



## INTERVIEW WITH 2016 GUNNAR DYBWAD LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT EVELYN HAUSSLEIN

by Trevor Meek

BROOKLINE, MA – If there were a Mount Rushmore for the disability rights movement, Dr. Gunnar Dybwad would undoubtedly be among those figures chiseled into the fine-grained granite. A resident of Massachusetts by way of Germany, Dr. Dybwad’s work as an advocate for the special needs community led him up the steps of Capitol Hill where his tireless efforts would improve the level of education which our nation’s disabled children receive. Dr. Dybwad, who passed away in 2001, is also credited as being the first social advocate to frame the rights of the developmentally disabled as a civil rights matter rather than a medical concern. In the words of Evelyn Hausslein, “He truly was a visionary.”

In March of this year Mrs. Hausslein was the recipient of the 2016 Gunnar Dybwad Leadership Award. The award is given annually by the Department of Developmental Services to an individual whose advocacy on behalf of the special needs population reflects the momentous work of Dr. Dybwad. It is a very prestigious honor.

Evelyn has been the director of several Massachusetts organizations which focus on advocacy and support. She was the project director of the Early Intervention Training Center at the Federation for Children, the founding director of The SUPPORTbrokers of the Arc of Massachusetts and has also served as chair for The Arc Government Affairs Committee where she has been instrumental in the Mass. Alliance for 21st Century Policy (MA-21). MA-21 drafted the initial Real Lives bill which, according to the Mass. Families

Organizing for Change website, “will improve the delivery of support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their family members.”

To those in the Specialized Housing community, Evelyn Hausslein is a familiar face and a friend. The Haussleins were among the founding families of one of Brookline’s earliest SHI homes where their son Tom has been a resident for nearly thirty years. With all of her accomplishments and the many positions she has held, Evelyn says that her proudest achievement is “being able to help parents of children with intellectual disabilities not only with the authority of a professional but, more importantly, as a parent myself.”

SHInsider recently sat down with Evelyn to discuss the Gunnar Dybwad Leadership Award and her career.

**First of all, congratulations on receiving the 2016 Gunnar Dybwad Leadership Award. Dr. Dybwad taught at Brandeis University and was the founding director of the Starr Center at Brandeis’s Heller School. You are an alumna of the Heller School. Did you know Dr. Dybwad?**

EVELYN HAUSSLEIN: He was certainly very distinguished, but I wasn’t really aware of him when I first arrived at Brandeis. Eventually we met and I never expected to be working alongside somebody who had written a book and who was a pioneer in our field. He really set the course for community inclusion for the special needs population long before there were laws and practices in place.

He was no longer teaching while I was at Brandeis; he was supervising graduate students. But he was very much around. He and his wife Rosemary were a great team. I believe I alluded to this in my acceptance speech, but I very clearly remember smelling Rosemary’s cooking on nights when Dr. Dybwad would meet with all of us students at their house. She was always very accommodating. They were like parents to a lot of us graduate students. To win an award in Gunnar’s honor is very touching. I consider it one of the privileges of my life that I knew him as I did and that I was also able to work with Martha Ziegler at the Federation for Children who was very much a visionary herself.

**You’ve been a professional advocate for the special needs community for forty plus years. What inspired you to pursue this career?**

My son, Tom. He provided the inspiration. Tom has truly influenced me in my career, but I did have training in it before he was born. I was a liberal arts major and wanted to be a teacher. I graduated from Wellesley, I was going to get married and I needed a job. I found out that Tufts University gave a teaching internship at the Mass. Hospital School. So, I was working four days a week and was at Tufts one day a week taking courses. When I started having children I took some time off and, once I was ready, I went back into early childhood special education.

If Tom hadn’t come along, my focus may have remained on working with very young children, but as Tom grew up I pivoted my focus from early childhood education to working with school-age children and then young adults and so on as he got older. I didn’t know a lot about supporting adults with special needs until I really *needed* to know about it. It’s amazing how we survived with what little information we had at the time *[laughs]*.

And I learned along the way the importance of speaking authentically as a parent while also a professional in the field. I realized this while at the Federation for Children with Special Needs. While I was there, I traveled around the country on a national grant talking to people about early intervention. We were encouraging parents of young children to speak out and teaching them about policy and such. I quickly realized that I had a unique perspective as a parent, myself. People who have heard me speak will come up to me and they will remember Tom because I told a story about him while I was giving a speech or teaching. *[Article continues on p. 2.]*

*[Continued from p. 1.]* **Much of your work has been focused on helping families who are seeking support for their loved ones navigate the services available to them efficiently and effectively. Obviously there have been improvements in this area thanks in large part to your work, but do you find that those families seeking assistance are overwhelmed by the process? Do you have any advice for families who may be in the initial stages of their search for assistance?**

I think that parents or family members should try to see the big picture. And it's very hard to pull back and see the big picture when you're in the middle of it all because it can be overwhelming. My advice is to have that in mind, yet still focus on doing one thing at a time. Try to take all of the problems that you are worried about, whether it's money, or transportation, or finding a job, et cetera, and take them on one at a time. And always be mindful of the bigger picture.

I also think that there needs to be room to take risks. Parents and families need to be willing to let go and let their loved ones take risks. And, listen, it gets harder as you get older. One of the things I'm most proud of in raising Tom is teaching him how to use the T. We were tired of waiting for the school cab to come and pick him up so we taught him how to take the bus and the train. And now he could tell you how to get just about anywhere in the city.

Another bit of advice would be to talk to other parents. Find a group of parents facing the same issues as you and never be afraid to ask for help. I sometimes have trouble asking for help, myself, but I find that I always learn something new when I do ask for advice.

### **How did you and your family find Specialized Housing?**

Our family and a group of other families in Lexington who had met through the high school or the LAB program, where our children were students, got together. We were all exploring answers for the big question,

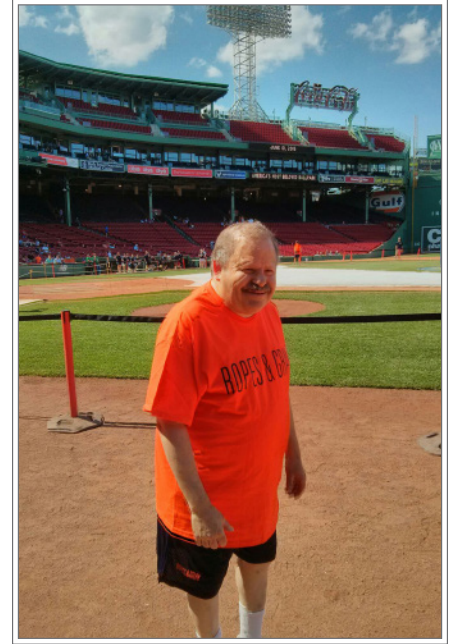
"What's next?" Our children were finishing up their various programs or graduating from the high school and we were looking for the next step. We didn't know beans about transitioning. So, we met with a lot of people from various group homes and the like. One of those people who came out to meet with us was David Wizansky. We were all very impressed with him and with his honesty. Especially my husband. David really struck a chord with him. We wanted our kids to live together in this model that David was presenting to us because they had all grown up together. And here was an opportunity that was really new and exciting, both for our children and for us.

### **What were your initial thoughts about the Specialized Housing model when you first discovered it?**

It was exciting, for sure, but it was very scary. On the other hand, we had a great support system. We had each other and we really have a great group of families. The idea of the independence that was possible through the Specialized Housing model really appealed to all of us. I remember Margot Wizansky talking to us about the importance of finding a friendly and safe neighborhood as a location for the house. And there couldn't be a better, friendlier neighborhood than Brookline. The residents are truly a part of their community as we had hoped they would be in the beginning.

### **You recently retired. What do you plan on doing with your free time?**

Having finally retired, again, I hope to devote more time to my family, my neighbors and my church, keeping closer to home. I give thanks that I am in good health and have energy for many things but I wish to slow down some and care for those I love. I will probably continue to talk to parents of individuals with disabilities, continue to follow legislation and policy without going to meetings, visit The Arc of Massachusetts in its new offices, and see friends I have made during my work and volunteer years.



## **ALAN AT FENWAY**

by Ivy Mckenzie

BOSTON, MA — On June 10th, 2015, Alan Lampert of St. Paul Street had a chance to play ball at Fenway Park during Field of Dreams Day. The event brings together corporate teams for a daylong tournament to benefit Boston Action for Community Development and the Summer Works program.

Alan's employer, law firm Ropes and Gray, chose Alan and several other employees to participate. The weather was perfect, and Alan got a hit his first time at bat. Ropes and Gray played against the TJMaxx Corporation and emerged victorious.



## **FULLER STREET RESIDENTS VISIT FRIENDLY FENWAY**

On April 20th the Fuller Street residents enjoyed a Red Sox game at Fenway Park. The Sox beat the Tampa Bay Rays 7-3 that evening to snap a three game losing streak. Mookie Betts hit a home run over the Green Monster and Big Papi David Ortiz had three RBIs. Go Sox!





## “CHARLIE” PREMIERES AT HISTORIC COOLIDGE CORNER THEATER

by Trevor Meek

BROOKLINE, MA — In September of 2015, Hollywood icon Johnny Depp brought his highly anticipated film *Black Mass* to the historic Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline. The premiere prompted a temporary closure of long stretches of both Beacon and Harvard Streets, and news helicopters hovered overhead for footage of the limousines lining up below. Fans and reporters loitered for hours outside the neighborhood movie house for an opportunity to congratulate Depp and his co-stars on their success. Recognized worldwide for his lucrative role as Captain Jack Sparrow, Depp shyly walked the red carpet and answered a few questions before he snuck inside where he may have fallen asleep during the film. He admitted



that he had taken a nap at a premiere in Venice only days before.

A few months later, while Brookline was still buzzing from Depp's visit and yet another glitzy premiere for the Oscar winning *Spotlight*, the Coolidge Corner Theater hosted a screening of *Charlie* by director Lev Olmenchenko. There weren't any helicopters hovering overhead, no limousines lining Harvard Street. Reporters weren't elbowing their way toward a red carpet. Yet, there were plenty of fans. And most were warmly greeted at the theater door by the star of the evening himself, Specialized Housing resident Charles Hurvitz.

Over 200 people came out on the cold January night to pack an upstairs theater for the screening presented by Gateway Arts and Specialized Housing. Many in attendance had already seen the short film on Olmenchenko's website [synonshop.com](http://synonshop.com) and still paid the price of admission. Tickets for the event quickly sold out.

After the credits had rolled and *Charlie* proclaimed “That’s a wrap!” on screen, Gateway director Rae Edelson and Specialized Housing’s Ted Cassely took questions from the audience on a panel alongside the director and star. Hannah Hoffman in her role as master of ceremonies conducted the Q&A. Many of those called upon from the audience expressed their appreciation of the film and took the opportunity to congratulate Lev and Charlie. Rae Edelson and Ted Cassely articulated the long standing partnership between Gateway Arts and Specialized Housing in supporting autonomy for adults with special needs.

When asked about his expectations for the documentary, Lev told the audience that he

would be submitting it to several film festivals and that he was grateful for the exposure that it had already found. He also added that his inspiration for the film came from several artists and employees of Gateway Arts who insisted that the young director should focus his lens on the gregarious Mr. Hurvitz. In one of many memorable moments during the Q&A Father Brian Clary, who offers a particularly enlightening and heartfelt anecdote in the film, was spotted in the audience by his friend Charlie. “Thank you Father Brian,” Charlie said into his microphone, “I like you.”

Once the Q&A was over, many in attendance shuffled toward the Exit signs, but several others made their way toward Charlie to again congratulate him and to request a picture with the Mayor of Brookline (as he is fondly referred to in the film). He also gladly signed several autographs. It was a night absent of glitz, but with the right touch of glamour thanks to Hannah Hoffman, Courtney McKenna and the staff of Gateway Arts.

It's difficult to imagine that those in attendance for the premiere of *Black Mass* left the Coolidge Corner Theater that night feeling any closer to Johnny Depp. However, it's quite easily imagined that those in attendance for the premiere of *Charlie* went home proud to call the Mayor of Brookline their neighbor and friend.

You can watch *Charlie* on Lev Olmenchenko's website [www.synonshop.com/video](http://www.synonshop.com/video)

## SHI ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Openings and New Developments

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

### New Residents

Kelsey Horsington  
Michael Natale  
Kathleen DeVellis  
Leah Dunn  
Kelsey Horsington

### New Hires

Malinda Hachlafi, relief staff  
Randy Reynolds, relief staff  
Hanna Sturtevant, relief staff  
Melody Brimmer, relief staff  
Wendy Donnell, relief staff  
Patricia Tueme Lezama, relief staff  
Nicole Merrill, house manager  
Christine Burke, house manager



## MY BUDDY: HARVARD COLLEGE STUDENTS REACH OUT — WITH FRIENDSHIP

By Sarah Sweeney, Harvard Staff Writer  
Rose Lincoln, Harvard Staff Photographer

*The following article and corresponding pictures are taken from the Harvard Gazette (<http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/03/my-buddy/>) with their permission. The article features Specialized Housing residents Amy Richmond and Andrew Peyron.*

CAMBRIDGE, MA — Making new friends is one of the hallmarks of the college experience and for Fatima Bishtawi '17, hitting it off with freshman year roommate Amanda Mozea '17 was key. But it wasn't quite enough.

Inspired by her brother with special needs, Bishtawi had worked with Unified Sports throughout high school, and at the start of her freshman year at Harvard she connected with the Best Buddies program, which connected her to Andrew Peyron. And inspired by Bishtawi, Mozea followed. Now, Bishtawi and Peyron and Mozea and buddy Amy Richmond meet two to three times a month.

"Amanda and I usually hang out with our buddies together, and Andrew and Amy both



love going to the dining hall so we usually just bring them over to Pforzheimer's dining hall for brunch or dinner," said Bishtawi. "Other times we hang out at their house [a group home on Concord Avenue] and talk. Sometimes we go to the Coop, which is a store they both love!"

"Amy is a coffee aficionado and fanatic. She loves Harvard gear more than any Cambridge resident that I've ever met," said Mozea. One of Richmond's first questions when she meets a new person, she said, is "Do you like coffee?" And no matter what the answer, "She will still love you unconditionally."



For the two juniors, the quartet's outings are a reprieve from the stresses of academics and an opportunity to refocus and reconnect with what — and who — is important.

"Things become simpler when I'm with Amy," said Mozea. "If I'm upset because I didn't do as well as I wanted on a test or on a paper she always asks me, 'Did you fail?' And when I tell her that I in fact passed, she says, 'Then that's OK.' And she's right. It's OK. Amy gives me a perspective that I lose when I'm surrounded by people who are constantly trying to do more and achieve more and be better. I really value that — and her hugs."

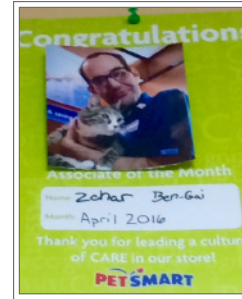
### PHOTO CAPTIONS

*Top: Friends, including blockmate Eni Dervishi '17, (center) stop by the buddies' table. The fun starts when Fatima Bishtawi mentions that Amanda Mozea has a boyfriend. Amy Richmond is slightly peeved and wants to know if she's the last one to know.*

*Right: To lighten the mood, Amanda Mozea brings her boyfriend, Deng-Tung Wang '17, over from the other side of the dining hall and introduces him to Amy Richmond.*

*Bottom: After her boyfriend leaves, Amy Richmond interrogates her buddy: "Why didn't I know sooner? Who knew before me?"*

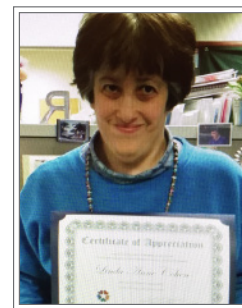
## SPECIALIZED HOUSING RESIDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR DEDICATION



Zohar Ben-Gai was recognized by his employer PetSmart as the Associate of the Month for April 2016. Zohar has worked for PetSmart for a little over a year in the Customer Service department.

Zohar says that his first couple of months at PetSmart were "rocky, overwhelming and difficult." He says that a new supervisor at work helped him gain confidence in himself. He adds, "The kindness and patience of a boss makes all the difference."

Stephanie Weaver was recently awarded a Gold Pin from the Museum of Science symbolizing 1,000 hours of volunteer work at the M.O.S. Stephanie is an Overnight and Summer Courses Volunteer. Her duties include match mailing, material recycling and making news tubes. When asked what her favorite part about volunteering is, Stephanie says, "I like everything about volunteering!"



Linda Cohen was given a Certificate of Appreciation by the Federation for Children with Special Needs for her 23 years of service to the Federation. Linda is an Office Assistant and says, "I really

like the people that I work with — all of my co-workers."

Robbie Ritter received his 6 Year pin from Star Market in May. Robbie works in the deli department. In his six years of employment, Robbie has made many friends and looks forward to going to work every day.

