

# UNIVERSITY OF REDLANDS

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*Intercollegiate Athletics*

May 25, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Mari Burningham and I am the head volleyball coach at the University of Redlands. I am writing this letter of reference proudly on behalf of Jessica Pettitt.

Jessica Pettitt recently visited our school along with all the other schools in our conference. I had the opportunity to hear her speak and to take part in her sessions on two occasions.

Our entire athletic department participated in her discussion and Just Rescue activity. Jessica's session was both entertaining as well as mentally stimulating and forced me to really think about and evaluate myself as a coach and professional and come to terms with some of the motives behind my actions whether conscious or subconsciously. The Just Rescue activity helped my group to really understand our different and varied personality types and the different ways we chose to make tough decisions in a hurry based upon our own personal experiences and biases as well as our personality types.

I also attended her keynote speech entitled Be The Change You Want To Be. Just as the Just Rescue activity was geared towards our coaches and support staff the keynote speech was geared for the student-athletes of our campus. I saw all the athletes there go from texting and playing games on their iPhones to actively participating and being engaged in the conversation. As I am sure you know, getting college students off their phones is major feat. Jessica Pettitt was able to capture her audience, in my opinion, for two reasons:

1. She did a great job of communicating on their level, using language they understand and use, it was humorous, and highly entertaining.
2. On a more cerebral level it was thought provoking, forced them to participate and get engaged. She was also able to keep them engaged because she talked about something that as student-athletes they can be interested in, apply to their lives right now, and apply later on in life. It forced them out of their comfort zone and provided them so avenue of thought that they may not have thought about themselves or in life in general.

As a former two sport Division I athlete and a coach in the NCAA for the past 8 years I have had the chance to listen to, observe and participate in only a few speaking opportunities. I would like to see more NCAA sponsored speakers who can pass great messages onto our outstanding student-athletes. There is a need in many subjects and the more we can get through to our student-athletes the better off they will be not only in college, on competition, but in the rest of their adult lives.

I would endorse Jessica Pettitt to do more speaking engagements for the NCAA and I hope you will considering allowing her and others like her to come in and help us shape our student-athletes minds and help us coaches as our coaching situations and trials are ever changing with the changing of the times around us. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or if you would like additional information. I'm proud to be in the NCAA and I am anxious to help in any way that I can.

Warmly,

Mari Burningham  
Head Volleyball Coach, University of Redlands