

Presently, she has embarked on the study of American Sign Language and has great interest in medical science. It is noteworthy that Ms. Lyubovskaya was diagnosed with non-verbal learning disorder and Asperger's Syndrome only six years ago at the age of twenty-seven.

Community Service Award

Northeast Independent Living Program



The **Community Service Award** is given to the Northeast Independent Living Program for its unwavering support for Asperger Works and the disabled community.

NILP focuses on assisting people with disabilities to live in the community with whatever supports they need, as do the other Independent Living Centers in the United States. All of the centers are private not-for-profit organizations that are run by and for persons with disabilities. It is mandated that the staff and the nonprofit board have at least 51% persons who have disabilities.

NILP began its work in Lawrence thirty-six years ago with a staff of three by providing services that have allowed people with disabilities to live dignified, independent lives. Up until NILP appeared on the scene, those with

disabilities had few choices: life in residential schools, nursing homes, or state hospitals. NILP provides "Peer2Peer Resources for People with Disabilities."

But NILP not only helps people with disabilities. It has also took it upon itself to aide a new, basically unknown entity, Asperger Works, by providing us with the use of a conference room for meetings, donation of office space (including Wi-Fi and phone service), and emotional support. Everyone associated with NILP has shown our tiny staff of Board members, intern, and volunteers much respect and large doses of kindness that we hope to pay forward in the future.



Dinner of Hope, 2015

SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS



Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, this year's Keynote Speaker, was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 2007 in a special election, becoming the

first woman in twenty-five years to serve in Congress from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She represents the Massachusetts Third District, holding the same seat that was held three decades earlier by her late husband, former Congressman, Senator, and presidential candidate Paul Tsongas. The Third District spans across portions of Essex, Middlesex, and Worcester counties.

The Third District has a proud tradition of military service, and Congresswoman Tsongas honors that tradition, as well as the military family she grew up in, by serving as a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee. In this role, she has championed the fight to combat and prevent sexual assault in the military; authored numerous pieces of legislation that provide modern, cutting-edge resources to our service members; and worked to support veterans transitioning to civilian life. She has also led the push for modernized body armor and is working to support the unparalleled innovation taking place at Massachusetts military installations.

Congresswoman Tsongas also serves in a leadership role on the Natural

Resources Committee as the top Democrat on the Federal Lands Subcommittee. In addition, she has made supporting small businesses a priority and encouraging the growth of state-of-the-art manufacturing and technology companies that have become a trademark of the region.

The Congresswoman has made accessibility a hallmark of her Congressional office. With offices in Lowell, Lawrence, and Fitchburg, and office hours in Haverhill and Marlborough, she has worked to make it as easy as possible for residents to connect with her about any issue of concern to them or to get assistance with problems they may have when dealing with federal agencies.



Daniel M. Kimmel (Master of Ceremonies) is an American film critic and author. He earned his B.A and MA in Sociology. at the University of Chicago College, where he is

also a doctoral candidate, and has a law degree from Boston University.

From 1984 to 2009 he reviewed films for the *Telegram & Gazette* of Worcester, MA. He has also written about movies for the *Jewish Advocate*, the oldest continually-circulated English-language Jewish newspaper in the United States. He was the president of the Boston

Society of Film Critics and is still its member.

Mr. Kimmel is also the author of several books and has co-written a play about the Hollywood blacklist, *The Waldorf Conference*. His 2004 book about the Fox Network, entitled The Fourth Network: How FOX Broke the Rules and Reinvented Television, received the Cable Center Award for best book of the year. He was nominated for a Hugo Award, given annually for the best science fiction or fantasy works for his collection of essays entitled Jar Jar Binks Must Die. And his novel Shh! It's a Secret was on the shortlist for the Compton Crook Award given to a writer for the best first novel by the Baltimore Science Fiction Society.

He is a visiting assistant professor of Sociology at Yeshiva University, NY and has received numerous honors, fellowships, and awards.



Daniel Rivera (Mayor of Lawrence, MA) is the 45-year-old son of a single mother who emigrated from the Dominican Republic to find a better life for her family. He is married and has a

young son. Mr. Rivera graduated from Lawrence High School, where he served as a co-chair of the LHS Model UN and as the Senior Class Secretary.

He earned his Master's degree from Suffolk University in Business Administration going to school at nights and weekends.

He worked as Project Manager at the public housing project where he grew up and was the Economic Development Director for Congressman Marty Meehan. Prior to becoming mayor in 2013, Mr. Rivera was an At-Large City Councilor. Throughout his political life, but especially since he became mayor, Mr. Rivera's goal has been to put Lawrence on the map as the vibrant, energetic immigrant city it is.



James J. Fiorentini (Mayor of Haverhill, MA) is a native of Haverhill. Mr. Fiorentini graduated from Haverhill High School and attended Tufts University with a degree in Political Science, was a Vista

volunteer, and received his law degree from Northeastern University School of Law. He was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar in 1974 followed by admission to the New Hampshire Bar. He is married to Martha Fiorentini and they have three children, James, Regina, and Chrissy.

Jim served as an Assistant District Attorney and prosecutor in the Haverhill District Court and as a Special Assistant Attorney General to Attorneys General

Francis X. Bellotti and Robert Quinn. Mr. Fiorentini served on Haverhill's City Council from 1995 to 2003. In 2003 he ran for mayor and won. Since then he has been reelected six times. Although he will soon be celebrating his seventieth birthday, he does not appear to be slowing down and is working as vigorously as ever to better the city he loves so much.



Richard Rodriguez is a member of the Asperger Works Advisory Board and is a disability lawyer. He is a product of Special Education and an advocate for people suffering from disabilities and has

been a long-time advocate for people with disabilities.

He himself is disabled due to a slight hearing problem, speech impairment, and other disabilities. But he has refused to give in to self-pity and has, in fact, succeeded despite his hearing difficulties.

Richard succeeded despite his disabilities and overcame poverty having grown up in a New York housing project in a drug and crime infested neighborhood. Despite his disabilities, he served nine years in the Army National Guard where he was appointed to Officers' Candidate School.

In 2014 he was appointed by Mayor Dan Rivera and confirmed to the Lawrence Commission of Disability by Mayor Dan Rivera. His appointment was confirmed by the Lawrence City Council. His peers elected him as Chairman of the Commission, whose responsibility it is to ensure that the city is in compliance with the American Disabilities Act.

The mission of Asperger Works is

- to **educate employers** about the contributions adults with Asperger's Syndrome (AS) can make to their companies through employment; and
- to **help put adults with AS to work** by providing employment-related services and training in a caring and open environment.

In other words, our goal is to help adults with AS become self-supporting, valuable members of society through appropriate employment.

DIRECTORS AND ADVISORS

Daniel R. Rajczyk

Founder/President



Diagnosed with Learning Disability when he was a child, Daniel did not learn that he had Asperger's Syndrome, a neurodevelopmental disorder associated with

Autism, until the early 2000s.

Daniel earned his B.A. in Sociology and Media Studies at The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA and his M.A. in Information Technology at Endicott College, Beverly, MA. It was while studying at Endicott that Daniel first began formulating ideas about a nonprofit organization that was to become Asperger Works. His difficulties in finding and maintaining appropriate employment drove him to make his dream a reality.

Adam Rajczyk

Board of Directors Treasurer



Adam Rajczyk is a founding member of Asperger Works and is its treasurer. Mr. Rajczyk is a government disability professional who has been working as

a part-time consultant since his retirement in 2002.

He received his education in Poland (a country he left in 1968) and in the United States. Adam has made himself completely accessible to Asperger Works. He has been extremely

supportive of Daniel as he grew from a child to adulthood and is proud of all his achievements

M. Eva Rajczyk

Board of Directors Secretary



Eva is another family member involved with Asperger Works. She arrived in the United States with her family as a child in 1959 after a harrowing escape from her native Hungary and

two years in Montreal.

She received her B.A. in Social Studies and History from Salem State College and her M.S. Ed in Instructional Technology from Lesley University. She spent 25 years teaching high school students and still considers herself to be a teacher even after 11 years in retirement.

Eva is an active member of a number of civic organizations in Haverhill, MA. But her greatest effort goes to advocating for Asperger Works to ensure that the organization will be around as long as adults on the high end of the Autism Spectrum are in need of its services.

