

An Exceptional Honor for an Exceptional Person

December, 2017

If you've ever walked the floors of the Harris & Harris corporate headquarters, there is a high likelihood you've seen Omer Matalon. To say Omer is key to the operations of Harris & Harris is quite the understatement. He's known and loved by everyone in the office, not just for his great work ethic, but for his perseverance and contagious spirit.

As a child and teenager, Omer attended Camp Ramah in Wisconsin as part of the Camp's Special Needs program known as "Tikvah" (Hebrew for "hope"). After completing his tenure as a camper, Omer participated in the Camp's unique Vocational Program, which enables former campers with certain disabilities to learn independent living skills and get practical, on-the-job training. In Omer's role, he worked in the camp's kitchen, where he helped stock and organize the necessary items, clean appliances, serve food to the guest tables, and help the chefs with food preparation. He then spent continuous summers working at camp and perfecting his skills. After his last summer in 2012, Arnie Harris, our CEO and former President of Camp Ramah, offered Omer a full time facilities clerk position at Harris & Harris. Ari Derman, our General Counsel, and former Coordinator of Camp Ramah's Vocational program, went on to further mentor Omer as he joined Harris & Harris.

Since then, Omer has been an integral part of the Harris & Harris team. In 2014, Omer won the prestigious Client Engagement Award, as voted on by all of his peers. Along with Ari Derman, Omer then wrote an inspirational article for the Ruderman Family Foundation chronicling their strong bond dating back to Camp Ramah, and Omer's incredible development at Harris & Harris. Omer's rapid rise and success has been an amazing sight to see.

Omer is always willing to go the extra mile to help anyone who comes his way by supporting them through his facilities work and encouraging them to strive for success with his can-do attitude. Our staff at Harris & Harris take great pride in letting him know that the feeling is mutual and making him feel appreciated! As such, Camp Ramah hosts an annual phone-a-thon to raise money for camp scholarships, to enable campers to attend that otherwise could not afford it. On November 30, a group of Harris & Harris employees donated to the phone-a-thon in the form of an unexpected surprise team gift, in honor of Omer's 5 years at Harris & Harris!! This gift was incredibly poignant, since a large part of the scholarship initiative this year will support special needs tuition and activities. Honoring Omer was incredibly important and meaningful to the employees who contributed, as it provided a way for them to finally say thank you to Omer for all he does for us each and every day. The employee contributions were then matched by Harris & Harris in a corporate capacity, and then by Omer's parents, Hedva & Moshe, who stated, "During the past five years Omer has matured and grown into a young adult who learned to share, take responsibilities and (to great extent) manage his own life. Many of this is due to you, who embraced him at H&H and gave him the opportunity to develop into who he is now." The total amount was then matched in full by an anonymous donor! The love and appreciation we have for Omer at Harris & Harris is palpable.



About Harris & Harris, Ltd.

Harris & Harris is a Chicago-based collection firm, representing local and state government, gas and electric utilities, and hospital systems. Founded in 1968, the firm employs more than 500 associates headquartered in downtown Chicago, as well as Detroit, and Milwaukee offices. It employs state-of-the-art information and data management systems to meet the speed and reporting needs of its clients.

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