



BREAKING GROUND ON MAINE SHI PROJECT



By Michael Caballero

SOUTH PORTLAND, ME — This past June, future residents of Specialized Housing’s second development in South Portland, Maine gathered with family members and next door neighbors to recognize the groundbreaking for the construction of their

new home. Their E Street neighbors (residents of SHI’s first South Portland house) were gracious hosts for the event. The new house will have space for ten adults and two live-in staff apartments. It was a beautiful day, and those present were able to enjoy great food and company. Program Manager



Nicole Merrill was kind enough to grill all of the tasty burgers and hot dogs despite being surrounded by clouds of smoke at times. Scrumptious desserts were made by Emma Geller, future resident of the new E Street home. The house is scheduled to open in March of 2018.

662 WASHINGTON CELEBRATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY

BROOKLINE, MA — *This past summer residents, family members, and staff celebrated the 30th Anniversary of 662 Washington (Est. 1987). Jeannine Mara, 662 resident Jimmy LaCroix’s sister, gave a speech to honor the occasion. Below is an abbreviated transcript of Jeannine’s speech:*

First, I want to acknowledge the groundbreaking approach to supporting independent living that David and Margot Wizansky started these many years ago. I am in awe of their vision, and how their grass-roots organization has grown into the fourteen houses that are part of Specialized Housing today.

I am deeply appreciative of our founding families and all of the staff for the hard work and dedication that has gone into making 662 such a wonderful success.

There is a happy, positive attitude here. Everybody supports each other in their

achievements, their sorrow, their birthdays, and in their day-to-day endeavors. By extension, I’ve grown to know all of the relatives—parents, siblings—and staff who offer so much love and support to the entire 662 family.

The 662 group looks forward to events together such as the Wheelock family theater, the JCC, going to church, house parties, and now barbecues on the new back patio. What a fun day it was last April with our 662 families working together to clean up the backyard and create a new summer gathering place.

There is a small group of residents who routinely answer the phone when I call. There is Paul with his deep voice that could rival a professional DJ’s. There is Tommy who, after his first holler for Jim, will go far and wide to find him. There is Richie who is an excellent message bearer, and Dorie who regales me with the awesome vacations she takes with her sisters. And then there is Paige, who never misses asking me how my husband John is. When stopping by 662 on a weekend, we are greeted by Paige who holds court by the TV, Keith with his quiet presence, or Kendrew with his dry wit and

hilarious one-liners.

One of my favorite recollections is of renovating Jim’s bedroom about twelve years ago. What began as a project for my husband John and me quickly turned into a community effort. Tommy accompanied John to the hardware store to pick up some tools. A trip to Home Depot became a party of four to pick up a Shop Vac. Paige and Richie waltzed by to offer their opinions on colors. Fred checked in on occasion to check on our organization and progress. Dorie and Kendrew, not ones to miss a party, came up to join in the camaraderie.

Most recently, Jim, Keith and others enjoyed the chance to help our newest member, Kelsey, move in. Everyone helped to make her feel right at home. Though Sarah has since moved to a place that is a safer haven for her, she is thought of fondly, and is still a member of the 662 family.

May we all continue to enjoy being part of this wonderfully large family. Look how strong we can be together and how much we can accomplish as a team. Thank you, Daniel, for your tremendous effort in organizing this day.



HOUSE MANAGER APPEARS ON FAMILY FEUD

CAMBRIDGE, MA — Playing along with our favorite television game shows from the comfort of our couches is a cherished American pastime. We've all imagined ourselves running down the aisle on *The Price is Right*, or pictured ourselves spinning the *Wheel of Fortune*. Earlier this year, Cambridge House Manager Sakle Howell played along with her favorite television game show. But she wasn't on her couch and she wasn't just imagining herself on television. In fact, Steve Harvey was standing right next to her. And as she recently informed a curious friend—Yes. He is tall.

SHInsider sat down with Sakle to discuss her experience on one of America's all-time favorite game shows, *Family Feud*.

Alongside your brothers William and Daniel, your sister Tricia, and your cousin Oneal, you recently appeared on an episode of *Family Feud*. Whose idea was it to try out for the show?

Sakle: It was my idea to try out. When I found out *Family Feud* was coming to Boston to hold tryouts I called my brothers, sister and cousin to ask them if they wanted to try out for fun. I didn't know that they would actually pick us to be on the show. I always watch *Family Feud* and my family would always play along with the show when it came on, even when I was a child.

How did you find out that you'd been chosen to compete on the show?

I found out that we were chosen when I received a phone call in February from the

Team Howell (William, Daniel, Tricia, Sakle and Oneal) with host Steve Harvey

casting director telling me that they really enjoyed us during tryouts and that we were very entertaining. They asked if we were still interested in being on the show and meeting Steve Harvey. I said, "Of course!" They offered to fly us out, all expenses paid, and we gladly accepted.

Where is *Family Feud* filmed?

Family Feud is filmed in the Civic Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

Did you get to spend much time with the host, Steve Harvey?

I got to spend a lot of time with Steve for the two days that we were in studio with him. He is on stage from the first taping at 8:30 in the morning until the last taping at 4:30 in the evening. He was doing a lot of stand up comedy and engaging with the audience as well.

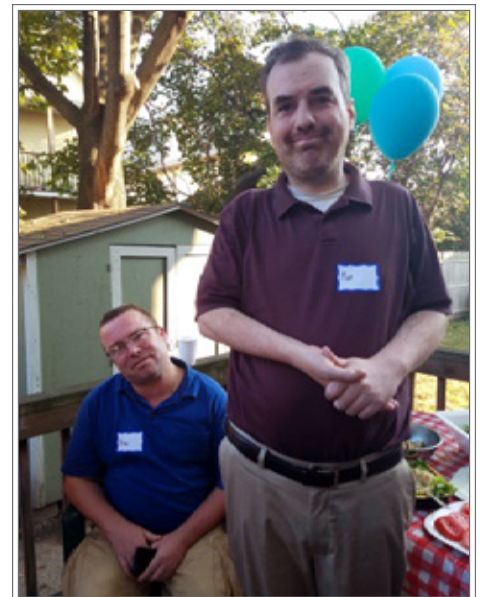
Your episode premiered on October 25th. Did you watch it with your family/team members?

Yes, the whole family watched it together. I was very nervous. I was more nervous when it was time to watch myself on TV than when I was in the studio playing the game. Knowing that all of my friends, family, coworkers and residents at Concord Ave. would be watching made me nervous. I didn't get to see the episode or taping until the night that it premiered on TV, so I didn't know what to expect.

What was your favorite part of the whole experience?

My favorite part was dancing in the audience to the DJ's music while waiting for our time to go on. It helped us relax and forget that we would be on national television. The staff was very welcoming and laid back. They made us feel very comfortable the whole time that we were there. They also gave great advice and helped us look good on TV. It's an experience that I will never forget!

20TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY AT 7 WYMAN





COOKING WITH CAROLE: LESSONS WELL LEARNED

By Rita Bartczak

NEWTON, MA — I've always worried about my son Brendan and having healthy food available when I'm not around. Brendan is high functioning autistic and lives with nine other young men and women like him and he is on a gluten-, casein- and soy-free diet.

Last year, at a meeting for my son's house, parents once again raised the concern that our young adults don't know how to cook. I had resisted the thought of Brendan even getting into a kitchen. Of my three sons, Brendan has shown zero interest in cooking anything. His trips to the kitchen involve getting a Coke out of the refrigerator. Not that I ever encouraged him to cook—I felt he doesn't really care enough—and I reasoned safety first. How



could he hold a knife without cutting himself?

Some of his housemates are proficient in preparing meals, while most, including Brendan, spend as little time as necessary in the kitchen. An enthusiastic cook myself, I was okay with that as I reasoned someone will always be there to cook for them and there is always take out.

They are not the only ones who don't like to cook. Millennials spend less than 20 minutes a day preparing food and 53% eat at restaurants at least once a week.¹

Taking The Plunge

After this last board meeting I finally agreed to change that. We would give our young adult children the opportunity to cook. Anne, one of the parents, introduced me to Carole, a cooking instructor with experience from the Threshold Program at Lesley College who had taught her daughter Gabi, now one of Brendan's housemates.

In our first meeting Carole surprised me when "fun" was the first thing that came out of her mouth. "They have to have fun cooking." Her suggestion was to have dinner parties where five housemates cook the meal and then sit down and enjoy the fruits of their labor with their housemates as guests.

Carole masterfully planned the menu and supervised the shopping for ingredients, accommodating Brendan's diet with ease.

I nervously awaited Brendan's account after the first "Dinner Party." He called me as he does every night around 10 pm. "It was great Mom. We loved the food and everyone had a great time—only one thing happened—I cut my finger cutting onions."

I was horrified! Why would Brendan cut onions? Couldn't he have done an easy task like scooping sorbet into cups?

I had visions of a huge cut with blood dripping all over the food. Not so, Carole reassured me the next day. "Brendan wanted to cut onions—and it was a tiny scrape. We have

to let him make mistakes or he'll never learn," she said.

Their next dinner party was another success. Brendan, whose language is usually devoid of hyperbole, said the dinner was "absolutely wonderful." Carole sent me the pictures after the party. Much to my surprise, who was cutting meat with a sharp knife? Brendan! Why him?! "Because he wanted to cut the meat," Carole reassured me, "and he did a great job—no cut this time."



Lessons Learned All Around

What this has taught me is that Brendan's hidden talent in the kitchen was cutting things. I had to go beyond my worry and let him fail—because as Carole said—that's how they learn. I am encouraged that they can learn to prepare meals safely and responsibly.

I can also see that preparing a meal from start to finish gave them a sense of accomplishment and mastery. I am sure that with more cooking parties planned we may find more hidden talents in the kitchen.

¹ MarketWatch 09/10/2016

SHI ANNOUNCEMENTS

Openings and New Developments:

Specialized Housing currently has an opening in Arlington. Also, Specialized Housing has two developments in progress: South Portland, Maine and Newton Highlands. Please contact Mary Chris Semrow at mcsemrowshi@gmail.com for the Maine project and Michael Caballero at mike@specializedhousing.org for the Arlington opening and the Newton Highlands project.

New Hires:

Katelyn Burke, Relief Staff
Ashley Casey, Relief Staff
Jill Marie Chatburn, Live-In Staff
Marlena DiMattia, Live-In Staff
David Lydon, Relief Staff
Marsha Ripert, Relief Staff



MASS. SELF-ADVOCATES TOUR MBTA CONTROL CENTER

By Trevor Meek

BOSTON, MA — For the majority of Specialized Housing residents public transportation is a necessary part of their daily lives. Whether it's commuting to and from work, keeping appointments, running errands, or just visiting friends—completing everyday tasks requires the MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority). Of course, any daily commuter relying on the “T,” as it's always referred to, has to navigate the varying obstacles between points A and B. “The train was delayed again,” is a frequent complaint, often lodged with more colorful language than the pages of the SHInsider can accommodate. Yet, as inconvenient as the occasional delay or mechanical failure can be, most residents would tell you that the MBTA is, and has always been, crucial to their independent lifestyles.

This past summer, a delegation from the M.S.A.C. (Mass. Self-Advocates Club) visited the MBTA Control Center in downtown Boston to take a peek behind the curtain of the transportation system that the city so heavily relies on. According to M.S.A.C. Vice President Matthew Bander, he had met the Assistant General Manager of the MBTA, William McClellan, at an event over the summer. As they discussed his role with the MBTA, Mr. McClellan invited Matthew and the Mass. Self-Advocates to tour the Control Center. Knowing that a glimpse into the inner workings of the T would pique the interests of his fellow M.S.A.C. members, Matthew accepted Mr. McClellan's invitation.

Recruiting friends and fellow Club members to join him on the tour proved as easy as Matthew had expected. According to M.S.A.C. Treasurer Kendrew Caporal, “The MBTA is part of my life every single day and I really

wanted to see behind the scenes. I hoped to get a new perspective. I thought the tour was a great idea.” Kendrew's enthusiastic curiosity was shared by fellow Club member Paul Mossberg, who added, “I've always wondered how things work behind the scenes, and who's in charge. I wanted to learn more.” M.S.A.C. President Neal Cane also jumped on the opportunity to tour the Control Center. According to Neal he has been riding the trains and buses of Boston since he was ten years old and, he says, “I couldn't pass up the chance to finally see the nerve center of the T.”

Located just a short walk from South Station in downtown Boston, the Control Center is a high tech, state of the art facility. The most striking feature inside the Control Center is the wall-to-wall High Definition video screens which allow transit officials to keep an eye on each train line and bus stop. It's a futuristic layout resembling the command bridge of the Starship Enterprise from Star Trek. Dispatchers and supervisors in the Control Center coordinate with rail operators, bus drivers and transit inspectors who are out in the field to mitigate congestion throughout the city. Kendrew Caporal was especially amazed by all of the factors that the Control Center staff have to juggle on a daily basis. “The way that they take everything into account, from sporting events to the weather, and how all of that effects the timing of the trains and buses. It's a lot to process.”

The Transit Police have their own bank of surveillance monitors in the Control Center which were installed in 2014 through funding provided by the Department of Homeland Security. A Transit Police representative keeps a close eye on these displays for any sign of criminal activity along the MBTA routes. As Matthew Bander says, “You really have to be on your best behavior when using the T. There is somebody watching around the clock.” Kendrew Caporal adds, “It's amazing how much the Transit Police have to keep track of. It's a lot of responsibility, but the tour also made me feel like I'm in good hands with the MBTA.” Members of the tour group report that security for the Control Center itself is also thorough and access to the facility is strictly limited. A security clearance is required to enter.

The Club members who attended the tour of the Control Center agree that this experience has given them a newfound admiration for the MBTA and, as many of them had hoped, a new perspective. Train delays will always frustrate but, as Neal Cane says, “There's a lot more to it than people might realize. Everybody there works really hard and really cares. I have a lot of respect for the MBTA.”

To find out more about the Mass. Self-Advocates Club please contact David Wizansky.

MEET PARKER AND JEFF, WYMAN STREET'S NEWEST RESIDENTS

By Jackie Clayburgh

ARLINGTON, MA — *Wyman Street has gone through some exciting changes in the past year with the addition of two new residents—Parker Brandstater and Jeff Wales. Along with the celebration of our 20th Anniversary, we have been very busy this year! House Manager Jackie Clayburgh sat down with Jeff and Parker for an exclusive interview.*



Jackie: You both recently moved to Arlington. Where are you from originally?

Parker: Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Jeff: Rochester, New York and also Cambridge.

Jackie: How about work, do you have a job or attend a day program?

Parker: I go to Options E in Belmont on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. On Mondays and Thursdays I work at B Fresh in Brighton.

Jeff: I go to the Edinburg Center in Bedford every day except for Tuesdays, but I'm hoping to start going to Gateway Arts in the future because I really like art!

Jackie: Tell me something about yourselves that most people wouldn't know about you.

Parker: My favorite animals are dogs, wolves, geese and tigers. I can also make a lot of bird noises like pigeon cooing or goose honking.

Jeff: I'm really good at making art and working with color despite being red/green color blind.

Jackie: How have you been adjusting to life at Wyman Street?

Parker: Great because I like being independent and public transportation is very convenient in Arlington.

Jeff: I like the environment here and I like having my own room.

From left: Parker Brandstater, Jeff Wales