Letters of Recommendation/Evaluation

When approaching future authors for letters of recommendation, here are some tips:

I. Approach prospective authors in person – if they agree, follow up your visit with a thank you note (include the approximate date you plan to contact them further with specific instructions)

II. Once your application is started (i.e., you have an id #), contact your authors in writing and include the following:

A. Personal statement
B. Grades (transcripts)
C. Resume (list of experiences)
D. A 1-page biography
E. AMCAS Letter writer form / other HP school form if applicable
F. Instructions (see below)
G. Give them at least a month to do the letter and give them a deadline for submitting it!

III. Be sure to include the following information/instructions for your letter writers:

A. Encourage authors to use direct electronic submission to application service (or school) if possible
B. If using regular mail, give them addresses of Admissions Departments/Offices (providing stamps/stamped envelopes is nice, but not necessary since letterhead should be used)
C. Letters need to on letterhead if available
D. Letters need to be signed
   1. Author can scan letterhead and signature, insert them into a Word doc as pics, save as a PDF
   2. Author can scan letter already printed on letterhead and signed
E. Letters need to be confidential – do not accept copies from your authors!!!
F. Letters should cover/include:
   1. Identify relationship to the applicant (i.e., peer, professor, and employer)
   2. Identify the length of time the author has known the applicant
   3. Information regarding the applicant on any of the topics listed below:
      a. Problem-solving and decision-making - that is the ability to gather, analyze and synthesize information and arrive at a logical answer.
      b. The ability to empathize with others and to the needs of society.
      c. Motivation and staying power – medical/health professional school requires maturity, flexibility, dedication and a number of other qualities (the same qualities desirable in a physician/health care provider who must tolerate a great deal of stress).
      d. The student’s process for dealing with both sides of an issue or ethical problem - schools will look at how a student approaches and formulates attitudes towards issues and ethical problems but not their conclusions.
      e. The student's ability to work effectively and productively in large and small group settings. Is this person a team player, i.e., works well with others? A follower? A leader?
      f. The author’s overall assessment - this includes all of those qualities they think would make a good physician/health care provider, including honesty, responsibility, communication, ego strength, and perhaps the most important question of all, "Would they like to have this person as my physician/ health care provider?"

IV. Follow up regularly on progression of application – monitor letter arrival and pester authors if necessary!!

V. Let authors know your final status with a final thank you note (accepted, waitlisted, etc.)