

# 2015 GRADUATE OUTCOME SURVEY



## Let me tell you a story...

BY DR. JACOBS

A long time ago, a boy was having trouble at school. He had autism. No surprise (there's a lot of that going around). He had multiple obsessions, which completely interfered with his ability to get work done. The obsessions were overwhelming.

**Fast forward — Chris starts in our middle school.** He receives lots of counseling and begins to realize he is smart. He takes more difficult courses. He graduates with his diploma, then enrolls in the local community college. Within a year, he has started his own landscaping business and decides to transfer to American University in Washington, DC. AU is not interested in accommodating Chris's issues with math, so he transfers once again, to the University of Maryland in College Park, the flagship campus of the University System. He majors in American History. During this time, he writes and self-publishes several mystery books that use The Harbour School as the setting. He knows not to include any violence in these books because that is not what we tolerate at Harbour. Today, Chris is working for the grocery chain, Harris Teeter. He stays in touch with Harbour staff and recently won the "Customer Service Hero Award". Chris credits his work experience while at Harbour, including the exceptional vocational transition program, with his success.

This is not a typical story. But it is a story about an individual who utilized The Harbour School program and became successful. Every story at Harbour is an individual one. Student-by-student, we work to clock their success. As Chris said in a recent email: "THS is such a wonderful place."

By the looks of things, we are doing a good job, although we did run into some turbulence this year. Every year we check in with our grads and see how they are progressing. Here are the results.



### HOW MANY GRADS DID WE REACH?

Through June 2015, 397 students graduated from The Harbour School. Six of our alumni are deceased. Through mail solicitation and follow-up phone calls, we were able to reach 323 of our graduates, or 82.6%—about the same as last year. This survey goes all the way back to 1991, our first graduating class.

### GRADS LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

The news is good: Overall, 23.8% of grads are living independently, a slight increase over last year.

According to a 2013 study by Shaun Heasley reported in Disability Scoop, only 17% of people with autism ages 21–25 have ever lived independently. The current majority of our students have autism.

### WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE TELL US?

A recent study (2012) by the Hammill Institute on Disabilities found that the top five skills valued by employers for employees with disabilities are: demonstrating personal integrity/honesty in work, ability to follow instructions, ability to show respect for others, ability to be on time, and ability to show high regard for safety procedures. Interestingly, the first four skills were also desired of people without disabilities. Employers valued the ability to read with understanding for the fifth item for employees without disabilities. Another interesting finding of the study is that employers from service/business areas had a higher expectation for higher order thinking than employers from science/technology. The dropout rate nationally and in Maryland is significantly higher for students with disabilities than it is for students not diagnosed. Smith, Manuel and Stokes (Learning Disabilities vol 18.no2) indicate that, on average, 14% of students with disabilities drop out of high school.

The mdreportcard.org website reports that the annual event drop-out rate for students with disabilities is 5.4%, and 3.0% for nondisabled students. The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates show 20.3% of students with disabilities not completing their program and 10.2% of plain students not completing the program over 4 years.

The disabilities network recently reported that 77% of people with autism were not working.

***Harbour students do not drop out. Over the last 24 years, only 2 students have not completed the high school program.***

## HOW DO WE COMPARE:

	THS	MANSEF	NTLS2
# of students:	366	210	12,000
Post-secondary	48.7%	57%	31.9%
Employed	84.2%	53%	48%
Criminal involvement	.2%	13%	Unknown

## WHAT DO OUR GRADUATES TELL US?

Not surprisingly, the survey revealed a good bit of “too soon old, too late smart”. A number of comments concerned the wish that the alum had taken better advantage of opportunities while still in school.

Alumni wanted more structured opportunities to be with each other post-graduation.

Grads wanted more assistance in finding college placement.

Alums wanted more rigorous training for college preparation, such as deadlines, heavier workloads, more experience with doing job interviews.

Many families and graduates expressed appreciation for the program they received. “Really good and brilliant teachers. She’s reaching her fullest potential,” a parent noted.

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

- It was a class act
- I will always spell Harbour with a “U”
- I think they did great, maybe more job training
- More life skills, like managing a budget
- Better preparation for college-bound students
- At all my son’s jobs, they have complimented him on his work habits
- They helped me find a college to go to
- I loved The Harbour School, they helped me with jobs and appointments. They helped me a lot.
- More technology courses
- I should have stayed until I was 21
- Parent comment: I think he skated, I don’t think he was challenged enough

*Continued on reverse*



**Number of  
Harbour School  
grads in  
post-secondary  
education, working,  
or a combination:  
90.3%**



## WHAT ARE OUR DIRECTIONS FROM HERE? HOW DO WE BUILD AN EVEN BETTER SCHOOL?

- There is an alumni link to the school's Facebook page and alumni have organized a reunion.
- The rigor of college preparation courses has been increased. Stricter timeline for assignment completion have been imposed.
- Do a better job of helping students apply and be accepted into post-secondary schools.
- A secondary analysis of the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS-2) showed a positive connection between parent expectations and student outcomes. Our transition program will work with families to support appropriate post-secondary expectations.
- We have added a foreign language to the curriculum.
- We have added academies to push students further in technology, performing arts, and health careers
- We have added an adult social club for graduates (Harbour Alumni Social Club)



## CONCLUSION

At The Harbour School we believe in the law of physics— that nothing stays the same. We either get better or not. We are definitely committed to getting better. The Harbour School has just completed its 33rd year. We have achieved a great deal... And there is much left to do.

We believe that our fledgling birds will fly further and faster if they are not only well fed, but also have a clear focus on where they are going.

**We are a fine, fine school with fine, fine students and fine, fine teachers!  
It is no wonder we all just love this school!**

The Harbour School at Annapolis  
1277 Green Holly Drive  
Annapolis, MD 21409  
410-974-4248

The Harbour School at Baltimore  
11251 Dolfield Road  
Owings Mills, MD 21117  
443-394-3760

## POST-SECONDARY SCHOOLS & INTERESTING JOBS

### 4 YEAR COLLEGES

American University  
Arizona State University  
Bowie State  
Cabrillo  
Culinary Institute of Jerusalem  
Delaware State University  
Delaware Technical Institute  
Elizabeth State University  
Frostburg State University  
Full Sail University  
Leslie College  
Lincoln Tech  
McDaniel College  
North Idaho College  
Salisbury State University  
St. Mary's College  
Towson University  
University of Hawaii  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
University of Maryland, College Park  
Washington Adventist University  
Washington College

### 2 YEAR COLLEGES

Anne Arundel Community College  
Brevard College  
Carroll Community College  
Chesapeake College  
College of Southern Maryland  
Community College of Baltimore County  
Harrisburg Area Community College  
Howard Community College  
Jefferson Community College  
Montgomery College  
Paradise Valley Community College  
Prince George's Community College

### EMPLOYERS & JOB POSITIONS

Anne Arundel County P.S.  
Apple Call Center — Tech Support  
ATK Space Systems — Admin. Assistant  
Baltimore City — Police Officer  
Darcars — Mechanic  
Dept. of Corrections — Parole & Probation Agent  
Dept. of the Interior  
Dept. of Health & Human Services  
Dept. of Juvenile Services — Case Mgmt Specialist  
Dept. of Transportation — Research Assistant  
Dept. of Veterans Affairs — Clerks  
Federal Aviation Admin.  
Howard County Public Schools  
Infologics Corp. — Research Assistant  
Library of Congress — Retrieval Technician  
Lifebridge & Courtland Gardens — Kosher Supervisor  
Maryland State Dept. of Education  
Montgomery County, Maryland  
Montgomery County Public Schools  
NASA Goddard Space Center  
National Institute for Science & Technology  
National Institutes of Health  
Norris Ford — Mechanic  
RGIF — Inventory Control  
United States Army — Mechanic E4  
Vermont State — Park Ranger  
World Bank — Clerk