



## CELEBRATING ANOTHER 30TH ANNIVERSARY!



*Another Specialized Housing home has recently reached the 30th year milestone. Residents, staff, families and friends of 666 Washington gathered to celebrate and recognize the past thirty years and share the stories that have developed over time. Below are some photos and excerpts of speeches from that celebration. Congratulations 666 Washington on thirty years!*

When we applied to have Sandy become a resident of the second house, I was worried Sandy would not make the grade because

she was non-verbal, compared to some prospective residents. Margot told me that she looked at Sandy's records and saw that we had challenged her and that she had always met the challenge.

The first weekend Sandy was at the house, she and Jimmy went out to a restaurant with no money and were escorted home by the police. I both laughed and cried. Margot and David stuck with her, and she went from a resident that fell asleep at house meetings to not only a participant but to a leader.

*- Martha Tuttle (Sandy's mother)*

I lived at home until I was 30. It was a pretty good deal. But my parents wanted me to have my own place. I was a little nervous about leaving home. I thought I would miss my folks and my cat, Sam. My parents helped me deal with it. My Mom and her friends and my sisters gave me a lot of cool things for the house. My Dad was a trustee for a long time. He was always there for me. I miss them both so much, but I know my parents are up in heaven, happy that I am doing well.

*- Dorothy*

As we celebrate our thirty year anniversary today, I'd like to thank the residents, staff, and my family for making it a memorable time in my life. I would like to thank Andrew, Ian, Sandy, Sheila, Ben, Dorothy, Mike, Kevin, and Margie for making some of the best years of my life living in Brookline. I would also like to thank the staff for helping me during good times and bad and for all their support. I'd like to say that living here has been an honor.

*- Charles Donald*

I would like to thank David and Margot for starting this wonderful program. It has been great for me to become more independent living away from my parents. Living with nine other residents is great, but sometimes problems arise, so there is always a friendly staff member on hand to help solve any problems.

*- Ian Hobson*

I moved here in 1996 when I was in my late 20s. I wanted to have a nice home and to become independent so I could learn to cope with life and to be proud of myself. We have come a long way and the proof is right in front of you. Ten people, with staff, living in a busy and hectic lifestyle sounds easy, right? Okay, I may be a little off. Just ask the staff. But we like it here and are glad to be here for each other when push comes to shove. Thank you all for your love and support. If it hadn't been for David and Margot, my life would be different. You all touched and influenced our lives so thank you.

*- Andrew*



## CHARLIE

by Trevor Meek



Charles Hurvitz, resident of 769 Washington and artist at Gateway Arts, was recently the

subject of a short documentary titled *Charlie* by director Lev Olmenchenko. The documentary explores Charlie's various artistic talents, his longstanding friendships throughout the community of Brookline, and his thirty plus years as a resident of 769 Washington.

The movie features interviews with David Wizansky and Ted Cassely of Specialized Housing, as well as an interview with Charlie's guardian Adam Nussenbaum. Rae Edelson and Stephen DeFronzo, directors of Gateway, offer poignant insights into Charlie's creativity, as does art facilitator Courtney McKenna. Chobee Hoy, of the real estate agency which bears her name, Father Brian Clary of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, and Marc Griliches of 769 Washington also sat down to discuss their good friend Charles and provide some very touching commentary.

In this film, we see Charles at his best—happy, playful, and enthusiastically discussing the Boston Symphony Orchestra, for which he has had a lifelong passion. The film imparts an honest portrayal and, for a brief span, shows Charles irritable and with little patience for the filming process which took weeks. However, in retrospect, Charles says that he “really enjoyed” the experience and has developed a lasting friendship with the director, Mr. Olmenchenko.

You can see *Charlie* at <https://vimeo.com/129707928>, where you will also find short vignettes of other Gateway artists. An official premier for the film is expected to be held at the Coolidge Corner Theater. Once the date is confirmed, Specialized Housing will communicate the information to the SHI community.

## IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU!

by Michael Caballero



BROOKLINE, MA — If you know Rich Kas-triner from our Fuller Street location, and you happen to see him during your day, you'll most likely be told by him that it's so good to see you. Initially, one may mistake the greeting as automatic — like how we might tell the store cashier to have a good day, without re-

ally thinking about what that means — but if you look into those bright eyes and that wide grin of his, you will instantly feel that Richie is truly happy to see you. Rich is one of the most authentic people you'll meet, and this is just one example of his appreciation of others and the world around him.

Rich is well known in his house for his long walks for pleasure or work. He has no problem walking from Brookline down to Faneuil Hall, or even further! He returns to the house with stories of large ships coming into the harbor, the street entertainers and their amazing tricks, watching all of the interesting people, and a description of how beautiful the day was. If he's not enjoying a leisurely stroll downtown, he's making the long walk down Commonwealth Avenue for work. While some would dread that route to-and-from work every day, Rich takes the opportunity to meet many of the vendors along the busy street. Some are so happy to see him that he sometimes receives a cup of coffee on the house.

Rich loves his work as much as he values his leisure time, and his positive approach to work defines who he is and how others perceive him. Rich works at Boston University, in one of their student cafeterias. One of the managers said this about him: "Everyone seems to take to him. We have lots of people clean the table and mop the floor, but when Rich comes in, the atmosphere changes; he brings a lightness and happiness to the workplace. No one else can do that, and everyone responds." Rich is not just a happy worker either. Rich is known for his dependability,

hard work and great results. After his first six months of working at Boston University, Rich received a raise and recognition for his outstanding performance. Most recently, Rich was promoted to food server. Since starting at BU, Rich has received many awards, including an employee of the year award, and he continues to receive merit-based raises. Not that more proof is needed, but some may recall the more than eight feet of snow the region experienced last winter. Rich only missed one day of work during those brutal blizzards. He insisted (despite staff recommendations) on walking to work during that challenging time of year. He knows people depend on him, and he always wants to be helpful, even if it means walking through a blizzard.

His mother, Rita, shared that it's hard to know what he will accomplish next because he's always surprising them with his increasing independence and interests. Moving into the house was a great catalyst for Rich, according to his mom. The flexibility with supervision and the allowance for new experiences has enabled Rich to grow as a person in a way that she never expected. Her comments about Rich relate, on some level, to all of our SHI adults. For this reason and many more, SHI staff are fortunate to work with the adults in their homes because they all bring something to our lives that we, too, would have never expected. As for Rich, he seems to have found that perfect balance of work and fun and doesn't want to miss one moment. He is a great model for us all. Thanks, Richie! It's so good to see you, too.

## SHI ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Openings and New Developments:**

Specialized Housing has a variety of openings in Arlington, Brookline, Newton, and Cambridge. Please see our website or contact Michael Caballero at [mike@specializedhousing.org](mailto:mike@specializedhousing.org) for more information.

### **Upcoming Maine Information Session:**

November 19, 2015 at 6:15pm at the South Portland Community Center, 21 Nelson Road. Learn more about the newest Maine housing opportunity.

RSVP to [mcsemrowshi@gmail.com](mailto:mcsemrowshi@gmail.com)

### **New Hires:**

Michelle Taylor, relief staff  
Mark Lockman, relief staff  
Ashley Mosley, relief staff  
Annie Belmer, relief staff  
John Goldsby, manager

## A POEM

*For One of the Nicest People I Know*

by **Thierry Cushing**  
Brookline, MA

for **Stephanie Weaver** on her birthday

She works hard at her job and smiles every day  
So many nice things about Steph I can say  
When she comes home, she rushes to Claude's side  
She helps her into her chair and helps her onto The Ride  
She helps clean Claude's clothes and watches TV with her too  
I think without Stephanie we would all say "boo-hoo"  
She makes all of us happy as she lives here  
So please raise your glass and give a good cheer  
A toast to my friend, Happy 53  
And many returns  
Love, Thierry

## A RESIDENT ART EXHIBIT

(Information provided  
by Linda Finnerty)



CAMBRIDGE, MA — This past spring, J.B. Finnerty, a young adult living in Specialized Housing's Cambridge location, was one of three artists showcased at an art exhibit at Lesley University. The exhibit was titled *Focus on Autism Spectrum Disorder: Annual Symposium & Art Exhibit*. Below is a description of J.B.'s work, including text from his speech that he gave at the exhibit.

James Brendan (J. B.) Finnerty is a 27-year old artist who lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is a graduate of Concord Carlisle High School. J. B. is a young artist with autism who currently works at Gateway Arts in Brookline, MA and previously worked as an artist at Outside the Lines in Medford, MA. J.B. also works as a part-time library page at the Lincoln Library in Lincoln, MA where he held his first one-person art exhibit (February 2011).

J.B.'s works include whimsical drawings—fun little line drawn characters or subjects with watercolors that exude a happy spirit. In addition to his line drawings, J. B. uses a more abstract and spontaneous, symbolic style on canvas. He often explores graffiti-like, symbolic images that are uniquely his own.

His paintings are oversized, colorful, and appear to contain a vast amount of information that has been stylized and/or abstracted. He associates and connects colors, shapes, and symbols to each other in ways that are often unexpected and

novel. These surprising and unconventional connections require the viewer to stretch his or her thinking, making it an extraordinary and personally interpretative experience.

Having a novel way to view the world is an asset for JB as a visual artist. He exhibits a knack for making fluid artistic statements about his world, pulling the viewer in. JB's artwork often references his love of Jim Henson, his love of comics and his life experiences. JB is an emerging artist whose artistic message is fresh and uninhibited.

### J. B.'s Speech:

Hello, my name is J.B. Finnerty. Thank you all for coming today. It is always nice to share my work with others. I am an ordinary person who comes from Concord, Ma. I now live in Cambridge. I am a part-time page at the Lincoln Library and I attend Gateway Arts in Brookline. I would like to talk a little bit about my art. I have been sketching since I was very young. When I was growing up I drew lots of cartoon characters. Images that I saw on TV and books helped me get a head start in my budding career. I remember drawing because it helped me get through unhappy experience like when I moved to Los Gatos, California.



One favorite painting is Home Sweet Home Cooked. I used symbols that reminded me of visits with my brother Connor in Burlington, Vermont. And we had a lot of fun at that place. He even showed me his friends. Just thinking about that painting makes me happy.

In *Puppet Eyes*, my painting is all about Jim Henson and although I never knew him I met his wife Jane at an exhibit about his work. I just loved the way she told us how all the Muppets were created. Jim Henson's work is inspiring to me.

When I painted *Springtime in the Forest*, I felt light-hearted. I want people to feel the lighter side of color when the forest is filled with pastel greens.

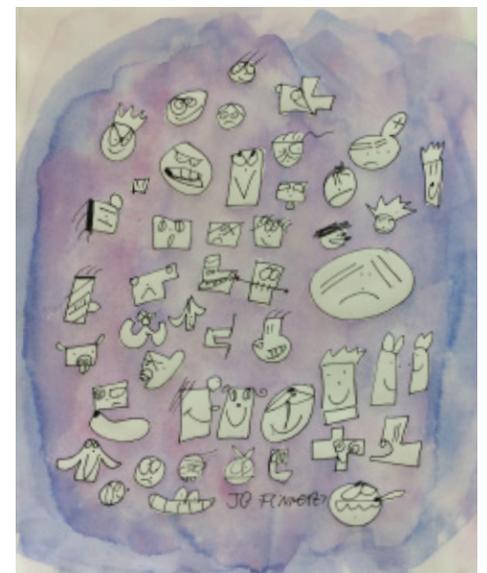
In addition to loving to work with paint, I love every foreign language in the world. My art speaks a different language. It comes from the way I use my colors, and every picture tells a story. My stories represent the being of my artwork as told from the artist's perspective.

I hope you enjoy my artwork.



My cartoons made me feel happy. Today, my cartooning helps me work out different situations in my life. I like to draw sketches on grids where I illustrate what is on my mind.

My painting is a form of art that I have been perfecting and mastering. When I paint, I am thinking about using color and shapes that you see every day. I usually paint about what is going on in my mind. I relate colors and shapes and forms to things that I know.



## THE INSIDER KITCHEN

Thanks to the young adults at Lincoln Street for taking these impressive photos of their creatively presented food.

