big Mission's* story. Lives were forever changed. I felt that I was not only speaking for my son at that day but for all of the military personnel who have died since 9/11.

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That day I purchased several copies of the book. I presented a copy to each of the elementary school IMCs in our school district in my son's memory. The IMC director was delighted to receive them and guaranteed that the books would become a part of commemorations of 9/11 in future years. Of course, sharing these memories with our children is the purpose behind telling this story. They are too young to remember that day, but the book tells the story from the unique perspective of bringing a piece of the 9/11 steel to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. That the steel is displayed at the Milwaukee War Memorial Center is especially significant because so many veterans have played huge roles since 9/11. At the dedication ceremony the display "Remembering Our Fallen" surrounded the 9/11 steel, so those veterans who were killed were part of the ceremony. Joe Campbell and the other veterans who were in attendance at the ceremony spoke to the substantial role veterans played in the endeavor. This book clearly demonstrates the veterans' community working in conjunction with other groups, particularly firemen, to accomplish something impressive. That unity of purpose needs to be shared and fostered in young people. I believe that *The Little White Truck With The Big Mission* eloquently accomplishes the importance of working in unity to demonstrate what groups of people can do when they work together.

It is my understanding that this grant would help get more copies of this book into schools and into the hands of the young people who need to remember this part of our history that has become so important to us. I hope that your organization shares the importance of accomplishing this and sees assisting with the promotion of this publication as an effective tool to do this. On Purpose Journey, Inc. deserves your serious consideration.

I will always remember.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kay Castner".

Kay Castner

Mother of CPL Stephen W. Castner, KIA Tallil, Iraq 7-24-06