

# CHAI Honors H.A.L.O.'s contributions

**T**he Help A Little One Foundation and founders Alan and Gayle Pinshaw were recognized as outstanding advocates for children with disabilities at the 13th annual CHAI Evening at Pops event on May 20th.

The Community Housing for Adult Independence (CHAI) program celebrated H.A.L.O.'s 10-year effort to enhance the quality of life and emotional well being of children with neurological impairments. CHAI, a program of Jewish Family & Children's Service, helps adults with disabilities to live independent lives in the community,

"Today when a very vulnerable population is becoming more vulnerable due to state budget cuts, our efforts are needed more than ever before," said Co-chairs Nancy Kaplan Belsky and Hope F. Albert in their welcoming message. CHAI shares H.A.L.O.'s commitment to creating programs that recognize all people need to be connected to a caring community, they said.

Sy Friedland, Executive Director of JF&CS, also applauded H.A.L.O.'s dedication to children and their families. "The dictionary has a number of definitions of the word halo," he said. "I thought this one was



**CHAI co-chairs Hope F. Albert and Nancy Kaplan Belsky with H.A.L.O. founders Alan and Gayle Pinshaw.**

particularly apt: *the aura of glory, veneration or sentiment surrounding an idealized person or thing* . . . If not idealized (Gayle and Alan) are certainly ideal in their interest in children with special needs and their families."

Friedland was involved from the beginning in the development of *Family Circle*, a H.A.L.O. and JF&CS partnership to help families who have a child with significant disabilities.

"I want to thank Alan and Gayle for making us a part of this effort to reach out to these parents. . . We appreciate your raising our awareness of the need, helping us understand how to respond, and providing the support that made it possible to establish a valuable program," he said.



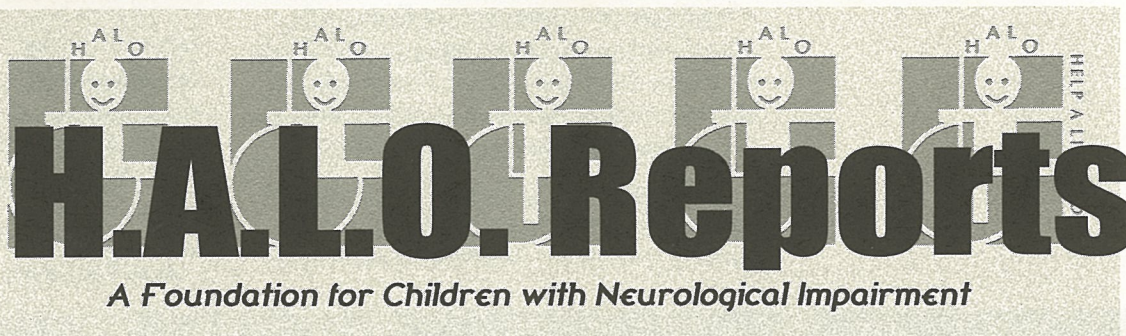
**JF&CS Executive Director Sy Friedland, left, with H.A.L.O. founder Alan Pinshaw, M.D.**

## Inside this issue:

- Founders Message P2
- H.A.L.O. helps Doug Brackett prepare for ravages of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy P2
- Take a sensory break in NEPC's Snoozelin® room P3
- Family Circle may expand P3
- UMass-Amherst students have befriended children at Northampton Nursing Home for 33 years P4



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## Founder's Message

**O**rganizations succeed not because of one or two individuals, but because a multitude of people do many different things with a common purpose.

It is now a little more than ten years since the inception of the Help A Little One Foundation. Many people have donated their expertise to this endeavor so that we can raise funds, invest them wisely, communicate our mission and deliver something of value to children with neurological impairment and to their families.

When Sarah became ill in September 1991, our family went into a tailspin. Eighteen months later, moved by our experience and observations, we conceived the H.A.L.O. Foundation. The fulfillment of H.A.L.O.'s mission helps us to heal ourselves and others.

Our initial objective was to provide material things to enhance the physical and emotional well being of the more than 250 children in Massachusetts' four pediatric nursing homes. Most people are unaware of these places or these children with devastating impairments. By 1998 it became clear that we had achieved our objective. H.A.L.O. had provided many pediatric residents with suitable video and audio equipment, stuffed animals, pony rides, therapeutic dog visitations and gifts on a regular basis.

We sought advice and insight from the H.A.L.O. family of board members, advisors, professionals and friends. Eventually the road led to the *Family Circle* partnership with Jewish Family & Children's Service. Through affiliations like ours, JF&CS serves 25,000 people of all ages and faiths in 50 programs in more than 80 Greater Boston communities.

Gayle and I are both proud and humble that H.A.L.O. was selected for CHAI's annual recognition. We remain dedicated to enhancing life for children with neurological impairment, and their families. As always, we thank you for your kindness and support.

Sincerely,

*Alan Pinshaw*

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***"The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity."***

Principle 2, Declaration of the  
Rights of the Child  
U.N. General Assembly  
resolution 1386 (XIV)  
20 November 1959

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## H.A.L.O. supplies technology for disabling future

**W**hen Debra Brackett's son was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Patty Reardon of *Family Circle* provided emotional support and information about the progressive, debilitating disease.

Recently, Patty facilitated H.A.L.O.'s gift of an Apple computer to assist Doug with school work at home. Debra is helping Doug to acquire computer skills so that he will be able to communicate later when MD worsens his voluntary muscle control.

Debra wrote: "The H.A.L.O. name that you have given your foundation goes far beyond the meaning of the words. You have Helped A Little

One in such a BIG way. Doug now has the ability to capture the world in another way we have all learned. You have given him the chance to explore his abilities instead of seeing his disabilities. Someday in the future, if you ever receive a letter that says "Thank You, From Dougie" printed from his computer, you will then believe how much you have Helped A Little One. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts."



**Doug, Mom & computer**



## Multi-sensory room soothes soul at NEPC

**E**ver had one of those days where you want to close the door, crawl into bed and escape the chaos of the world?

The staff at New England Pediatric Care saw a need to create a quiet haven at their Billerica, MA children's nursing home, where both residents and staff sometimes need to get away from the daily commotion.

Based on the Snoozelin® concept, the staff assembled a quiet room designed to soothe the psyche with

sounds, sights, smells and tactile experiences.



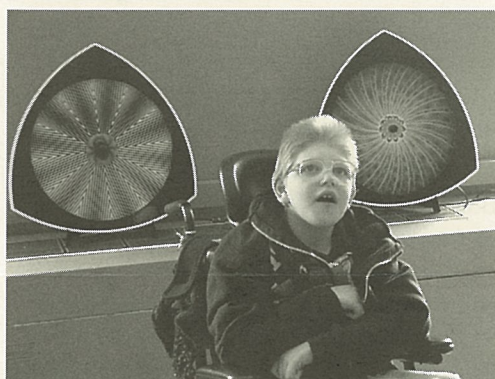
**NEPC's simulated waterfall of lights**

Near the end of a classroom corridor, the room sports bean bag chairs to ease wheelchair stiffness. Children can hold fiber optic "strings" of light that pulsate to soft surround-sound music. In the corner, a colored-light waterfall gently induces relaxation. Lazy planets rotate on a mobile above the waterbed, where children (and sometimes a lucky staff member) are cradled by miniature swells of warmed

water. Attendants can experiment with a variety of aromas and sounds — including ocean, heartbeats and nature calls — to provide an experience that comforts and calms the child.

Recreation Director Laura Pica reports that the \$4,500 installation, funded by grants from several sources, enables the staff to schedule regular respite, but also provides a quick change of scenery when a child is temporarily overwhelmed by something in the environment.

"Everyone has responded beautifully to this multi-sensory experience," Laura said.



**Drew relaxes in the Snoozelin® room .**

*Beautiful dreamer,  
wake unto me,  
Starlight and dewdrops  
are waiting for thee;  
Sounds of the rude  
world heard in the day,  
Lull'd by the moonlight  
have all pass'd away.*

Stephen Collins Foster, songwriter.  
Music composed by George Gershwin

## Family Circle exploring expansion in MA

**F**amily Circle is expanding.

Patty Reardon, director of H.A.L.O.'s three-year-old Family Circle partnership with Jewish Family & Children's Service, is assessing the viability of establishing a Family Circle office in Boston's North Shore region.

Family Circle provides educational and social programs for caretakers, contact information and other useful tips for managing the bureaucracy governing disabled children.

More than 140 families in Boston's South Shore region are served by Family

Circle's Norwood, MA office.

"I have contacted all hospitals, social service agencies, school collaboratives and early intervention centers on the North Shore to make our services known," Ms. Reardon said. "The usual state departments for public health, mental retardation and social services, as well as associations for children have also been notified to refer families."

A minimum of 40 participating families is needed to staff a cost-efficient office.

*If you know a family in need of Family Circle, please call (781) 551-0405.*





**A  
Foundation  
for Children  
with  
Neurological  
Impairment**

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*When you help even a little, you Help A Little One.  
When you Help A Little One, you help us all.*

## UMass' Boltwood: 33 years of friendship

UMass faculty advisor Merle Willmann says the Boltwood Project for community service learning began in a coffee shop.

"The world, the nation and the University of Massachusetts were going through dramatic changes in 1969. It was a time of social turmoil, wars — both cold and hot, that people could not understand," he said.

A group of student regulars at the Boltwood Walk Coffee Shop in the center of Amherst accepted a faculty member's challenge to dedicate 2.5 hours a week as a companion to a resident at Belchertown State School (for the mentally retarded). Thirty-three years later, several thousand UMass students have befriended young people with disabilities at more than 50 locations in Western Massachusetts.

Three groups of UMass students, with wide-ranging career goals, buddy up weekly with pediatric residents at "NoHo"—Northampton (MA) Nursing Home — for a semester-long relationship.

"Boltwood is amazing. I got hooked," says Jacki Davis, who began volunteering as a freshman, and graduated as student coordinator.

"You are with one resident for the whole time. It opened my eyes to the subtle things — non-verbal communication, for instance. I've learned a lot both personally and professionally."

Jacki accepted a position as an RN at Massachusetts General Hospital after graduation in May. Not all Boltwood students plan to work in related fields.



**UMass students presented a quilt to their "NoHo" buddies at the end of the semester.**

Some sign up for what they hope is an easy one or two credits, or a break from testing. Merle Willmann shared these comments:

*"My life will never be the same . . . Through the past twelve weeks, I have grown more than I have in the past four semesters at the University."*

Sophomore, Engineering.

*"I learned a lot about myself over the course of the semester, and most of it has to do with Boltwood. . . I have really changed as a person . . . I became more patient with people and overall just became a better person. I plan on teaching and this was a very good experience. I believe that the point of school is to educate the whole person, and this is a very good way of doing that. . . I'm upset that I waited until second semester of senior year to do Boltwood."* Senior, History/Education.

*"Boltwood has made me feel like I'm actually doing something to help society — and that feels really good!"*

Junior, Accounting

Northampton Nursing Home is a past recipient of H.A.L.O. grants. Contact the Boltwood Project at (413) 545-6609 for more information.

**Coming soon!**  
**www.halo.org**