

PRESS RELEASE ON THE OCCASION OF 11TH PRIZE AWARD “MESTEMACHER PRIZE FOR THE TOP FATHER OF THE YEAR” 2016

Two times 5,000 euros for two top fathers

“Gender mainstreaming is women’s business – this equation doesn’t tally. To an equal extent it is men’s business. It is especially fathers who play a decisive role,” emphasised the Federal Chancellor, **Dr Angela Merkel**, in her welcoming address of 2015 on the occasion of the “Mestemacher Prize for the Top Father of the Year” prize-awarding ceremony.

(The complete welcoming address can be found at: <http://www.mestemacher.de/social-marketing/spitzenvater-des-jahres> in the section award presentation 2015 – keyword “Festschrift”.)

Berlin/Gütersloh, 11.03.2016:

To promote men’s emancipation, the family-managed company Mestemacher distinguished modern men for the 11th time. The men demonstrate clear commitment toward their children und support their partners with great dedication, helping them make headway in their career.

“For top fathers, partnership and gender-democratic relationships are a matter of course. They don’t lose face as a result of their support of their partner’s career and their being there for their children,” the initiator of the gender equality prize, **Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers**, emphasises.



Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers

Photo: FOTO session

Patroness Federal Minister for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and the Youth, **Manuela Schwesig**



Manuela Schwesig,
Federal Minister for Family,
Senior Citizens, Woman and the
Youth

Photo: Federal Press Office

“I congratulate the top fathers of the year 2016! The Mestemacher award recipients demonstrate: having time for one’s family is important. These fathers are role models, and they are living a modern family culture, which is something more and more couples would like to have. This is because being a father is about more than reading a night-time story to one’s children in the evening. It is about sharing the educational work in a partner-like manner. Unfortunately, this is still not a matter of course. Many fathers who decide to take some time off or work less in their professions still encounter a lack of understanding. What we need is a cultural change: in business and also in society. Which is why I keep on working on the idea of family working time, so that men can also take time for their family without having to fear ending their careers,” says the patroness Minister for Family Affairs **Manuela Schwesig**.

**WHO ARE THE TOP FATHERS OF THE 11TH AWARD PRESENTATION?
HOW HIGH IS THEIR PRIZE MONEY?**

First name: **Patrick**
Surname: **Neumann**

Prize money: 5,000 euros



**Portrait of Patrick Neumann,
11th award recipient of the Mestemacher Prize for the Top Father of the
Year 2016**

Patrick Neumann is an ideal Mestemacher Top Father, because, with his family work, he contributes toward a more emancipated society. He relieves his partner **Frauke Sanders**, who is responsible for management development of women at Volkswagen utility vehicles in a male-dominated labour world and culture. **Patrick Neumann** and **Frauke Sanders** are the parents of **Jarek** and **Niklas Titus** Neumann.



Patrick Neumann with his family
Frauke Sanders, Jarek (left), Niklas Titus.

The graduate sociologist **Patrick** is an advisor for fundamental sport policy issues at the LandesSportBund Lower Saxony (State Athletic Federation of Lower Saxony). After the birth of his two sons, he took over a child-related break as full-time and part-time parents. Thus **Patrick Neumann** allows his partner, **Frauke Sanders**, and mother of the two joint sons to return to a full-time job after the end of her parental leave. After her parental leave, **Frauke Sanders** can once again dedicate herself to her scope of work as an equal opportunities officer and the management development of women. During the parental leave, **Patrick Neumann** makes use of his statutory entitlement to work part-time.

Patrick Neumann completed his degree as a sociologist at Georg-August University in Göttingen and works as an advisor for fundamental sport and political issues at the LandesSportBund (State Athletic Federation) of Lower Saxony as well as at the Landespräventionsrat (State Prevention Council) of Lower Saxony in the federal programme "Demokratie leben!" ("Living Democracy!") – promoted by the BMFSFJ.

Both sons visit day care centres. **Niklas Titus**, the youngest son, is 1.5 years old and currently visiting a pre-kindergarten with the "Energiezwerge" ("Energized Dwarfs"). **Jarek** is 4 years old and visits the AWO kindergarten. On average, the family father **Patrick** spends 7.5 hours daily with the care and upbringing of the children. In her free time, family mother and full-time employee, **Frauke** supports him in providing for the sons a familial atmosphere in which they can thrive.

Patrick, by profession an expert for the prevention of right-wing extremism, also takes care of a large share of household tasks as a matter of course. His multi-faceted commitment within the framework of his fatherhood documents an emancipated life plan, by means of which the compatibility of family and career is realised for the benefit of all involved parties in an exemplary manner.

In so doing, **Patrick** does not orientate himself to traditional attribution patterns. **Patrick** organises his daily life with the corresponding negotiation processes. The aim of the organisation is equal opportunity that is implemented by means of the flexible assumption of new roles. He is very interested in harmonising the different interests between people, between men and women, between mothers and fathers, between fellow occupants, between parents and children. This also greatly characterises his image of women.

Patrick accepts women (as well as men) with their socialisation, their strengths and weaknesses and their mode of communication, to which he reacts in a flexible and understanding manner. His actions are aligned to harmonising the needs arising from this so that everyone, regardless of gender, has development opportunities. Where there are attributions analogous to old role patterns such as "the man is responsible for the car and the woman for the children's clothing", **Patrick** takes a critical look at the division of tasks to see whether they are derived from the current interests of the involved parties or are based on the gender-specifically-shaped socialisation path.

Concretely, **Patrick** demonstrates a great deal of appreciation regarding the professional competences, gainful occupation and career wish of **Frauke** and explicitly allows her to climb the career ladder by means of his parental leave and worktime reduction. In **Patrick's** opinion, if framework conditions or interests change, changes are possible at all times and structures can be modified flexibly. "Let's try it out and see whether we like it like this," is his motto. For **Patrick**, a number of individual preferences and personal competences take priority over outdated thought and role patterns and traditional attributions.

First name: **Christoph**
Surname: **Paas**
Prize money: 5,000 euros



Portrait of Christoph Paas, 11th award recipient of the Mestemacher Prize for the Top Father of the Year 2016

Christoph Paas, his partner **Birgit Jansen** and the four children **Dinah Paas** (17 years), **Silas Paas** (13 years), **Alva Lilith Jansen** (2 years), **Noemi Deva Jansen** (11 months) have been living together in a modern patchwork family since 2012. Since his education as an organ and harmonium builder, **Christoph Paas** has been specialised in the assembly, metal pipe crafting / restoration and intonation of this musical instrument. At the end of 2014, he founded ALMA Bandoneon manufacture. In his Cologne-based workshop, he crafts new bandoneons and restores historical instruments.



Christoph Paas with his family
Birgit Jansen, Noemi, Silas (Mitte), Alva.

Since the birth of his daughter **Dinah**, from 2000 to this very day, he has been uniting worktime and parental leave. In so doing, his partner **Birgit Jansen**, with whom **Christoph** has been in a relationship since 2012, can practise her creative work as a self-employed illustrator and graphic designer. Currently she is entering working life again in her new office partnership to carry on designing for book and magazine publishers, cultural establishments, agencies and medium-sized companies. For their mutual children, **Alva** and **Noemi**, **Christoph** and **Birgit** mutually implemented the time-out. **Silas Paas** and **Dinah Paas**, the children **Christoph Paas** brought along into the cohabitation, were already pupils in secondary schools at the time they moved together. **Christoph** is a father and musical instrument maker with body and soul. He gives his love to **Birgit**, his children and his professional passion. He spends plenty of time teaching the children to become independent and freethinking people. Daughter **Dinah** is currently being educated in the United States.

So-called workshops are held for his son **Silas** during **Christoph's** free days. Little treasures are crafted, and **Silas** playfully learns about working with tools and the special quality of working with different materials.

In the household, the Top Father **Paas** takes over all tasks that are typically completed by housewives. Having grown up with seven siblings, **Christoph** is not only extremely experienced when it comes to skin creams; he also knows the strengths of the so-called weaker sex.

Christoph sees his life companion as an equal partner. The communication and division of tasks is always taken at eye level. Thanks to his commitment within the family, **Birgit** is able to continue in her career, even with two small children. She became self-employed in the field of illustration and graphic design ten years ago and appreciates her partner creating space for her that allows her to stay up to date and develop herself further.

When **Birgit's** mother suffered from cancer in 2013 and 2014, **Christoph** took wonderful care of **Birgit** and the little **Alva** during this difficult time for the family. For some time, he also looked after the complete household so that **Birgit** could concentrate on saying farewell, and he ensured that, despite all turmoil and grief, **Alva** received the emotional attention she needed. Here, in particular, **Christoph's** generosity and natural respect toward his partner is demonstrated.

Christoph feels comfortable in very different roles. He is a sensitive craftsman in his workshop, a proud father of four, and a diligent and conscientious stay-at-home dad who knows how to use a broom and carry shopping bags. He masters these tasks with aplomb and keeps his cool in many nerve-racking moments of daily family life, without acting as the strict patriarch, as might be the proposed with a classic understanding of the roles.

ABOUT THE INITIATOR

Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers is an entrepreneur, economics expert and campaigner for women's rights. The partner of the Mestemacher Group and member of the corporate management board is a professor in the Faculty for Economics and Health at the University of Applied Science in Bielefeld. As a campaigner for women's rights, she has been devoted to men's emancipation and the statutory female quota for more than 20 years. The mother of 2 adult children and 2 grandchildren has been married to **Albert Detmers** since 1975.

WHAT IS THE OPINION OF THE INITIATOR ON TOP FATHERS?

Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers elaborates: "When fathers are motivated and believe that reconciling children, kitchen and career is an important task, they can do this just as well as motivated women and mothers. The parents' cooperation in the family is a good prerequisite to ensure that all family members are doing well and no one is unduly stressed. The children regularly have two contact persons to support them when needed, fathers increase their design flexibility. They become more intensive co-creators in the upbringing of the offspring and co-creators with the household and family world than was intended by the traditional father role.

And mothers feel unburdened when upbringing and family work rests on two pairs of shoulders. Mothers and fathers can better accommodate the dual burden of career and family. Everyone can do really well when the family is supported by qualified family-complementing care offers and education offers. Partnership on an equal footing within a marriage and the family supports the economic potential of society and the economy. Increasing numbers of men and fathers take the conscious decision to deploy their skills for children, housework and cooking to a greater extent. They have distanced themselves from the expectations to be satisfied by a typical man and have now gone off to seek new shores.”

Ulrike Detmers, the initiator of the prize, responds to this problem and makes clear that, with top fathers, having children and a professional occupation is possible without further ado. Both **Patrick Neumann** and **Christoph Paas** are convinced that it is important to have an influence on children regarding their character and mental and physical development from birth on. Equally, it is a matter of course for them that the mother of their children has a right to an own professional career, own income and pension which she has contributed to herself. She acts on the foundation of this conviction and thus creates the best possible prerequisites for the practised marriage and family model based on partnership.

ABOUT THE FOUNDING COMPANY MESTEMACHER, INDUSTRIAL BAKERY FOR PUMPERNICKEL, WHOLEMEAL BREADS AND INTERNATIONAL BREAD SPECIALITIES

The Gütersloh **Mestemacher Group** is represented in more than 87 countries and offers wholemeal breads and international bread specialities. The company was founded as a city bakery in 1871. Today, the **Mestemacher Group** consists of five companies and employees 585 persons. In 2015, it generated a turnover of 151 million euros. Since 1994, **Mestemacher GmbH** has been responsible for the promotion of gender equality and the compatibility of family and career.

The central corporate management is in the hands of **Albert Detmers**, **Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers** and **Fritz Detmers**. Today, the management trio has developed the former city bakery into a company that is a global market leader in the field of long-lasting wholemeal breads that remain fresh for a long time and have a shelf-life of up to six months, and international bread specialities.



The photo was taken on the occasion of the annual press conference 2015:

Bread bakers enjoy great favour with shoppers.

(f.r.): Albert Detmers, managing partner, Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers, partner and member of the central management board, Helma Detmers, partner, and Fritz Detmers, managing partner (all Mestemacher Group)

Image: FOTO session

Among other prizes, in the time from 2001 – 2013, the **Mestemacher Day Care Centre Prize** was awarded. Here, annually, day care centres in different regions in Germany were distinguished for gender democratic upbringing and family and career compatibility.

The **MESTEMACHER PRIZE FOR THE FEMALE MANAGER OF THE YEAR** is also based on **Ulrike Detmers'** dedication and many years of research on questions pertaining to gender democracy and gender mainstreaming as success factors for the economy.

“In Germany, the influence on economic and corporate decisions is too male-dominated. This is why we advocate mixed-gender teams. Neither the economy nor companies can do without the performance of women. Top performers are needed, and here it is not the gender that is of decisive importance,” the entrepreneur and economics professor never tires of saying in her publications and speeches.

She personally selected the award recipient of the Mestemacher Prize Top Father of the Year. The filled-out questionnaires in which the upbringing and house work of family fathers is described in detail convinced **Ulrike Detmers** that the fathers she selected satisfy the high requirements to be satisfied by top fathers in the best possible manner.

More at: www.mestemacher.de

Questions on the Mestemacher Group and the “Mestemacher Prize for the Top Father of the Year” are answered by:

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