



MN ASSOCIATION OF
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Unleashing education from convention

BOB DeBOER

2017 MN CHARTER SCHOOL PIONEER AWARD

Bob DeBoer has been doing “pioneering” work in education focused on providing research-based educational programming and services for children that have a wide range of developmental delay issues.

Bob’s commitment and dedication to ensure that children no matter their disability, or need, have ‘*a Chance to Grow*’ to their fullest potential is rooted in his personal life story.

Bob’s experience of living with the effects of polio, which he contracted as a young child, and having a child with a brain injury focused Bob and his wife, Kathy, attention on brain development issues – which became their calling.

It was through their personal journey of providing for their daughter’s education that led Bob and Kathy to begin a small program to help children with learning disabilities and reading problems.

From the success of this small initial program they searched for a way to serve more students. In 1994, New Visions Charter School opened its doors in Minneapolis and within three years the school was serving over 200 hundred students.

As the charter school community grew, Bob took a leadership role in working to ensure that all charter schools understood and provided the special education services that were needed by students with development or special needs.

Bob co-founded and served as the chairperson of the MN Charter School Special Education Project, (which evolved into Indigo Educational Services). The project which provided services to the majority of Minnesota’s charter schools for many years, was recognized as a national model on how to provide special education administration and services for charters schools.

As New Visions School and the Special Education evolved and grew so did Bob’s interests. He became interested in creating an environmental project-based school that would be located in Wright County. He worked on that effort for a number of years, seeking the right location and funding. In 2015, that effort culminated in the opening of the Jane Goodall Environmental Academy.

Bob DeBoer you are a **Minnesota Charter School Pioneer** for helping to “*Unleash Education from Convention*” through your work to ensure that all students with special needs have quality educational services to help them have ‘*a chance to grow*’ to their full potential.