

February 14, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Saheeda Nadeem is employed with Bethany Christian Services in Kalamazoo, Michigan as a Youth Specialist. In this capacity, Ms. Nadeem works directly in a home with older youth (17 – 19 years old) who are soon to age-out of the foster care system. The youth she serves come from diverse cultural, national, and language backgrounds. Consequently, Ms. Nadeem's own history of immigration, her language skills, and her life experiences make her uniquely able to relate to and assist Bethany's client youth. Let me emphasize this last item: Ms. Nadeem's age and life experiences uniquely position her to provide support and service to the young men and women served by Bethany, as Ms. Nadeem is respected by the youth as a mother-figure and is relatable to the youth as one who has likewise experienced significant personal difficulty. In addition, Saheeda Nadeem goes beyond job expectations and finds ways to not simply do her assigned tasks, but to participate in the broader life of the agency.

Ms. Nadeem has been employed in her role with Bethany Christian Services since April 2016. Ms. Nadeem is a faithful and highly valued member of Bethany's team. Not only has she contributed directly through her work, but she has served as a valued liaison to the local Middle Eastern population, helping client youth maintain their own cultural connections and helping to connect community organizations to the home.

In sum, Saheeda Nadeem is truly an irreplaceable member of Bethany Christian Services. We already have difficulty meeting the staffing needs of our homes for older youth. And, we especially have difficulty finding staff like Ms. Nadeem with personal life experiences, cultural skills, and language skills so congruent with the needs of our youth. Please accept my strong and urgent request that Saheeda Nadeem be granted legal permission to remain in the United States.

Respectfully,



Joel Bell, LMSW
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Branch Director
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