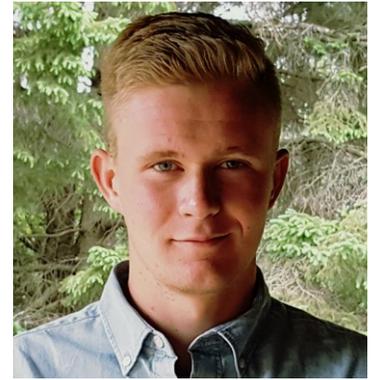


## DANIEL MOOERS, PSAI 2016-17 Scholarship Winner

PSAI Member Company:     Satellite Industries  
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University/College:       Dordt College  
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Graduation Date:         2018



### ***The Life and Value of a Portable Restroom***

*The day I arrived at my new home, Exceptional Restrooms in New Orleans, Louisiana, is a day I will never forget. Being one of 120 new restrooms in a shipment from the manufacturer, I was not accustomed to seeing restrooms looking abused; riddled with broken parts and graffiti. The yard crew unloaded us from the semi and placed us up against the fence on the left side of the yard. It was a rather large yard, capable of holding over 3000 portable restrooms. It was springtime and it appeared that most of the restrooms were already out in the field, working at construction sites, ballfields and outdoor events.*

*As a new portable restroom, you're confident you'll receive the best jobs. Perhaps you'll work at an upscale party or a concert with your favorite band. Exceptional Restrooms was one of those companies who handled large, exciting events and we were all eager to begin.*

*While I sat in the yard waiting to be taken out in the field, an older, worn out restroom caught my eye. He was soaking up the sun and seemed to be enjoying the day. I thought it a bit strange considering how much wear and tear could be seen on his faded, blue exterior. I couldn't help myself and spoke up, "Hey Mister, you look to be, um, well, used." He glanced at me and smiled. Rather than a curt response, he quietly said, "That's the truth, been here twenty years." We sat in silence for a while. I realized that I came across a little arrogant, so I tried again, in a more friendly tone. "Tell me what it's been like since you first arrived at Exceptional Restrooms."*

*He began his story; He arrived over twenty years ago in one of the first shipments. He looked fondly to the other restrooms lined up next to him and said they all began at the same time. It was obvious by his tone that his past had clearly affected him. I pressed further and said, "I suppose the past twenty years have been a bit rough." I expected him to start complaining, telling me about all the jerks who knocked him around, burned holes in his side with a cigarette and trashed his space. Instead, he started talking about people and how much he enjoyed taking care of them. He told me about little boys and girls he watched playing soccer, softball and doing tricks on their boards at the local park. Those little boys and girls kept coming to the same park, year after year until they finally went on to college or other jobs. He said how proud he was of so many of them because they had grown into such wonderful young men and women.*

*One young man in particular was very special to him. He went into the Army right out of high school and returned a hero, but without the use of his legs. The young man couldn't use a standard restroom anymore, but he could use the wheelchair accessible one at the park where he came with his young bride. He continued to describe several others who greatly impacted his life, but as time wore on, he quickly tired and we said our goodbyes. The next day dawned and that old restroom was still in my thoughts. With a sense of anticipation of my first assignment, I was loaded onto a trailer. The driver was in a hurry and cinched us down with straps that cut into my base, but I really didn't mind because I was thinking about what might be ahead for me and the other restrooms that day. As we drove, I saw the city skyline in the distance. It looked like we were heading that way and my excitement began to rise. I had heard a lot about the city and the fun events held there. Sure enough, we were unloaded in the middle of a beautiful plaza, with a huge fountain and an event coordinator who was instructing others to set up tents, table and chairs.*

*As we quickly found out, we were going to be used at a ceremony to honor the police, fire department, and first responders. We watched them erect a stage, colorful banners and three large grills to prepare a cookout. Within a few hours, the grills were red hot and people started gathering around, some of them using our service.*

*It was a gorgeous spring day. Soon, the stage filled with people and the Mayor stood at the podium to introduce the Chief of Police and Fire Department. He showered them with compliments and emphasized the vital role they played in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and asked them to stand up and speak.*

*As I listened, I heard countless people recant their horrors of being hurt in the storm, and eventually attended to by the police, firefighters, and first response teams. Near the end, one of the first responders stood up and talked about the great support given them by teams bringing in water, blankets and other necessities. Then he said something I will never forget. He said that he wanted to recognize Exceptional Restroom's crews for the service they provided. He said they worked around the clock to keep bathrooms clean and well equipped for the hundreds of displaced people, and how vital it was to the community.*

*We drove back to the yard the next day, all clean and well serviced. They set me back down next to the old, faded, blue restroom and he asked how my first event went. I told him all about the beautiful plaza, friendly people and the remark of the first responder about the storm and Exceptional Restrooms. I could see that same emotion welling up in him at the mention of the storm. I waited patiently while he gathered himself. After a while, he began to tell me about his experience on that day.*

*On the day of the storm, August 29, 2005, he was in a park near the waterfront. There were some of his buddies spread around the area and they watched the storm build out over the ocean. While city officials were demanding people to leave the area and find safety, the restrooms remained staked down waiting for the storm.*

*Then it hit. The storm surge brought seawater over the wall directly to the base of the restrooms. He was under a foot of water and the chains holding him between two cement posts were rattling, threatening to break. The wind tore at his roof and door, trying to dislodge him from his post. The rain pelted his sides and hail slammed down upon him. He couldn't see what was happening to the other restrooms, but he knew that it was likely some would not survive.*

*Late that night the brutal storm quieted and a peace fell over the city. In the early light, people came to see the damage and destruction caused by Katrina; they cried and described their survival experiences. Electricity was out; no one went to work or school for many days. The portable restrooms became very popular, with everyone hoping to use them until the power was restored. It was hectic, with people and restroom crews taking turns filling and emptying the restrooms. Days stretched into weeks, and even months as clean up continued. As the old restroom neared the end of his memories, he finally looked up. He had tears in his eyes, but a proud look on his face. The storm claimed three of his closest friends, but left behind the realization of just how vital all of them were to the people of the community.*

*I said nothing, but thought about what may lay ahead for me and the other restrooms I arrived with. One thing was certain; I was glad to be a part of Exceptional Restrooms and that I was placed next to true heroes who had held the place together for twenty years. I guess being new and shiny is a good place to start, but in the end, I want to be worn and faded too, with fond memories of the people I served and the good we did in the community.*