

Timmy D. Displays His Groove

"So how did you wind up in Framingham?"

Tim Driscoll and me were sitting in my office a day after the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter event.

"It was in '04. I was in Sage House, you know, when the program was over there," pointing out the window, "on Clinton Street. I came first, then my wife joined us, our boy was eight." "I think we were the first two parent family to enter the program. I think we were the first in the State." "At first I thought nine months (the program) I'm never going to make it. But I did."

"Your family's success opened the doors for a lot of two parent families trying to stay sober and reunite with the families."

Tim told me that he had grown up in a single parent family in one of Boston's not to genteel neighborhoods. After a successful start in adulthood; good job, family, owning a home; his disease wreaked havoc in his life. He'd lost everything including his beloved son to DCF.

"Thirteen years now?," referring to his sobriety.

"No, twelve."

"Great man. How'd you wind up working for us?"

"I kept in touch with the social worker there, Barbara, and would see SMOC folks at meetings. I was doing OK, had a good job, but wanted to do something different. SMOC felt like family. I started asking about jobs there. One day Louis (Louis Miller, Turning Point Shelter Director) says, 'Hey I think I got a full time job you'd be great at.' So I became the bus driver for Turning Point."

"Yeah, I'd see you outside, the van parked, you in the driver's seat, waiting for the group, always a smile on your face."

"Yeah, I really liked it, I was glad I made the decision to work for SMOC." Then Beth (Beth Connolly, Common Ground Resource Center Director) said she had the perfect job for me. So I became a CSPECH case manager."

"Yeah man, look at you now." Tim had recently been promoted to Director of our YARCM (Young Adults in Recovery Case Management) program, replacing Johnny P, the original program director.

"Big shoes to fill. How's it going?"

"Good. I like it. I'm learning."

We talked about the vibrant and at times wild energy of 18-24 year olds trying to stay sober.

"I think you're doing great. We're lucky to have you step in. It's an important program, trying to help kids get to a different place in their lives."

Tim smiled and said "Yeah."

On Wednesday morning, December 14th at the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance held at the Boston College Club in downtown Boston, Timothy Driscoll, age 53, with no a speck of gray showing on his buzzcut brown hair and a green shamrock on his right forearm, received the Ed O'Neil award for his work as a CSPECH case manager.

The award presented to Tim by the former New England Patriots star player Jarod Mayo, Joe Finn, MHSA President, and the family of the late Mr. O'Neil was richly deserved.

NOTES:

1. Attached is the write-up of Tim's work completed by Tim's former CSPECH Supervisor, Sarah Goncalves, submitted to the MHSA awards committee.
2. A picture of Tim receiving the award can be found on our website.

“William Shakespeare once wrote, "How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world." There can be little doubt that today's world is weary and that the world of human services can be a tiring and challenging environment. The South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) has many "candles" in our agency who all work diligently each day to help others. However, Timothy Driscoll, affectionately known as Timmy D, seems to glow a little brighter among us all. Tim consistently goes above and beyond not only for his clients, but also for his colleagues. He continuously supersedes expectations, not because he has to, but because he wants to. Tim is well known in the agency for his excellent case management skills, and clients often request to work with him. He gives his utmost attention to the needs of these clients. He will arrive early or stay late to make sure the clients can make appointments or stop by late at night to check on properties and make sure that everyone is safe. If a colleague asks him for a favor, as I have many times, he never turns them down. He brightens our office with his infectious laughter and ability to always find the positives in any situation. All of these things make Tim an incredible asset to our agency and a valued team member.

But the true reasons why Tim Driscoll is worthy of the Ed O'Neil Award are seen in more subtle ways. Those reasons are seen in the water Tim gives to a client he knows will be walking outside in the summer heat. They are seen when Tim drives into Boston to visit a client who has cancer and no family. They are seen in the crossword puzzle books he gives to that same client to lift his spirits. And they are seen when Tim is in conversation at his desk with young men who aren't even on his caseload, but who admire him and seek him out for guidance as they try to put their lives on the right track. There is one such young man who Tim has become somewhat of a mentor to. He is a role model for this young man, and drives him to job interviews, encourages him to maintain his sobriety and lovingly chastises him when he makes poor choices. None of these actions might seem like grand gestures in the scheme of ending homelessness, but to our clients these things have meaning. They send the message that they are worthy of care and happiness, that they are valued. Tim uses his light to light the way for others, to empower them, and to encourage them to change their lives for the better. The path to end homelessness is long and complicated. It cannot be done by one person or through single deeds, but Tim Driscoll is certainly doing more than his part to light the way.

