



JOHN J. BARTHELMES
COMMISSIONER OF SAFETY

State of New Hampshire

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY
DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES
STEPHEN E. MERRILL BUILDING
23 HAZEN DRIVE, CONCORD, N.H. 03305
TELEPHONE: (603) 227-4000 • RELAY NH (7-1-1)



ELIZABETH A. BIELECKI
DIRECTOR OF MOTOR VEHICLES

November 21, 2016

Denise Hanchulak
Program Director
American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators
4301 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 400
Arlington, Virginia 22203

Dear Ms. Hanchulak,

The State of New Hampshire is proud to nominate Debra Leonard, of our Dover New Hampshire Division of Motor Vehicle office, as the 2016 AAMVA IDEC Examiner of the year.

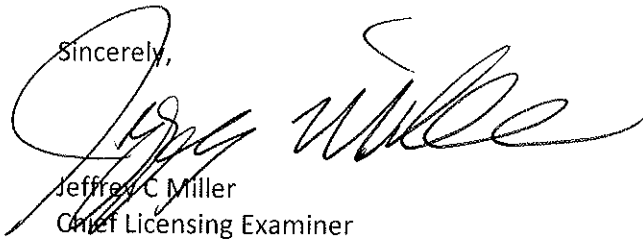
During her tenure with the division, Debra has been employed as a driver license and motorcycle Examiner. Debra has dedicated herself to the mission of safe drivers, safe vehicles and safe roadways by treating every customer fairly with dignity and respect. The respect given to each customer by this examiner is especially important when exposing first time drivers to state government. Debra has capitalized on her short time with applicants by breaking down barriers and finding ways to communicate our public safety message effectively.

While conducting road tests, Debra is courteous and professional, whether the applicant passes or fails. She always takes time to help them understand what they need to work on to be successful when they return. Whether it be things they can do to better their driving habits or to give advice on how to handle stressful testing scenarios. Debra went above and beyond to assist a young man who was struggling to pass his written test. Each time he came in and failed he believed that he was a failure and was going to quit. She took time from her day each time the young man came in, to speak to him and his mother. Debra's positive attitude and can do efforts encouraged him to return and finally pass the test. (See letter attached)

Debra always goes out of her way to be a team player with staff and other Examiners wherever she is assigned. She volunteers to do more to assist in making the visit to the DMV pleasant and more efficient. Perhaps the most significant public service Debra offers is a willingness to look at each applicant as an individual. Debra has broken down communication barriers and changed the perception of public servants.

Debra consistently performs the duties and responsibilities of a certified examiner. Her excellence in adhering to the principles and recommended practices are without question. She always conducts herself in a professional manner which brings credit to the Bureau of Licensing, Department of Safety and the State of New Hampshire and most importantly, the mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey C. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jeffrey C Miller
Chief Licensing Examiner



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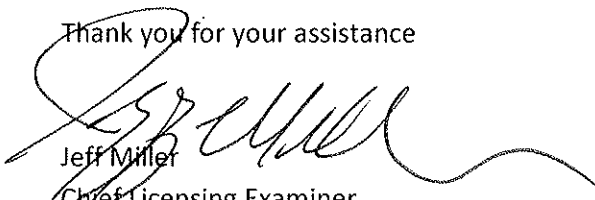
1/26/2017

Denise Hanchulak
Program Director, Certification & Standards
AAMVA
4401 Wilson Blvd, Suite 700
Arlington, VA 22203

Denise,

Attached is a Letter for Debra Leonards Award with the names removed for privacy purposes.

Thank you for your assistance



Jeff Miller
Chief Licensing Examiner
NHDMV

To whom it may concern;

My son is twenty-four years old. He has struggled in the past three years with many of his consequences of his choices.

One of those consequences was losing his driving privileges. In the past year he paid all of his fines and he was notified his driving privileges were reinstated.

When I drove him to get his license he was informed that he needed to retake the written test and road test. He was upset however he understood.

He took the written test and failed. The clerk told him he had to wait ten days before he could try again. My son was very embarrassed that he failed after driving for many years. He walked away and told me he was not going to take the test ever again. I encouraged him to study and take the test in ten days.

Ten days later he refused. Two weeks later he refused. A month later he refused. I knew he was very depressed. I tried almost every day to get him to go and try again. Finally two months later he agreed.

When we pulled up to the DMV at Dover Point we were both nervous. I was worried about if he failed again how he would handle that. He was worried about being embarrassed again.

When we walked in a State of New Hampshire employee was holding her clip board and greeted us. She smiled and asked us if we needed help. Her name was Deb. She told us where to go and wished my son good luck.

She smiled and asked us if we needed help. Her name was Deb. She told us where to go and wished my son good luck.

I sat down where I could see my son and I prayed for him to pass. I closed my eyes and I heard "What!!" He timed out of the test...he failed. He sat in the testing room and I could tell he was trying to get the courage to walk out. I waited trying to figure out what to say to him. A few minutes later he came out. He walked up to the desk and the clerk told him he had to wait ten days. I heard him say thank you and he walked away.

While I drove home I asked him if he knew the test was timed. He said he knew however during the test he forgot because he was concentrating on the questions. He said he will never take the test again and that I was wrong. I did not know what to say so I said nothing.

Two weeks later I printed off a driver's education packet for him to study and left it on his desk. I did not say anything to him. A few days later he asked me to drive him to take the test.

I was beyond nervous when we arrived at the DMV. Walking up I noticed Deb was getting out of a car and she hurried to walk up to us. She told my son that everyone fails a few times and she knows he will pass this time. She walked him up to the counter shook his hand and wished him luck.

I again sat where I could see him and I wanted to cry with fear. Deb came out from behind the desk and she smiled and said "you're a great Mom". I smiled and I shared with her how worried I was that he would fail and how he does with failing is difficult

to watch. She took my hand and said "You can do this. If he fails you look at him and tell him a test does not define him. He needs to take it again." I looked at her so scared however I felt comforted by her words. She squeezed my hand and walked away. Fifteen minutes later I seen my son put his head in his hands, he failed again. The clerk behind the counter also realized how many times he failed and that he just failed again. She looked at me and neither of us said a word however we both knew this was going to be hard. My son came out and he walked up to the clerk. He said thank you and walked away. As I walked behind my son, Deb came from behind me and walked with me to my truck. She told me that we would be okay and that I must keep pushing him. She made me promise to keep pushing him. I took a deep breath and I promised. She told me she would be looking for us and I said "thank you."

My son went into severe depression. He felt he was stupid and he refused to do anything. I prayed hard for my son to find the courage to stand up to his dark feelings. He refused every time I asked him to go take the test.

Months went by and he refused. Finally one day he called me and said he had been studying. He asked me to drive him to the DMV. I was excited however I was afraid.

I hoped Deb was there for a little support. Just seeing her would give him a little hope. When he walked up to the counter, Deb was standing with the clerk. She smiled when she seen my son and she came from around the counter.

She took my sons hand and told him she believed in him however no matter what, she wanted him to know the test was a small part of his life. She told him to do his best and she would be praying for him. He walked in to take his test.

Deb looked at me and said "I was so worried. I have been looking for you two. I am so glad you got him back here. You're okay and again your one of the best Mom's I know." She told me she would be back before the test was over and to keep good thoughts. We were walking out as Deb came back in. She stopped when she seen us and she immediately took my son's hand. She walked outside with us and she asked him what happened. He told her he missed too many questions. He failed again. She looked at me and told my son "You have the best Mom. I want you to go home and study. In ten days I want to see you back here. Ten days I want you to promise me." My son looked at her so defeated however he promised. Deb took my hand and told me "I was a force to be reckoned with." I smiled and said "I do not feel that way." She smiled and said "ten days".

Ten days later my son asked me to drive him to the DMV. I was surprised however he said "Deb made me promise". I secretively smiled and wanted to tell her thank you so much! Instead I looked at my son and said I would drive him.

Walking in felt different. He looked for Deb however she was not there. He walked up to the clerk who remembered him from all the times before. She smiled and said good luck.

He walked in sat down and I wanted to cry. I sat to the side waiting for him. I did not know what would

happen. A few minutes later I looked up and Deb was standing in front of me. She kneeled down and said "You guys are the best!" I took her hand and I told her how scared I was if he failed. She told me a little story about one of her children and how she also had to watch them hurt.

She told me she could see the love I had for my son. She told me the love I have for him will know what to do and I will do it. She said "you guys have touched my heart." This is tough to watch however I believe in you and your son."

I never met Deb before in my life. She knew nothing about me or my son. Her belief in us was nothing short of amazing. She received nothing in return. We do not have much to offer. I am a single parent and life is all over challenging. Being a good Mom does not cost anything. I love being a Mom. Deb knew that and I was proud of that.

She told me she may not make it back before he was done but she would say a prayer. She squeezed my hand and gave me a beautiful smile and I looked at my son. I knew he was struggling because he had his head in his hands. I walked up next to the desk. To hopefully give him a thumbs up if he looked for me. A few minutes later he put his head down on the desk. He failed again.

No words were needed from the clerk who seen us so many times. My son walked out without saying a word. He asked me not to talk to him. We drove home in silence. We did not talk about it again. I would not mention the test again. I did not know what would happen however I knew he could not handle more failure.

Three weeks later he asked me to drive him to the DMV. I made an excuse and I was hoping for a few more days to prepare for what would happen. The next day he asked me again.

I could tell he was angry. He told me "I am taking that test. I am sick of taking that test. I will not stop until I pass that test". I was speechless.

He walked up to the counter he greeted the clerk. He walked in and sat down. I went outside to walk because I could not handle the stress of what if...

Standing there looking out at the cars passing by, I felt someone touch my arm. I knew it was Deb. She told me how proud she was we were there again. I had tears in my eyes and I shared with her a little about my son and my family. She listened and then said "Your son has everything he needs with you standing next to him. I can see it in his face. He knows you believe in him."

I looked at this angel in disguise wearing a State of New Hampshire shirt, that I knew held her angel wings down and told her I could never thank her enough. I told her how it mattered so much that she believed in me and my son. I told her I would keep making my son take the test until he passed no matter what. She smiled and said "I will be here waiting every time to cheer you guys on".

We walked in and Deb went behind the counter. She gave me a thumbs up and walked in the back. I sat down and waited.

I stood up when I knew the time was getting close. I asked God to please help my son. A few seconds later I heard a loud yell that said "YES, I PASSED"!!!! He stood up and ran to me. As I was hugging him

tears were rolling down my face. I turned and Deb came from out the back area and held her hands in the air. She said out loud "I knew you could do it!" My son was so excited. The clerks were so excited. With tears in his eyes he made an appointment for later that afternoon for the road test.

Deb walked with us out to the parking lot. She was so proud of my son! She told him this was the beginning of a new start and he needed to build on this. I stood there listening to this stranger speaking such power into my son. I asked if I could hug her and she hugged me as my answer. She hugged my son. She asked him why he was waiting to take the road test and he told her he wanted to wait. She smiled and we all agreed he would have his license that day 😊

Driving home he said to me "Mom do you have enough money so I can get a haircut? In case I pass I wanted to look nice for my picture." I wanted to cry listening to such hope coming from my son. He had not cut his hair in months and his beard was over grown. He needed a reason and that day he had a reason.

Later in the afternoon we went back to take the road test. Deb was there however she said the other examiner would be taking him. She told my son "this is easy you got this". He took a deep breath and walked in.

I looked at Deb and said "He wanted to get his hair cut in case he passed." Deb, for the first time since I met her, eyes watered. She said she noticed and that her heart skipped a beat when she seen how handsome he looked.

I looked at this woman who was an employee of The State of New Hampshire and wondered if anyone knew how special she was. I wondered if her supervisor or the DMV Director or the Governor knew how special she was. I knew I would make sure everyone would know at some point.

Deb again told me how wonderful I was and how special my son was. She said she would never forget us and will be sad that she will never know what happened to us after my son received his license. I also was sad to think I would never see this wonderful person who made such a difference in me and my son's life.

She told me should would be back and hopefully she will watch my son take his picture.

A little while later my son stood for his picture and Deb went behind the counter. She smiled so proudly at him and he smiled back at her. I will never looked at his license and not remember who he was smiling at.

Tears rolling down my face, I looked at my son and seen the hope in his eyes. Passing the test was more powerful than I believed.

Deb came around with a Kleenex and said to me "your tears are beautiful. I hope you know how special you are".

I looked at her and wanted to say "To most people I am no one. I have no material value in this world and I have no status and I am poor. I live in subsidized housing and have food stamps." However I wiped my tears and said "thank you".

I am so glad that a person like Deb did not care about my status or my lack of wealth. Deb had no

idea who I was and still treated me and my son as though we were someone important.

I promised her I would return soon and give her an update on my son. She hugged us both and walked towards another road test. I quietly thanked God for sending her into our lives.

Deb made such a difference in the way my son and I viewed the DMV. So many times we are just a number to the clerks at the DMV. We get told what to do and many times with the simplest greeting. The clerks are very busy and I believe if they had more time they may be able to give more to people. Deb found the time in between doing her job. She always remained professional and always knew her time constraints.

Deb most definitely should be in a position to train employees how to be engaged. It came natural for her and she knew how to support us in the time frame she had. She knew how to make my son and I feel as if we mattered.

I do not know Deb's last name however I am sure it will be easy for the DMV to identify her.

I promised myself I would at some point make sure everyone knew how special Deb was and this is that point.

Please help me with thanking The State of New Hampshire for having an employee like Deb. She deserves so much more than I could ever give her. My son is driving and he feels good about himself. He shows everyone his license. I always look at his license and remember the angel who stood behind the clerk at the counter and it was her my son smiled at.

You matter Deb and I will keep my promise. Some day you will look up and I will be there ready to share my son's success. You gave me a memory that washed away the defeat of so many failures. You gave me and my son hope. Thank you from the heart of a Mother who needed someone like you.

Sincerely,

Thank you,

