

Dr. Martin S. Karp, Member

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NO. 10-012 OF
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA,
RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS OF
MORDECHAI B. FESTER IN CONJUNCTION WITH MULTIPLE
SCLEROSIS WEEK**

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: EDUCATION**

Mordechai B. Fester, salutatorian of the Miami Beach Senior High Class of 1983, passed away on December 24, 2009 at the age of 42 after a ten year battle with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Mordechai was born in Israel and moved to Dade County, Florida with his family at the age of three. In his youth, Mordechai skipped two grades, and was an honors student at the Lehrman Day School of Temple Emanuel. He was also a member of the Miami Beach Boy Scouts Troop 65. Mordechai was one of the youngest Jewish people in Miami to conduct an entire High Holiday service, which he did at age 14, after studying with Cantor Eleazar Bernstein. He studied judo, karate, piano and guitar.

As a student at Miami Beach Senior High, Mordechai was a member of the National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, Music Honor Society, the Chess Club, and Future Business Leaders of America, as well as holding positions in both local and state office for Key Club. He was an award-winning member of the Miami Beach Senior High debate team and the National Forensic League. Mordechai was an honors student who was selected to represent his high school in the county-wide Silver Knight award competition in Mathematics. At the age of 15, he became one of 20 regional finalists in the state-sponsored PRIDE (Program to Recognize Initiative and Distinction in Education) competition, a program that measures excellence in the fields of social studies, math, science and writing. He was also a National Merit Scholarship finalist and graduated at the age of 16. Mordechai went on to earn a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, winning the best undergraduate thesis award. After college, he worked for many years in the information technology sector, including for networking giant Cisco Systems. Mordechai lived with his family in California, and was a donor to and member of many philanthropic organizations.

MS is a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system, which is made up of the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves. Symptoms may be mild, such as numbness in the limbs, or severe, such as paralysis or loss of vision. The progress, severity, and specific symptoms of MS are unpredictable and vary from one person to another. Today, new treatments and advances in research are giving new hope to people affected by the disease.

In the United States today, there are approximately 400,000 people with MS—with 200 more people diagnosed every week. Worldwide, MS is thought to affect more than 2.5 million people. While the disease is not contagious or directly inherited, epidemiologists—the scientists who study patterns of disease—have identified factors in the distribution of MS around the world that may eventually help determine what causes the disease. These factors include gender, genetics, age, geography, and ethnic background.

The South Florida Chapter of National Multiple Sclerosis Society formed in 1953. They hold a walk-a-thon, bike-a-thon and advocate and educate people in the area.

In Mordechai's memory, Miami Beach Senior High will participate in MS awareness week, which is March 8-14, 2010. Students will partake in community service activities through Key Club and the Debate Team honoring Mordechai's life achievements including those he made as a student at Beach High while at the same time holding education programs to bring substantial knowledge and awareness about MS. Summer volunteer opportunities and internships for Miami Beach High students can offer an educational framework for gaining experience while making a difference in the lives of people with MS.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN S. KARP:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approves Resolution No. 10-012 honoring Mordechai B. Fester's life and accomplishments by promoting education programs at Miami Beach Senior High designed to encourage service and awareness during Multiple Sclerosis Week.

**RESOLUTION NO. 10-012
OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS OF MORDECHAI B. FESTER IN
CONJUNCTION WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS WEEK**

WHEREAS, Mordechai B. Fester, salutatorian of the Miami Beach Senior High School Class of 1983, passed away on December 24, 2009 at the age of 42 after a ten-year battle with Multiple Sclerosis (MS); and

WHEREAS, Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic, often disabling disease that attacks the central nervous system. In the United States today, there are approximately 400,000 people with MS - with 200 more people diagnosed every week; and

WHEREAS, as a student at Miami Beach Senior High School, Mordechai was a member of the National Honor Society, Math Honor Society, Music Honor Society, the Chess Club, and Future Business Leaders of America, and he held positions in both local and state offices of the Key Club. He was also an award-winning member of the school's debate team and the National Forensic League; and

WHEREAS, in Mordechai's memory, Miami Beach Senior High School will participate in MS Awareness Week March 8-14, 2010; and

WHEREAS, Students will partake in community service activities through Key Club and the Debate Team honoring Mordechai's life achievements including those he made as a student at Beach High while at the same time holding education programs to bring substantial knowledge and awareness about MS; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, approve Resolution 10-012 of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing the outstanding contributions of Mordechai B. Fester in conjunction with Multiple Sclerosis Week.

A copy of this resolution is placed in the permanent records of this Board.

Presented this tenth day of February, A.D. 2010

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

CHAIR

ATTEST:

Secretary