



# Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



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## **Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Teacher Named Montgomery County Teacher of the Year**

**Silver Spring, MD**—James Schafer, a physics and mathematics teacher in the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program, was honored as Montgomery County Teacher of the Year on April 28 at the Champions for Children Gala in Gaithersburg. This nonprofit organization has as one of its goals the recognition of outstanding teaching and, with the sponsorship of the Montgomery County Business Roundtable for Education, grants awards to these honorees annually. Schafer was honored with a \$1,000 award from the Marian Greenblatt Education Fund and has earned the right to compete for Maryland Teacher of the Year next fall. He will be honored at that time, along with the winners from the other 23 state jurisdictions, at a ceremony sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education.

A graduate of Rockville High School, Schafer studied applied mathematics and physics at the College of William and Mary, where he graduated cum laude in 2002. That same year, he joined the Montgomery Blair Science department to teach several levels of physics. For the past three years, Schafer has shared his instructing expertise with students in the Blair Magnet as a mathematics and physics teacher. Along with his teaching responsibilities, for the past three years Schafer has served as coach of the Blair *It's Academic* team, which took first place in the 2008 and 2009 D.C. Metropolitan Regional Championships. He also coaches the physics team and the Final Frontiers program, as well as mentors other county AP physics teachers.

One thing that sets Schafer apart as a teacher is his care and concern for students. Blair Magnet junior, Lani Matthews recalls, "I remember when I returned to school from being sick. Mr. Schafer realized I had been absent and sat and taught me the material I missed without my even asking. He is so nice." Besides being thoughtful, students agree that he is sincere and accessible. Member of Blair's *It's Academic* team and Magnet senior, Elizabeth Partan, praises Schafer, "Mr Schafer is incredibly open and easy to relate to, which makes him a lot

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of fun to be around.”

When congratulated on this honor, true to his considerate nature, Schafer graciously acknowledges those around him, “My personal thoughts on this award are that this recognition is a positive reflection on the Blair community, but specifically the Magnet and Science departments. The positive attitude, cooperation and collaboration that come with those departments are truly second to none. This is, of course, also a direct result of the fantastic students I get to interact with every single day. My energy and drive to teach everyday is motivated by the enthusiasm and inquisitiveness that these students bring to class. I am fortunate to have wonderful colleagues, students and a school community that has always been supportive.”

### **About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation**

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, parents, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched education for students, staff, and the community at large. The Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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