



Specialized Housing, Inc. Family Testimonials

Anne Schink

Parent of daughter living in an SHI program for the last 12 years

People often ask me how we found Specialized Housing, Inc. and how we chose this particular model for our daughter. Like most parents, we had very high hopes for her in terms of what she would be able to accomplish. She was born with a host of disabilities (low vision, hearing loss, sensory integration disorder, borderline IQ) but we were very encouraged about her ability to overcome them. When she was a little girl she struggled in school, in her social interactions, and in her self-care. As she grew older we believed that she would eventually come to the place where she would become an independent adult like her sister. It was just a matter of time. And we were willing to give her extra time. She had been in the GROW program at Riverview School on Cape Cod. She had achieved some work success; she had lived away from home; she had made progress in the skills of adult daily living.

The day finally came when we had to accept the fact that she had grown about as much as possible. This was a difficult time for us as a family, having to abandon some of our hopes and dreams for our daughter. At the same time, it was important for us to accept her limitations and to find a setting where she could achieve as much independence as possible and get out from under the constant glare of parental expectations. Our daughter herself needed to come to an acceptance and understanding of her own limitations and be willing to ask for the appropriate level of support when she needed it.

By sheer grace, we found Specialized Housing and their optimistic approach to maximum support for independent living. Our daughter has lived in a house managed by SHI for almost 12 years and it has been a good match for her. Our daughter is very capable: she works in a local supermarket; she uses public transportation; she uses the computer; she plays the drums and keyboard; she manages some of her own social life. But she struggles with money management, household chores, self-care, and some of the subtle negotiations in the workplace and the community. Through the support of SHI, she has a network of friends, a social life, and the supports she needs to manage her life independently. As a family we are blessed with the knowledge that she is in a safe and supportive environment that will be there even when we are not. She is happy and confident with her life and she sees herself as very independent. We believe that we have achieved the optimum balance between support and freedom that allows our daughter to have a very full life.

Sarah (Schink) Robinson

Sibling

As her sister, I am both protective and encouraging of her independence. Specialized Housing is a wonderful balance of structure and freedom. It has been amazing to see how much more comfortable my sister is taking care of herself, traveling, getting around town, and doing social activities than she was 12 years ago when she moved into an SHI house. As her sister, I am relieved to know that she is taken care of but is also able to and have a life of her own.

Dick & Peg Bayles

Parents of adult son living in SHI program for the past 22 years

“I Made It”

The first time our son, Keith, traveled alone he arrived saying “I made it!” With empty feelings in the pits of our stomachs we left our son whom we had nurtured for over twenty years to live in Specialized Housing Inc. We had every confidence in the staff but still wondered if anyone could care for Keith as we had. His strengths included good grooming and independent laundry skills. He had never taken a bus himself and rarely shopped without one of his family. Now he shops independently and takes subways and buses in Boston to get to work at the World Trade Center where he delivers mail for an investment firm. I doubt that I would have been able to watch Keith leave the house to take public transportation. But with the staff using skills to determine his safety and arranging for initial travel training Keith has shown ability to manage. Over the years he has participated more in discussions around the house and it carries over when he visits home. The child who didn’t ask questions now comments with why, what, when, who and where. We in the family can join with Keith in “I made it!”.

Deborah Bayles

Sibling

My brother Keith has lived in specialized housing in Brookline, MA for over twenty years. Initially, I was opposed to his moving into the house; I felt that he was being abandoned. I am grateful at how wrong I was. Keith’s house is a loving, warm home. Since moving into the house, Keith has developed self-confidence; he has friends, a wonderful job, the ability to navigate the Boston subway system, and the ability to advocate for himself.