



**Servas Canada: Furthering peace through multicultural dialogue**

## **Letter of Reference in Support of an Application for Servas Membership**

Dear Friend:

Please help us to evaluate this applicant's potential for benefitting from and contributing to Servas membership. We have included a brief description of Servas and its goals and philosophy to assist you, as well as some questions to help guide your response.

***Please sign and date your letter, and give it to the potential traveller. It should include:***

***Your name***

***Profession***

***Contact information (address, email and phone)***

### **Description of Servas**

Servas Canada is a branch of Service International, a non-profit, international network of hosts and travellers, building peace through cultural tolerance and understanding by offering opportunities for personal contact between people of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Through mutually arranged visits, hosts and travellers share their lives, interests, and concerns about the world around us. These encounters help form the building blocks of peace in the spirit of mutual service and respect.

Servas is a volunteer community of caring individuals, not a budget travel service. Travellers are encouraged to participate fully in the lives of their hosts. Everyone in Servas seeks to overcome bias, stereotypes, and physical barriers leading to multicultural understanding and cooperation. To be accepted into Servas, both host and traveller must share in the responsibility of developing a meaningful cultural relationship. Both host and traveller must be accepting of persons of every race, creed, and nationality. For more information, please visit our website, at [www.canadaservas.org](http://www.canadaservas.org).

### Questions to consider in your letter of recommendation.

1. Have you had opportunities to observe this applicant interacting with strangers and with people from diverse backgrounds? Is s/he able to make people feel comfortable and initiate dialogue; if so, how? Does s/he have good listening skills? Please give examples.
2. In your experience, is the applicant tolerant, adaptable, and flexible?
3. Servas travellers and hosts are both often faced with challenging situations. Travellers must take the initiative in contacting hosts, adapt to the host's environment (which may not meet their expectations) and accept responsibility for showing up as scheduled, or cancelling well in advance. Hosts must sometimes confront travellers whose behaviour is not consistent with the Servas mandate. In your experience with the applicant, how would s/he handle such situations?
4. Are there other ways in which the applicant has demonstrated the qualities of a Servas host or traveller as described above?
5. Would you be comfortable hosting this applicant in your home and/or staying with him/her as a guest?

March 2017