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Gateway Music Festivals and Tours  
% Mr. Dave Phielman  
P.O. Box 1165  
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December 4, 2002

Dave Phielman and the Gateway Music Festivals Staff:

I want to take an opportunity to thank you for the outstanding way in which Gateway handled the Hawaii trip for the Blue Springs High School Golden Regiment Marching Band. Please pass along my thanks to your entire staff as I know many individuals were involved in the process. The level of organization and attention to detail was incredible. From my first contact with Gateway to our final good-byes in the airport in Honolulu, the Gateway staff was a class act in every aspect.

The impeccable organization of Gateway was evident from day one as was displayed through the detailed packet provided outlining timeline schedules for when various items needed to be completed. This was complimented by many phone calls and emails. Gateway did an excellent job of not being overwhelming while still staying on top of things. I was always asked when a good time was to be contacted and calls/emails that I initiated were responded to very promptly. By spreading out when rooming lists, plane lists, food, etc. were due, it made everything manageable and gave us time to do it right. We especially appreciated the tickets all coming bundled by flight groups. This saved us hours of time.

The personality of all of your employees is nothing short of amazing. EVERY person I talked to at Gateway made us feel like we were the only group they were working with and EVERYONE was always so positive and willing to go the extra mile. I'm actually going to feel like I've lost a friend without having a conversation or email from Gateway!

Most of my office correspondence went through Angie and Tracy and they were both an honor to have an opportunity to get to know. They had to both have spent countless hours working out all of the details of the trip. When I saw them in Hawaii it was like I was seeing my two sisters after being parted for several years.

What a pleasure it was to work with Terra Widdifield, Anne Kearns and Robert Tuufuli! These individuals are some of the most pleasant and aggressive people I know. They got things done...period. Airline ticket problems...fixed immediately. I wanted a change of schedule...it was as good as done. While working with the kids, they always had such a sweet and caring demeanor and the band and staff immediately fell in love with them. It was an emotional farewell at our last meeting as they made us feel a part of their lives.

90% of creating a great "band trip," is the travel agency. 90% of a great travel agency is the tour guides and contact people that are associated with the process. Gateway certainly "has it together," but the element that makes Gateway rise above the rest is the people and the character of the people that represent the company on the phone and in the field. It was a pleasure working with Gateway and a wonderful life experience meeting some very eloquent, sincere, kind and loving employees of yours that I feel have become good friends.

On behalf of the Blue Springs High School Golden Regiment, thank you not only for a great trip, but also for your commitment to surrounding yourself with people that not only represent competence; but character, personality and compassion for one another and the groups they work with.

Best wishes for a wonderful December.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tim Allshouse". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Tim Allshouse  
Director of Bands  
Blue Springs High School