

## **PM awards outstanding Dyspraxia Awareness volunteer**



The Prime Minister has recognised Mikey Akers, aged sixteen, from Coventry, for founding 'Mikey's Wish', an organisation that raises awareness of verbal dyspraxia as well as supporting those who also suffer from the speech disorder.

Mikey was diagnosed with verbal dyspraxia aged two, and was later inspired to raise awareness of the condition when he heard about the difficulties his mother experienced when trying to find information and support. After writing a popular poem about his struggles, he now has a blog that supports fellow sufferers and their families. He has raised over £5,000 for the 'Dyspraxia Foundation' as well as funding speech therapy for four students in his primary school. Mikey will receive the award at an event organised by the 'Dyspraxia Foundation' to mark Dyspraxia Awareness Week.

Mikey is the latest recipient of the Points of Light award, which recognises outstanding volunteers who are making a change in their community and inspiring others. Each day, someone, somewhere in the country is selected to receive the award to celebrate their remarkable achievements.

### **In a personal letter to Mikey, Prime Minister Theresa May said:**

"Through 'Mikey's Wish' you are raising the visibility of verbal dyspraxia and ensuring that other people with the condition are supported. You should be incredibly proud of your achievement in creating your own organisation at such a young age, despite your own personal challenges with the condition."

### **Eleanor Howes, CEO of the Dyspraxia said:**

"We are delighted that Mikey's work to raise awareness of verbal dyspraxia has been recognised with this special award from the Prime Minister. Mikey is an inspiration to other young members of the Dyspraxia Foundation and his passion for helping others to understand verbal and motor dyspraxia is an inspiration to all who know him."

### **Mikey said:**

"I am surprised and very honoured to be recognised for such a prestigious award from the Prime Minister. All I had been doing was trying to raise awareness of the little known neurological condition, Verbal Dyspraxia, originally so that I didn't feel quite so isolated. I then realised through the responses I received just how much people, and their families, with the same diagnosis needed support. This led me to set up 'Mikey's Wish', with the support of my family, to raise funds and much-needed awareness. I would just

like to say a huge thank you for even considering me for this award as this will help with my mission to raise the profile of Verbal Dyspraxia.”

Mikey is the 799th winner of the Points of Light award, which has been developed in partnership with the hugely successful Points of Light programme in the USA. Over 5,000 Points of Light have been awarded in the USA, and both President George H. W. Bush and President Barack Obama have publicly supported the partnership with Points of Light UK. There is a similar cross-party approach to the UK programme and MPs from different parties often present their constituents with their Points of Light awards.

Regardless of whether it's a doctor restoring local monuments in her free time, a father teaching young people life skills, or a local musician giving a voice to lonely people, the Points of Light award honours shining examples of volunteering across the UK.

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Points of Light awards recognise outstanding individual volunteers, people who are making a change in their community and inspiring others.
2. The Prime Minister makes daily announcements of the winners to celebrate, encourage and promote volunteering and the value that it brings to the country.
3. If people know someone who could be a Point of Light they should write to the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street.
4. Website: [www.pointsoflight.gov.uk](http://www.pointsoflight.gov.uk)

**Mikey's Wish** Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/mikeyswish/>

The **Dyspraxia Foundation** is the only national registered charity working to raise awareness of the condition in the UK. It offers a dedicated helpline service from 9 – 1, Monday to Friday and via a tab on its website; facilitates a membership and network of local support groups; organises conferences and events; hosts an informative website and social media pages reaching over 40,000 followers including a closed group for vulnerable young people with dyspraxia aged between 13 – 25. The charity aims to raise awareness, improve services and understanding and enable every child with dyspraxia to reach their full potential in life.

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