

James M. Perkins

ONE OF MANY POINTS LIGHT IN WARD 8

In 1998 my wife started working at Happy Tot Daycare center; I was disabled and stayed home with Lil James. Each day we would have school, I would take out pictures of the weather I printed from the computer; photos of the sun, clouds, and rain. I would raise the blinds and ask him, "What is the weather today, James" and he would pick up the sun, clouds, or rain and say, "This one, dada!".

He picked the right one every time. We would have arts and crafts time and math with M&M. At Wilkinson and Moten ES; my son received The Principals award in 3rd and 6th grade. In 2008 James M. Perkins received ten medals, two trophy's and the Apangea National Championship for DC Public

Schools, all in Mathematics. In 2009

During his promotional exercise, he was Salutatorian and received the principal's award; James also received awards in English, Science, and French. He worked in the school cafeteria and was a member of Life Starts and Horton's kids. In the community, James worked at Pastor Brenda Anderson church; where he helps feed the homeless and bagged candy for the neighborhood children.

James would help his neighbors carry in their groceries or laundry to the laundry mat. When Ms. Shirley, our neighbor, was sick. James was there for her. He cried for her; he called her his second mother. James was almost shot one evening, as a gunman was firing a shotgun in the parking lot where we lived. He managed to save a four-year-old boy by pulling him to the ground as shotgun pellets flew over his head.

No newspaper or TV station reported this because no one died in our neighborhood that night. I wanted to get him therapy for the trauma he may have suffered, but he looked at me and said, "No, dada, I'm okay." When two young boys tried to rob him of his shoes, he didn't fight back, but he also didn't lose his shoes. His uncle wanted to get the boys that attacked him, but James said, "No, just let it go; it will only cause more problems."

James continued to walk the same way every day without fear; my fear kept me letting James do some of the things he wanted to do, but James looked at me one day and said, "If you don't let do some of the things I want to do, how will I grow up?" He was right. My wife and I raised James to be a passionate, caring, and intelligent young man. The DC Public School's mission statement, states "the mission of the District of Columbia Public Schools is to ensure that all

students acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live rich and fulfilling lives as responsible, productive and enlightened members of a democratic society." James Maurice Perkins fulfilled the above requirements and then some.

We want our son to be an inspiration to every inner-city child that works hard and triumphs over the gangs, drugs, and gun violence that plague some of our neighborhoods. I, like his father, can't allow our fourteen-year-old son's legacy to die with him, and through Total Sunshine Inc., we hope to bring a smile to every community and every child that needs our help.