



Committed to providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live full and prosperous lives.

The Got Mike! Fund

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Gosh, has it really been seven years since Mike went on to his next chapter and almost five years since we formed this Fund?? Seems like just a blink of an eye and yet also a lifetime...

Once again, we the Governing Board of the Got Mike! Fund want to thank you. You have made this all possible. You have believed with us that somehow we could make a difference in someone's life, help them live a little fuller, and have a lot more fun. You have helped us help other groups who are helping others. You and us together. In Mike's memory.

There are so many 'Mike stories' we all like to tell. He was a character and anyone who spent any time with him felt it immediately. One I have to tell came after he passed away. I received a call from one of his old buddies, Tony Ippolito (who is also on our Governing Board). It was just a few weeks after Mike had died suddenly and Tony was checking on me like many other friends and family were doing. I so loved these check-ins and they always had some reminiscing attached to them that would get us laughing... & crying. This one was no different. Tony said that a bunch of the old gang from South Philadelphia had just gotten together remembering Mike. Someone brought up the idea that maybe they as a group could help fulfill Mike's 'bucket list' of things he hadn't gotten to..... and so Tony asked me what was still on Mike's list? I thought a few moments and a few more. I then said that Mike would probably say he'd want to surf better or play better slack-key guitar or beat Steve, Paul, and Dave even more in tennis (all are also on our Governing Board). But truth is, he already did all these things and pretty darn well. I couldn't think of anything so said I'd ask our son, Michael (also on our Governing Board). I did and ya know what??? Michael couldn't come up with anything either. Wow. What a lesson. Not long after this I told Tom this story, one of Mike's good friends (also on the Governing Board). Tom laughed his infectious bubbly laugh and said, "Yeah that guy always just did what he needed to do. No one could make him wait till later!" Yep, that was Mike. Imagine if we all didn't wait for later or refused to take no for an answer (oh boy, there's lots of Mike stories on that one!). What if none of us had a bucket list and instead just lived life that fully?

So, with your help, that's what we're trying to do here..... help others live their bucket lists now.

We are proud to carry on this mission, to see the grins of accomplishment, to hear the whoops and peals of laughter, and to have someone say they didn't think they could ever do something they are now doing. We are honored to carry on Mike's message and his life's work, his spirit, and his name through this Fund and we thank you for being ambassadors with us. Because of your generosity, our dedicated volunteers, and the gift of ongoing administrative support from his non-profit organization (Networks for Training and Development, Inc.) we have been able to continue to do much these past five years. For this past year in particular, together we have supported:

- ★ *The fifth annual Got Mike! Fund Educational Leadership Award and Scholarship through APSE (Association of People Supporting Employment First) given to a selected doctoral student specializing in inclusion and employment of people with disabilities.*
- ★ *NJ Sharing Network's annual 5k race and all their work in organ donation.*

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The Got Mike! Fund is a sponsored project of Networks for Training and Development, Inc. - a registered USA-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (Federal ID Number 23-2703118/000)

