



Margie Richardson



Sandy Tuttle

## FAMILIAR FACES ON THE LOCAL NEWS

By Trevor Meek

BOSTON, MA — It's been a busy year for residents throughout the Specialized Housing community. So busy, in fact, that even the local news outlets have taken notice. Earlier this year on their "The Last Minute" segment, WBZ Channel 4 News caught up with SHI residents Margie Richardson and Sandy Tuttle at their place of work on the Boston College campus. Margie and Sandy have been working in the Boston College dining halls through the college's Supported Employee Program since the program's founding in 1987. According to Margie, she likes working at BC, in part, because, "It's so busy all the time. It's a happy place, a happy environment." Sandy, meanwhile, told WBZ's Juli McDonald that just a few of her many responsibilities include, "Filling napkins, filling silverware, trash, sweeping..." As touched upon in the segment, Margie and Sandy take great pride in their work and, for decades now, have been paragons of consistency and

professionalism—true role models for a generation of students on the BC campus.\*

Elsewhere in Boston, Channel 4 News interviewed SHI resident Thierry Cushing in a place that most people would not describe as a "happy environment"—the Registry of Motor Vehicles. On a recent visit to the RMV to renew his license, Thierry found himself fielding questions from WBZ's Lisa Gresci concerning the Registry's decision to allow Massachusetts residents to renew their IDs online. While he's admittedly not very tech savvy, himself, Thierry acknowledged, "Everything is computerized these days, so I'm sure a lot of people will just choose to do it online." As part of this same rollout, the Registry also announced that Mass residents will now be allowed to keep the same photograph on their IDs for up to 14 years. As he explained to the reporter, Thierry has concerns about this: "The thing is, if you (renew your ID) online, you get the same picture every time. If you get stopped by the police for something, they're going to say, 'Is this really you?'" \*\*

Finally, if you followed the coverage of this year's Special Olympics Summer Games opening ceremonies, you may have seen

veteran WBZ reporter Jim Smith interview Specialized Housing resident Stephanie Weaver. Like many SHI residents, Stephanie has competed in the Olympics for almost as long as she can remember. Due to an injury, however, Stephanie wasn't able to participate in her favorite track and field events this year. Yet her commitment to the games never wavered. Stephanie attended the 2018 Special Olympics Summer Games as a volunteer and spent each day of the games setting up events, snack tables, podiums, and then, once the closing ceremonies were over, she helped pack it all right back up. When Jim asked Stephanie if volunteering made her feel good, Stephanie humbly told him, "Yes. I like to do stuff for a whole lot of people." \*\*\*

To watch these segments online, visit [boston.cbslocal.com](http://boston.cbslocal.com)

\* Supported Employee Program Helps BC Workers Feel Fulfilled

\*\* Mass. License Photos Can Now Be Used for 14 Years

\*\*\* Opening Ceremonies Held for Mass. Special Olympics Summer Games



Thierry Cushing



Stephanie Weaver



## SPECIALIZED HOUSING FOUNDERS RECEIVE MARTHA H. ZIEGLER AWARD

By Trevor Meek

BOSTON, MA — Since 1974 the Federation for Children with Special Needs has provided guidance to families throughout New England while also shaping public policy that supports community inclusion and civil rights. They also, quite famously, know how to throw a party. Held at the Westin Waterfront Hotel in Boston's Seaport District this past May, the theme of this year's highly anticipated FCSN Gala was The Kentucky Derby. Guests pinned fascinators to their elegant hairdos and donned their flashiest suits—one attendee even dressed in full jockey gear. Patrick "The Piano Man" Birmingham provided the cocktail hour entertainment in the ballroom while friends, old and new, chatted and dodged the oncoming traffic of wide brimmed hats in the aisles between tables. The Gala is a night of celebrating advocacy, social work and recognizing those who have dedicated their lives to advancing civil rights and social opportunities on behalf of the special needs community. This year's award recipients included Ron Benham (President's Award), Bethany Van Delft Moffi (Advocacy Award) and Specialized Housing founders Margot and David Wizansky (Martha H. Ziegler Founder's Award).

According to the FCSN, "The Martha H. Ziegler Founder's Award was established to honor Martha's visionary leadership in the Parent Movement, and is given to individuals who continue that vision to educate, advocate and inspire." Past Founder's Award recipients

include actress/screenwriter Marianne Leone Cooper and her Academy Award winning husband Chris Cooper for their advocacy on behalf of underserved families in need of support across Massachusetts. In 2005 the Coopers established the Jesse Advocacy Fund in partnership with the FCSN in memory of their son. In 2017 the FCSN recognized Alba, Anastasia and their mother Mary Somoza with the Founder's Award for their twenty five years and counting of advocacy efforts on behalf of their peers in the special needs community. Twin sisters Anastasia and Alba were born prematurely and would later be



diagnosed with cerebral palsy. On a televised ABC special in 1993, ten year old Anastasia famously asked President Bill Clinton why her sister Alba, whose disability had been deemed more severe than her own, couldn't attend the same classes as she did. This question sparked a national debate and led to the inclusion of special needs children in generalized classrooms across the country.

2018 Founder's Award recipients Margot and David Wizansky founded Specialized Housing, Inc. after David, in his own words, "...had the idea that families could own and finance their own community living with the proper supports in place. The security that comes with equity should be available to everyone. By joining together, families could make the project more affordable." The Wizanskys envisioned a place where, according to Margot, "The residents of these households create a community at home—where they can relax, be themselves, where they're not teased or made to feel uncomfortable. A place where they can do most things at their own pace, spend their time the way they choose. A community in which they are supported, cherished, validated—where they can be of help to others." Since its founding, Specialized Housing has expanded from one family-owned home to fourteen and, in recent years, the Specialized Housing model has spread from Massachusetts into Maine. Many of the pioneering residents and family members from the original SHI project (established in Brookline in 1983) attended the Gala and celebrated this shared accomplishment alongside residents and family members from some of the newest SHI homes. Symbolizing the continued growth and success of the Specialized Housing model, Ned Reichenbach, a resident of one of the more recently developed SHI homes in Newton, introduced Margot and David to the stage to accept the Founder's Award. In his introduction, Ned proudly told those in attendance, "Living in a home founded by David and Margot Wizansky has been the greatest moment of my life—it's about who I am and what I can achieve in the real world."

*For more information, pictures, and videos from the 2018 Federation for Children with Special Needs Gala please visit [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org). The photographs included with this article were taken from their website with their permission.*

*Top photo: Margot and David Wizansky (center) hold the Martha H. Ziegler Founder's Award alongside Ned and John Reichenbach*

*Bottom photo: SHI resident Ned Reichenbach introduces Margot and David to the stage*





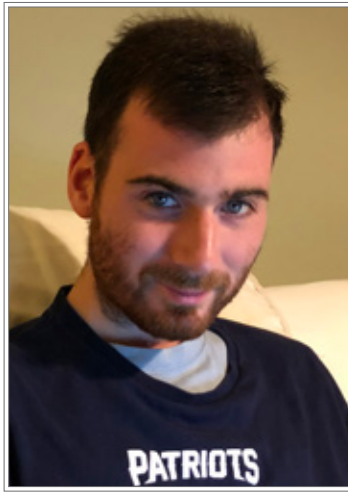
## DOCUMENTARY FILM STARRING SHI RESIDENT PREMIERES IN ENGLAND

BRIGHTON, UK— In the Spring 2016 edition of the SHInsider we covered the premiere of the documentary *Charlie* by director Lev Omelchenko at the Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline. The film focuses on Specialized Housing resident Charles Hurvitz and explores his life as an artist and cherished member of his community.

In November of last year the documentary made its international debut in Brighton, England at the Oska Bright Film Festival. What began in 2004 as a small gathering of intellectually and developmentally disabled filmmakers trying to showcase their work, Oska Bright has since become one of the most popular and beloved film festivals in all of England, drawing thousands of filmgoers each year. Colin Hambrook, editor of Disability Arts Online, was one of those filmgoers in attendance for the 2017 festival and, as he reported on the DAO website, “I was particularly taken with *Charlie*—a film by Lev Omelchenko which opened the afternoon’s ‘Portrait of the Artist’ session. This 25-minute documentary takes the viewer on a journey around Brookline, Massachusetts as a way of getting to know one artist—known as The Mayor of Brookline (aka Charlie Hurvitz)—who has made it his role in life to make a friend of the whole community.” The Oska Bright judges were also quite taken with the documentary. *Charlie* was nominated for Best International Film.

To watch *Charlie* online, visit Lev Omelchenko’s website at [www.levomel.com](http://www.levomel.com)

Photo: Charles Hurvitz with swag from the Oska Bright Film Festival



## NOLAN’S WEATHER BLOG

NEWTON, MA — Forecasting the New England weather can be a difficult task. A quote often attributed to the great American author Mark Twain says, “If you don’t like the weather in New England, just wait five minutes.” But ever since he was a child, Specialized Housing resident Nolan Gillman hasn’t wanted to wait even five minutes to find out what the weather might bring—he wants to know days ahead of time.

On August 9th, 2009, at the age of seventeen, Nolan started Nolan’s Weather Blog. As he wrote in that very first blog post, “I have enjoyed watching and reading about the weather, so I have decided to create a blog. I love the always changing weather here in New England.” And that love for the always changing weather keeps Nolan busy. On an almost daily basis for the past nine years Nolan has been preparing his readers for what they can expect when they step out their front doors in the days ahead. Nolan works at the Boston Children’s Museum during the day but spends his evenings studying both the American and European weather models before posting his updated forecasts around 10 or 11 pm most nights. He alerts his readers to any changes in his earlier forecasts throughout the week and, while he’s mainly focused on local weather, Nolan also keeps readers posted on major weather events around the country and world. While Hurricane Florence (which eventually weakened to a Tropical Storm) recently ravaged the Carolinas, Nolan began each blog post throughout those early days of September with updates on Florence’s trajectory and strength.

Much like his preferred local meteorologists Eric Fischer and Pete Bouchard, Nolan continues to keep a close watch on the remainder of hurricane season. But he’s also preparing for his favorite season—winter.

Like any brave New Englander, Nolan looks forward to the snow, but, as he tells the SHInsider, it’s still far too early to make any predictions about what we can expect in the coming months. You can expect to find his winter forecast in late November on Nolan’s Weather Blog.

Visit Nolan’s Weather Blog at [www.noloweather.blogspot.com](http://www.noloweather.blogspot.com)



## OUR FRIEND GARY

BROOKLINE, MA — Gary Pappalardo is a founding member of one of the oldest Specialized Housing homes in Brookline. After 29 happy and productive years with SHI, Gary moved out this past May. Among his many accomplishments as a representative of Specialized Housing are the countless medals he won as a Special Olympian and his many Top Scorer honors in the bowling leagues he competed in through the years. While he’s always been an avid athlete and ambassador to the Special Olympics, Gary’s most lasting contribution to the SHI community has been his relentless advocacy on behalf of his peers. Gary was a dedicated member of the Mass. Self Advocates in Brookline and for many years served on the Refreshments Committee. Gary also played a big role in the movement that led the Department of Mental Retardation to change its name to the Department of Developmental Services. All of us at Specialized Housing would like to thank Gary and his entire family for their enthusiasm, advocacy and friendship. We wish you all the best!

*The following article and corresponding picture are taken from the Federation for Children with Special Needs website with their permission. You can find a full archive of their quarterly newsletter, Newline, at [fcsn.org/newsletter](http://fcsn.org/newsletter)*



## LINDA COHEN: HONORING 25 YEARS AT THE FEDERATION

By Erin Anguish,  
FCSN Communications Coordinator

The Federation is proud to recognize Linda Cohen as she celebrates her 25th year with us. She joined our team in 1993, after completing an office training course with Toward Independent Living and Learning (TILL), an organization that helps individuals with disabilities to develop personalized residential, vocational, therapeutic, and support service plans.

Plotting a public transit trip from Linda's home, a Brookline condo managed by Specialized Housing, to our office in Charlestown is challenging, to say the least. Before starting her job here, Linda was worried about being able to navigate the MBTA. With the help of a neighbor, she overcame her anxiety and now confidently commutes to work (via two buses and the subway) three days a week.

Linda supports all projects, helping with copying, mailing, and preparation of event materials. If you attended our Visions of Community conference in March, she may have been the one who put together your registration packet, and if you walked away with a free book, Linda was the person that labeled it "compliments of FCSN". She also assists our Director of Human Resources

with administrative duties and our Gala Coordinator with the special auction.

Linda is always a welcome face in the office—she loves staying busy and regularly checks in with staff members to see if they need help. She enjoys learning new skills and has become a friendly fixture at all Federation events. For her part, Linda says she "likes working with people who like her." We certainly DO like her, and are lucky to have her as a colleague.

Congratulations to Linda on her 25th anniversary!



Top photo: Linda Cohen hard at work at the FCSN

## ARTS CORNER

### Dripping

By Abigail Miller

Don't worry about the noise  
Really annoying  
In the bathroom  
Pin size  
Please learn to deal with it  
It is not important  
Not any water in my ceiling  
Go on with life

### Art In Bloom 2018

By Abigail Miller

Not all galleries had floral arrangements; instead flowers were put in empty spaces. The courtyard was filled with pop up vendors trying to sell you bouquets of flowers or gardening bags with tools and soil. Only 3 out of the 5 or 6 galleries I went in to had wimpy floral arrangements.

*If you would like to see your poetry or art work published in the SHInsider, please contact Trevor Meek at [769washington@specializedhousing.org](mailto:769washington@specializedhousing.org)*

## SHI ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Openings and New Developments:

Specialized Housing currently has openings in Arlington, Newton, and South Portland, Maine. Please contact Michael Caballero at [mike@specializedhousing.org](mailto:mike@specializedhousing.org) for more information.

### New Hires:

Katie Burke  
Robert Carroll  
David Crossan  
Beth Dazet  
Dominic Desjardins  
Jennifer Dowling  
Kathleen Gens  
Veronica Ho  
Maribeth McTernan  
Courtney Taylor  
Marsha Ripert  
Elise Walker