



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Michael Myers Wins MANSEF Award

The Maryland Association of Non-Public Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) announced today that Michael Myers has won their annual *Inspiring Dreams and Changing Lives* award. Myers was nominated by Dr. Linda Jacobs, Executive Director of The Harbour School.

According to Dr. Jacobs, "Mr. Myers first became involved with The Harbour School through his son Sam, one of the first students at Harbour's Baltimore campus. He quickly recognized that the new school had no visible means of parental support or activity, so he set to work organizing the first PTO at that campus." Myers thinks back to that first meeting and remembers feeling the PTO was necessary, focusing on three key elements: "we needed a sense of community within the families, and so we began planning family oriented activities like the first school picnic. Support for the teachers was a clear need, so parent volunteers were organized, and, of course, activities such as teacher appreciation came from the PTO as well."

When a capital campaign to purchase a larger building in Baltimore loomed on the horizon, Mike was more than willing to chair the campaign, working tirelessly to raise the needed funds.

And that's not all. Myers was also one of the early leaders of the *CCBC Harbour Horizons* Program. Recognizing that our students would be most successful if they had a gradual transition into independent living, Myers and Baltimore Program Director Martha Schneider began laying out a program that would achieve this goal.



To that end, The Harbour Way Innovative Learning and the Community College of Baltimore County partnered to create a unique two-year, non-credit certificate program called CCBC Harbour Horizons. This five-day a week program is designed for students with mild to moderate learning differences who want to live and work independently. Utilizing The Harbour School's competency based curriculum philosophy, each course is designed to provide students with the academic, social and vocational skills needed to successfully transition into independent living. Students are enrolled at the college and have access to all of the amenities, clubs and social opportunities the college has to offer. The program is offered at the Catonsville and Essex campus. Today, Myers is still involved with the program, raising funds to keep it growing.

Myers son Sam became a student at The Harbour School at Baltimore with he was seven years old. "He could barely sit still," laughs his first teacher Gayle Pickhardt. "I'll never forget Sam's first holiday assembly. He got so antsy that when the group began singing Sam got up and started dancing and singing too. We all had such a great time. Now I see a mature high school student and I cannot believe he is the same boy. He is just amazing"

Myers remembers searching for the right school for his son: "in an effort to find the best school for Sam we hired a school consultant and began visiting special needs schools in the area. The consultant mentioned The Harbour School and we really liked what we saw. What clinched it for my wife and me was meeting Dr. Jacobs. I asked what Harbour's philosophy and underlying approach to education was and she said 'we don't have one. We believe every child can learn and we will continue to change our approach until we find what will enable that child to learn.' Given the uniqueness of Sam's disorder, that is exactly what we needed to hear."

Says Dr. Jacobs, "I often tell parents - especially those who have struggled for years to find a school that is a good fit for their child - we never give up on a child. As long as you stay in the boat with us, we will get to the shore, I promise." Michael Myers is one of those parents who has stayed in the boat.



“On behalf of everyone at The Harbour School, I congratulate Micheal Myers on winning the MANSEF 2010 *Inspiring Dreams, Changing Lives* award.”

The Harbour School is a non-public special education school, serving children in grades 1-12 with all the academic and social supports necessary to flourish in school. There are campuses in Baltimore and Annapolis. For more information about The Harbour School, call 410-974-4248 in Annapolis or 443-394-3760 in Baltimore. You may also visit our Website at www.harbourschool.org

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