



HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to recommend Ted Weissberg and Row Cypher, Inc.'s work in the Chicago community. Hostelling International Chicago has been working with Ted and Row Cypher since August of 2013, when Ted approached the hostel seeking a new partner and venue for Row Cypher's spoken word events. From the first meeting, Ted has been extremely organized, professional, and clearly passionate about the work he is doing in the performing arts community in Chicago. Ted's story (and the conception of Row Cypher) is impressive, and the fact that his events have progressed from dorm-room performances to regular community events with 50+ attendees is not due to luck, but to hard work, energy, and enthusiasm.

We have hosted events in conjunction with Row Cypher (and his other partner organizations) on a generally bi-monthly basis. Ted is a clear communicator regarding his needs for a successful event, and has been flexible with involving our hostel guests and community partners. For each event, Ted works with me on date availability, lets me know the concept of the event to make sure it is a good fit on both sites, and includes me on the review of promotional flyers well in advance of the event. He truly involves his partners and is always sure to recognize each and every one of them during his events.

After coordinating several events at the hostel with Ted, I invited Row Cypher to participate in Hostelling International Chicago's annual Peace Conference. I offered him a time slot to dedicate to "Hip hop and community" during which he and two guests spoke about their stories and the impact performing has had on their lives. He and the two guest speakers (Phenom and Robin Bobo) all performed as a supplement to their speeches, and it was by far one of the most moving sessions of the day. In general, the events Row Cypher produces are of the highest quality.

Ted has demonstrated that he is a thoughtful partner with respect to other events I have hosted, as well. He has connected me with other community members (primarily performers) who may be able to contribute to hostel programming outside of the events Row Cypher hosts at Hostelling International Chicago. I intend to continue working with Ted at Hostelling International, and highly recommend him and Row Cypher to other community organizations.

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