

## **SAMPLE CHARACTER REFERENCE LETTER – NEIGHBOR/COMMUNITY MEMBER**

The Honorable Rebecca Lawson

United States District Judge

[Address of the Court]

Dear Judge Lawson,

My name is Margaret Cole, and I have lived on Oakwood Lane in Riverbend for more than twenty years. I am a retired elementary school teacher and active member of our neighborhood association. I write to share my perspective about my neighbor, Anthony “Tony” Ramirez, who now comes before your Court.

Tony and I have been neighbors for nearly twelve years. We live three houses apart on the same street, and in that time I have come to know him not just as a neighbor, but as a dependable and kind member of our community. He has spoken with me about his current case, and while I do not comment on the legal matters before you, I feel it is important to describe the man I have known all these years.

What has always stood out about Tony is his readiness to help others without hesitation. A memory that I will never forget took place during the winter storm of 2016, when heavy snow and ice left several of us unable to shovel our driveways. Tony, without being asked, walked up and down Oakwood Lane with his snow blower and shovel, clearing the driveways of elderly residents who could not do the work themselves. My husband had recently undergone hip surgery at the time, and Tony made sure our sidewalk and driveway were safe. He did the same for three other homes, never asking for recognition or payment. His only explanation was, “We look out for each other here.”

Another example of his character occurred just last year, when one of our neighborhood children went missing for several hours. It was a frightening evening, and many of us gathered to search the nearby park and woods. Tony organized groups of volunteers, handing out flashlights and dividing the area into sections. His calm leadership reassured panicked parents.



Thankfully, the child was found safe, and I will always remember Tony's steady presence during that crisis.

Tony's contributions to our neighborhood extend beyond emergencies. He has served on the neighborhood watch committee, helping to keep our community safe. He also organizes our annual block party, arranging for food donations and making sure every family feels included. These are not glamorous jobs, but they make a difference. When people ask me who embodies the spirit of Oakwood Lane, Tony Ramirez is one of the first names I mention.

I know that Tony now faces serious consequences for his mistakes. I do not minimize that reality, and neither does he. But the person I know is not defined solely by this conviction. He is defined by years of kindness, responsibility, and citizenship. Those qualities have not disappeared.

I also want you to know that Tony will not face the future alone. Our neighborhood is a close-knit community, and many of us, myself included, stand ready to support him and his family. I will personally check in with his wife and children during this time, and I will remain a friend and neighbor to Tony as he works to rebuild his life.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective. I hope these stories provide you with a fuller understanding of Tony Ramirez, not just as a defendant in a courtroom, but as a neighbor and friend who has consistently demonstrated compassion, responsibility, and a commitment to community.

Respectfully,

Margaret Cole

Retired Teacher & Neighbor

[Contact Information]

