

PRESS RELEASE ON THE OCCASION OF 12TH PRIZE AWARD “MESTEMACHER PRIZE FOR THE TOP FATHER OF THE YEAR” 2017

**5,000 euros each for two top fathers
2,500 euros for the recipient of a special award**

Berlin/Gütersloh, 10.03.2017:

With the purpose of promoting men’s emancipation, the family-managed company Mestemacher distinguished modern men for the 12th time. These men demonstrate clear dedication toward their children and are committed to supporting their partners, assisting them to make headway in their career.

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



Prof. Dr. Ulrike Detmers

Fotohinweis: 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 reference: Federal Press Office

“I congratulate the top fathers of 2017! With their decision to work less so that they can look after their child, these fathers set a good example. They are living a modern family culture, in which partnership takes pole position. Many couples would like to have this, yet too few are willing to take the plunge. With my family policies, I support young families who would like to share work and family time more equally. This is why I would like to introduce family working time with a family allowance, which has the purpose of compensating the losses of earnings when both parents work almost full time, so that they can have more time for their children,” says the patroness Minister for Family Affairs, **Manuela Schwesig**.

WHO ARE THE TOP FATHERS OF THE 12TH AWARD PRESENTATION? HOW HIGH IS THEIR PRIZE MONEY?

First name: **Yoshinao**
Surname: **Mikami**
Prize money: 5,000 euros



Portrait of Yoshinao Mikami, 12th Award Recipient of the Mestemacher Prize for the Top Father of the Year 2017

by Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers

The family father Yoshinao Mikami can look back at a long career as a musician and composer in Tokyo, Japan. Following the relocation to Germany in 2010, he decided to focus his attention on composing. Yoshinao Mikami took this family-friendly decision so that he could look after his daughter Patrizia Saya - born in 2006 - more intensively, and also so that he could support his wife Stefanie, who is working. For this reason, he reduced the time spent on jazz music, because his wife's career and the mutual upbringing and education of their daughter took greater priority.

In 2010 he moved from Tokyo to Germany with his German wife Stefanie Nartschik-Mikami and their daughter, who was almost 4 years old at the time. After a long career at Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) in Tokyo, Stefanie accepted a full-time job at the headquarters of DAAD in Bonn.



Yoshinao Mikami with his wife Stefanie Nartschik-Mikami and their daughter Patrizia Saya Mikami

Photo reference: Isabel Grahs

With his role as a father, Yoshinao Mikami represents neither a typical Japanese, nor typical German man and father. Much rather, with his behaviour, he belongs to the group of pioneers who are paving the way for a new, family-friendly father culture. In Japanese society and in

the conservative environment of German society, it is more commonly expected that mothers stay at home after the birth of their child, to look after the little one and reduce the husband's burden, so that he can focus fully on his career.

Yoshinao Mikami, however, adopted a different approach, and this is also reflected in his actions. With his wife, Stefanie Nartschik-Mikami, he shares everything on the foundation of partnership. This also benefits their daughter. What is more, to support his wife, he also regularly does the household chores.

Yoshinao Mikami takes plenty of time to encourage his daughter's passion for dancing. Patrizia Saya takes ballet lessons. On Saturday, the top dad Mikami accompanies her to Japanese supplementary school.

The family is expecting their 2nd child in April 2017. Initially, they are planning parental leave for 6 months. Needless to say, the parents will continue to share the children and family tasks in an appropriate manner.

The in-laws are a great support, and since their move in the summer of 2016, the family has been living close to them. Apart from them, there also is a varying network of friends from the respective group the daughter is (was) attending, as well as a network of German-Japanese families who are also sending their children to supplementary school and, in part, have to master similar challenges. Apart from the bilingual education, children are also educated regarding the German and Japanese culture and values in a well-balanced manner.

First name: **Oliver**
Surname: **Blau**
Prize money: 5,000 euros



**Portrait of Oliver Blau,
12th Award Recipient of the Mestemacher Prize for the Top Father of the Year 2017**

by Prof Dr Ulrike Detmers

Oliver Blau is a family man with heart and soul. Directly after the birth of their three children, he laid the foundation for a very special father-child relationship. His son Niklas was born in 2011; 2 years later his son Felix, and Charlotte arrived in 2015. With their three children, father Oliver and mother Sylvia Blau split the family leave of about one year. After returning to work, there is some support provided by the child-caring team of family Blau: the full-day care centre for the youngest daughter “Kid Zone”, which looks after children from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and the local kindergarten for the two older children.



Oliver Blau with his wife Sylvia Blau and the children Charlotte, Niklas and Felix

The two graduate engineers are employed in managerial positions. Oliver Blau’s area of focus is on spatial planning. He was the head of “Verkehrsgemeinschaft Nordost Niedersachsen” (Traffic Community North-East Lower Saxony) from 2001-2014. 2014 he changed to become the head of the Marketing and Sales department at the KVG transport company, which is located in Stade, Lower Saxony. Sylvia Blau’s area of focus is on process engineering. She has held down a managerial position in product development in the food sector since 2006.

Things are running smoothly for family Blau because they are both successful at reconciling their career and family life and, in so doing, are able to handle the burdens that go along with this.

Family father Oliver Blau loves his “job” as a family manager and, at the same time, is also highly motivated at work. Even when he sometimes has to interrupt his work because a child suddenly falls ill, and then has to pick up the little one from the day care centre, he remains unruffled and even-tempered. He lovingly focusses his attention on the child and looks after the little one in a very caring manner. Every day, he makes sure that the children get healthy food. He does the shopping, takes the kids to the day care centre and picks them up again in the evening, in addition to rooting for his child Niklas during a football game.

For the three-fold mother Sylvia Blau, having Oliver as a husband and father is a true blessing. He supports her in word and deed so that she can work as a managing product developer. However, this is not all, as he also gives her the time she needs for herself and her hobbies. This definitely is not a matter of course in a family with working parents and more than one child.

Oliver Blau's employer is supportive, offering flexible working hours and home office. Thus, despite the dual burden, Oliver remains in a good mood. Coping with work and a large family can be managed optimally with alternating working hours during the so-called “rush hour” of life.

Special prize recipient: **Team Väterzentrum e.V.**
Special prize: **2,500 euros**



On the picture depicted as representative Marc Schulte and Eberhard Schäfer.

Photo reference: Agency Baganz

Information on the special prize recipient

“Väterzentrum Berlin” promotes the trend toward dedicated fatherhood, in that it supports fathers in all family-related situations, informs, networks and consults them. What is more, “Väterzentrum Berlin” also informs institutions and companies about the potential of opportunities provided by dedicated fatherhood. They get involved in family and social policy. With this approach of supporting fathers, “Väterzentrum Berlin” is unique. Being a committed dad is demanded by many, yet one hardly sees this actually being promoted. Their work is based on international, scientific insights of father and family research as well as the findings derived in the field of toddler psychology. All relevant studies document the great significance of fathers for their children’s development, as well as the role fathers play in contributing to a happy family – fathers, mothers and children.

Regarding their practical work, they align their activities to international good practice in the work with fathers and the family. They develop their concept and our practical work further all the time. Here, they receive suggestions from our professional network in Berlin, Germany and Europe. “Väterzentrum e.V.” is endorsed and promoted by dedicated fathers. The association was founded in 1987 and, under the name of Mannege e.V., primarily worked as a psycho-social information centre for men for many years. In 2012, the members took the decision to rename it into “Väterzentrum e.V.” The association is non-profit and registered in the Berlin register of associations. “Väterzentrum e.V.” is a recognised carrier of the youth welfare and member in the German association “Paritätischen Wohlfahrtsverband” (Parity Welfare Association) for the Berlin-Brandenburg state association. Source: www.vaeterzentrum-berlin.de

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 as if a load is taken off their shoulders when the upbringing and family work is spread out and 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."

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 545 persons. In 2016, it generated a turnover of 156.1 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.

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 recipients 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 Top Father of the Year” are answered by:

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The phot was taken on the occasion of the annual press conference 2017:

“Nah beim Kunden” / “Close to the customer”
(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)