

Severna Park High School would like to nominate Tom Lerario, director of finance and property of Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church for the 2015 Excellence in Education business award.

Tom Lerario, has fostered a strong and dynamic partnership with Severna Park High School, which began seven years ago and continues to this day. Community outreach is the cornerstone mission of Woods and Tom exemplifies this practice by providing Severna Park High School with many resources. He works tirelessly to accommodate various requests and needs for meeting and testing space. Tom is a tremendous resource to Severna Park in helping us accommodate testing space for the many students who take Advanced Placement exams. Every year, nearly seven to eight hundred Severna Park High School students test and we do not have the physical space at the school to accommodate this many students. For the last seven years, Tom has graciously offered meeting rooms at Woods Memorial Church for testing and has made the Advanced Placement testing process smooth and successful. He provides us with usage of his facility for two and a half weeks from six-thirty am to four thirty pm saving us over twenty five thousand dollars for facility rentals. He and his staff provide a clean building, ample parking, a quiet environment and even coffee for the staff. Tom spends hours establishing the schedule and finding space for us to test, adhering to strict testing guidelines, while making sure his congregation remains happy with our presence. He is able to make adjustments on the fly, if needed, and always makes sure that there are enough tables and chairs in each testing room. Tom works very hard to quickly and efficiently meet any request we have including spur of the moment challenges and obstacles. For example, you need another testing classroom, you will find Tom moving tables, locating chairs and arranging the room himself. Additionally, he has helped us save over four thousand dollars over the past seven years in equipment rentals. He also lends help for other issues that arise. When transportation became an issue, he directed us to the Community Center and we were able to rent their shuttle. When testing groups got too big, he helped us find any available space, even at another building. Without Woods Church and Tom's incredible leadership, our Advanced Placement program at Severna Park would not be as successful as it is.

In addition to accommodating Severna Park High School for advance placement testing, Tom also provides us with large meeting spaces and audio visual equipment setup for parent and teenage workshops and seminars. Severna Park High School has hosted several seminars such as *Surviving Teen Anxiety*. Realizing the great stress that students may feel at this point in their life, Tom helped to coordinate gatherings for local private and public school parents and students and encouraged them to attend the workshops. The workshop focused on practical resources and skills that teens and parents can use to learn how to express and alleviate anxiety.

Tom's dedication and service to our school is shown through his many volunteer hours. Over the last seven years, he has coordinated many Severna Park High School athletic and club banquets and meetings. He and his wife ran the Severna Park High School concession stand for the athletic boosters for three years. Tom volunteered twenty hours per week, accumulating over five hundred hours of service. He is also one of the first people every year to sign up to volunteer his time to help conduct mock interviews to eleventh grade students. Through the mock interview process, Tom provides one on one mentoring and imparts job-readiness skills and career counseling that enables students to become productive members in society.

Tom eagerly responds to the needs of his community and his invaluable commitment and support of Severna Park High School make many things otherwise impossible possible. Whether he is volunteering to help coordinate the advance placement exams, running the concession stand for the athletic boosters, coordinating team sports banquets, hosting family workshops, or conducting mock interviews, he exemplifies the positive and powerful relationship between schools and businesses partners. His "behind the scenes" contributions provide real learning opportunities and continual growth for students. We are grateful for his leadership and tireless efforts of giving to our students and helping them develop relevant skills to achieve greatness.