



ROCKY MOUNTAIN SEED ALLIANCE

April 23, 2019

To Whom It May Concern;

The Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance is pleased to send a letter of endorsement regarding Avalon Organic Gardens and EcoVillage's Personality Integration Rehabilitation Program for at-risk youth.

I personally have worked with Avalon since 2004 when I was a sustainability event producer and resident of the Verde Valley in Arizona where they resided for years.

Upon their relocation to Tumacacori and the development of an actual EcoVillage, our Executive Director (and my husband) Bill McDorman and I were again pleased to work with them directly as co-directors of the seminal seed conservation organization, Native Seeds/SEARCH in Tucson. We were partners on a USDA Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant (W-SARE). This grant partnership focused on increasing seed stock of two heritage grains: Chapalote Corn (the oldest known corn in this country) and White Sonora Wheat, the original wafer wheat of Father Kino.

What is most noteworthy about Avalon is their integrity and delivery of outcomes they promise. In fact, the grant program we participated in during 2011 launched them into their own ancient wheat production where today the community grows 90% of the grains they need! Not an easy task for a smaller community of 110 but with plenty of ingenuity.



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The dedication of community members allowed creativity to take center stage and they often built what they needed for harvesting, threshing and processing.

All this is to say, they have what it takes to create programs, follow through on the hard tasks at hand, roll up their sleeves, make course corrections and bring success to whatever they engage in.

I really appreciate the Personality Integration Rehabilitation Program for youth they have designed to help those who have strayed. As a former foster parent, it has been unfortunate to witness how unsuccessful “conventional foster programs” have been here in Arizona to help youth.

Putting kids (of any age) in a circumstance where they have structured activities, responsibilities, counseling and uncontaminated food (they get to grow as well as eat) would serve as a healthy model for state agencies and any groups attempting to rehabilitate our youth. Kudos to Avalon!

Sincerely,

Belle Starr
Deputy Director

Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN# 46-5661943).