

Maryland Recreation and Parks Association

The Tommy Ross Memorial Fund



The Tommy Ross Memorial Fund is being established by the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association (MRPA) to honor the life of Tommy Ethan Ross, who passed away in 2009, at the age of five from seizures connected to Angelman's Syndrome. Tommy was the son of Michael and Nani Ross and the grandson of Tom and Barbara Ross. Tom Ross served as MRPA's executive director from the fall of 2005 to 2011.

Angelman's Syndrome is a genetic disorder that causes developmental delay and neurological problems. Seizures often begin between 2 and 3 years of age. Individuals with this syndrome often display hyperactivity, sleep disorders, and movement and balance disorders that can cause severe functional deficits essentially requiring life-long care. Those affected by Angelman's Syndrome tend to be very happy and sociable; they love physical activities and have a special affinity for swimming and water play of any type.

Tom Ross and his family are establishing the Tommy Ross Memorial Fund under the auspices of MRPA to provide financial assistance to those with special needs and allow them to participate in recreation programs in Maryland at the local or county level. Tommy Ross loved activities of all sorts, especially aquatics where he was actually able to take his first steps alone in the water in the summer of 2009. Tommy was an inspiration to all who met and worked with

him; his teachers described him as having the "best laugh in the world". This fund would assist those, like Tommy, who would benefit from participation in park and recreation programs and are unable to afford the full cost of registration.

The fund will be administered by MRPA through the Therapeutic Recreation Branch and will award no more than three grants per year to individuals who have a demonstrated need for financial assistance. Priority will be given to those young people under the age of eighteen for such activities as sports, swimming, horseback riding, summer camp programs, socialization activities or other similar special inclusive programs. Nominations may be made by any member of MRPA to the Chair of the Therapeutic Recreation Branch and will consist of a one page write up on the individual being nominated, the proposed program and cost and the benefit to be derived.

Contributions to the Tommy Ross Memorial Fund can be made by sending a tax deductible payment to the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association (*payable to MRPA*).

Send your contribution to:

MRPA, Tommy Ross Memorial Fund
2000 Shorefield Road, Wheaton, MD 20902.