

Saint Paul City Council Member,

My name is Ornela Kurtic and I am an EMS Academy graduate from the summer class of 2011. I would encourage you to vote the approval of the Phase Three portion of our program.

Since EMS Academy three years ago, I have had many opportunities for learning, growth, and employment that I may never have had without the experience at Station 51. I am also a current employee of the Phase Two portion working on the BLS unit. I have continued to be dedicated to this program because of the way it has changed my life for the better. I believe that the Saint Paul youth are given a special and rare opportunity through the program and wish that it would continue to provide further advancement into the Fire/EMS field.

Phase Three would earn alumni and future graduates the opportunity to continue their growth as contributing community members. We all dream of what we would like to be when we grow up, some people are gifted with the passion and courage to pursue fire fighting and paramedic careers. I can say as a current member of this wonderful and hardworking group of individuals each of us has this common dream.

What better way to provide outstanding public service candidates for the city other than to allow the opportunity to those who have proven and dedicated themselves these past years to this cause.

Personally as a female and a Balkan war refugee, I do not believe I would have had the success that I have had so far without our program. Our diversity and multilingual talents are an invaluable resource to the melting pot city of Saint Paul.

I have lived in this city for several years now. Saint Paul has been my favorite place I have ever lived. I feel that this city is my home now and would like our EMS and Fire services to reflect the diversity of its residents. I would also like to give back to the city that has provided not only a home to me but also a career path. I feel that Phase Three would further the city's opportunity to diversify its Fire Department with our pool of Saint Paul residents dedicated to their city, who are already familiar and currently providing patient care to their neighbors.

Council Member, please consider approving the Phase Three portion of the EMS Academy. I believe it would be a great benefit to the residents of our Saint Paul community as well as furthering positive career paths to the city's youth. I am twenty four years old, my family does not speak fluent English and cannot help me when it comes to my education or career. As a young minority who works full time and goes to school full time I can attest that I will continue to live within the poverty range unless I am able to obtain a decent paying job. I believe there is a quote out there along the lines of "Poverty is the deprivation of opportunity" by a Prof Amartya Sen. Phase Three would provide this opportunity for me. It will also provide this opportunity for future youth in the same position as myself. By providing this opportunity for Saint Paul youth, in return we will provide the city an opportunity for future economically stable and community involved adults.

I personally would appreciate the opportunity to have the chance to become a Saint Paul Fire medic. Phase Three would give myself and others in my position just that. Please approve the vote so we can build a more equal, stronger, and more safe community for Saint Paul.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to this afternoon's decision.

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