



Sept. 23, 2019

To whom it may concern,

When you hire a new reporter to work for a small town newspaper, you never know what you're going to get. We've all had our horror stories with the process. When I hired Carter Jones, I was ready for anything. He was a big city guy nearly fresh out of college who claimed he'd be OK taking up life in the tiny town of Perham. There was going to be some culture shock, both for Carter and for the residents of Perham, who surely would be able to smell his city blood from a mile away. If not, they'd see his pink shoes and stylish hair and know something was up.

However, this ended up being one of the best hires I have ever made. Since day one, Carter has continued to make this town his own in a way I've never seen a young journalist do. His smile and positive attitude has proven to be an invaluable asset for our newspaper, as he not only provides professional representation for us, but continues to win over a town full of people who are used to only accepting its own. He has done this through his willingness to embed himself into the community in a way that shows he cares.

One ongoing series he came up with is called 1 in 3,000. Its concept is that every person in that town is special and worth writing about. A couple of times a month, he does just that, writing feature stories about the people he meets during his journey as a new, big city guy in a small town. The feedback we've gotten on this series is like nothing I've experienced before in Perham. They love it; they love him because they can tell he sees the value in each one of them.

In addition to his ability to connect and tell somebody's story, he has also shown that he can and will get in there with some of the toughest of issues, including suicide and drug abuse. He's taken everything I've thrown at him, from breaking news to a quilting story and everything in between. He's taken the brunt of angry callers while also taking his time with the little old ladies that come into the office wanting to chat.

I'm so thrilled that in a world where there are jobs far less stressful and much higher paying, he decided to go with his heart, because honestly, he could have done anything. At the pace at which he has learned and grown, I expect big things from Carter Jones. Out of the many young journalists I've known, Carter stands out as somebody I believe is exactly what the Dave Pyle New Journalist Award is all about. This young reporter is going to take his love of writing and photography and make a difference in the world — to know him is to know this. For readers in Perham and for those of us who work with him, he already has.

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