

ALEX BEAM

## Mr. Fussy's super green eco-yuletide

**M**r. Fussy is planning an exquisitely sustainable Christmas. It starts with the small things. Showering once a week in your clothes. Working in virtual darkness with energy-efficient light bulbs. If not for the mutability of current events, Mr. Fussy would read the same newspaper again and again, just to save trees.

Yes, the tree. Mr. Fussy has been doing his homework. It's so important to set the right tone! He thought of emulating his mother, who always drags out her 2-foot tall, plastic and foil "tree" around this time of year. But then Mr. F. saw this quote in Newsweek: "Always go real. A fake tree is petroleum based. It's not biodegradable." But it *is* re-useable... Well, never mind.

So Mr. F. has Newsweek's permission to drive down to the Catholic church — the one where they turfed out the liberal priest — to buy a lovely blue spruce, while supporting the hard-working husbandmen of Nova Scotia, right? Wrong! Full ecological purity dictates that Mr. Fussy rent a tree, preferably a "nontraditional" tree like a Southern Magnolia, from the Friends of the Urban Forest, who'll then replant it on a city street.

What a production. Mr. Fussy will probably end up at Our Lady's after all; a boy he used to coach in soccer sometimes helps carry the tree to the car. Somehow he doesn't see the Friends of the Urban Forest fumbling with bungee cords on top of his station wagon.

One of Mr. Fussy's sons likes to string Christmas decorations on the front of the house. The tree-huggers suggest LED lights, which consume 80 percent less electricity. But will they be bright enough to offend Mr. F's non-Christian neighbors? If not, what's the point?

Of course, Mr. Fussy wants to be creative. How about recycling the advent calendar? But does that mean he can't eat the little chocolate behind the manger on Dec. 24? Not worth it. The eco-people suggest sending friends online slide shows instead of Christmas cards. Marvelous! Mr. Fussy has never opened an e-mail inviting him to "check out our vacation pictures," and he never will.

Eliminating Christmas cards would likewise deep-six the carefully worded, annual family letter, in which Mrs. Fussy tells friends that her husband has had the same job for 20 years, but no one knows what it is.

Last year, John Kerry and his wife, Teresa, sent Mr. F. a Christmas card that could theoretically be returned to Georgia and recycled into carpet squares. Mr. Fussy has tried to find out how many people actually sent their cards to Georgia, and no one returned his calls. But, of course, who would want to recycle a precious machine-signed card from the distinguished authors of "This Moment on Earth: Today's New Environmentalists and Their Vision for the Future?"

Mr. F. wonders if the Kerrys will recycle the remaindered copies, and transform them into "Edwards for President" lawn signs. Probably not.

Gifts; of course, Mr. F. will be going green. He was just about to order a batch of worms for the composter on his list when he spotted a heretical dispatch in his favorite trade journal, Materials Recycling Week. Worms turn out to be huge emitters of nitrous oxide, appropriately known as Nox. Mr. Fussy hasn't been this disappointed since he saw those photos of Al Gore gallivanting next to his private, climate-destroying jet.

Dash the worms; there are hundreds of other, eco-worthy gifts out there. Candies made from soy-based wax — mmmm! Cruelty-free organic vegan lip gloss. iWood sunglasses ("These sunglasses scream sustainable style") for only \$350. A backpack made from recycled soda bottles for young Master Fussy, with 52 solar cells sewn in, to keep his cellphone charged. For only \$225! Money grows on trees, right?

Mr. Fussy's ultimate gift to the environment is his longstanding policy of aggressive re-gifting. I wonder who will be getting the Dead Sea mineral bath salts this year? Or the chocolate soap?

Mr. Fussy remembers reading in an eco-oriented guide book that if people really cared about preserving the Galapagos Islands, they wouldn't travel there at all. In that vein, the most sustainable, eco-friendly Christmas would be... no Christmas at all. Mr. Fussy can dream, can't he?

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MARK WILSON/GLOBE STAFF (ABOVE); PHOTOS BY DAN HABIB (BELOW)

Dan Habib (above) with his son Samuel, who has cerebral palsy. In scenes from the film Habib made, "Including Samuel" (below), Samuel is shown (from top) at physical therapy, in the hospital with his brother, Isaiah, and at school.

# Focus on the family



A photojournalist and father documents life with a child who has cerebral palsy in the film 'Including Samuel'

By Linda Matchan  
GLOBE STAFF

CONCORD, N.H. — In 1989, when Dan Habib was a new staff photographer with the Concord Monitor, he shot a story about a 6-year-old boy with cerebral palsy who was a student at Beaver Meadow Elementary School in Concord. The school was at the forefront of the mainstreaming movement to integrate kids with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Habib remembers how much he loved seeing, and documenting, the interaction between the children with and without disabilities. "It just seemed like the right thing to do for kids with disabilities," he recalls. "I think it made truly moving photos."

What he never anticipated was that the story of mainstreaming — now more commonly called "inclusion" — would become his own family's story, and that he'd return to Beaver Meadow years later as a father and photojournalist. This time the little boy with cerebral palsy in the classroom would be his own.

"Including Samuel" is Habib's 55-minute documentary about his second son, Samuel, who will turn 8 this week. It's the story of his family's efforts to include him in his school, family, and community, and that of other families with a range of experiences with inclusion, both positive and negative. It will premiere in Boston tomorrow at a sold-out screening hosted by the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts.

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## Veteran acts, upstarts celebrate BMA's 20th in subdued style

By Sarah Rodman  
GLOBE STAFF

The biggest surprise at the Boston Music Awards Saturday night at the Orpheum Theatre wasn't who won — deserving metalheads Killswitch Engage topped Act of the Year — or the returns of Bobby Brown and Extreme — both were warmly received. It was the fact that most of the crowd seemed to be paying attention.

Following last year's underwhelming Avalon edition of the festivities — where revelers paused only briefly between drink orders and animated conversation to recog-

nize the show taking place onstage — it was a wise decision by the organizers to move the ceremony back to the Orpheum Theatre for its 20th anniversary.

Folks who felt like schmoozing and boozing could do so in the lobby without interfering with those who wanted to enjoy the always shambling but oft-entertaining celebration of local and semi-local musicianship.

Saturday night's 2½-hour affair had all the classic hallmarks, both positive and less so, of BMAs past as veteran acts rubbed elbows with upstarts, former bright lights

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ZARA TZANEV FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Bobby Brown, performing at Saturday's Boston Music Awards at the Orpheum, was also inducted into the BMA's Hall of Fame.



# Making a film helps Habib bring his family's life into focus

► **"INCLUDING SAMUEL"**  
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setts-Boston.

But it's also, says Habib, "the story of my own transition as a person."

When Samuel was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, which disrupts the brain's ability to coordinate body and muscle movement, Habib and his wife, Betsy McNamara, reacted with a flurry of different feelings — love, fear, grief, worry, and ultimately hope and acceptance. How would they educate him? Who would be his friends? Because his cerebral palsy was caused by an unknown underlying health condition that also makes his health more fragile, he has been hospitalized several times.

Three and a half years ago, during one hospital stay for severe pneumonia, a neurologist suggested to Habib that he should document the family's experiences. "He thought it would be helpful to others," Habib says. "It's very hard to understand what it's like to have a child with a disability unless you have a child with a disability."

Habib, who has received numerous regional and national awards, has a particular interest in issues related to children and education. In the mid-1990s he documented the lives of eight young people, through photographs and interviews, in a project about teen sexuality, which was shown at free public screenings throughout New Hampshire.

The doctor's suggestion immediately appealed to him, not as a journalist but as a father. He thought it would help take his mind off his son's health issues. "Also, I thought maybe it will help me process this whole reality that our son will have a lifelong disability," he says.

The idea did *not* immediately appeal to his wife, Betsy McNamara.

"My first thought was: 'What?'" said McNamara, a fund-raising consultant. "He's always got a camera around, but this was more personal than I wanted it to be."

Eventually she came around — though, she says, "I'm still a little



PHOTOS BY MARK WILSON/GLOBE STAFF

**At left: Dan Habib (left), Betsy McNamara, and their two sons, Isaiah (second from left) and Samuel. The family's life with Samuel, who has cerebral palsy, is documented in Habib's film, "Including Samuel." At right: Samuel rides his bike, with encouragement from his father.**

weirded out by such an intimate portrait of our family." Over the course of three years he took more than 12,000 photographs and 60 hours of video, no small feat since this was his first experience shooting video, other than typical home videos. He borrowed a friend's mini video camera and used a simple on-camera microphone. "I did it on a wing and a prayer," he says. "I've applied everything I've learned as a journalist to do this."

He's learned, for example, never to oversimplify a story. He acknowledges in the film, which he narrates, that the process of making "Including Samuel" forced him to confront some of his own early prejudices about people with disabilities.

"When I saw people who didn't look like me, or talk like me, you know what crept into my head?"

he says in the film. "I don't like to admit it, but I often saw them as less smart, less capable, and not worth getting to know." He adds: "I hate to think that's how people see Samuel."

As his wife had anticipated, the film turned out deeply personal. It deals not only with inclusion in school and the community but with the challenges of successfully including a child with severe disabilities in family life.

Though Habib appears on screen less than other members of the family, he conveys how taxing it can be to raise a child with a disability. Samuel uses a wheelchair, an eating chair, and walkers at home and at school. The family spends hours each week preparing medicine, doing paperwork, and taking him to appointments. But Habib reveals his frustration with

people who, he believes, see his bright-eyed son as merely a one-dimensional disabled person. "When Samuel was drooling, or struggling to say a word, I wanted to say, 'That's not who he is. He's really intelligent and funny and caring.'"

"There were periods when Samuel's health was so shaky and bad that we couldn't go anywhere as a family," Betsy says in the film. "We missed a lot of family gatherings. We missed a lot of holiday celebrations. We just found ourselves feeling isolated."

Samuel's 11-year-old brother, Isaiah, also talks candidly, and poignantly, about life with his brother. "I know that he needs a lot of attention, and I try to face that. Like when he's sick, he gets . . . a really lot of attention. And . . . it just feels like you guys don't care

about me. Like, 'Hey, I'm over here also. I'm right here!'"

Yet the documentary reflects the joy of family life with Samuel, who, with assistance from his father, is involved in such activities as T-ball and basketball, and who roughhouses with his brother just like any other sibling. It takes us into Samuel's classroom at Beaver Meadow Elementary School, where, with the help of a supportive teacher and aides, inclusion keeps Samuel involved, learning, and upbeat. The other children see him as just another second grader who likes spaceships and hot dogs and the color yellow, and wait patiently for him as he answers questions.

"The film taught me a lot," Habib says. "It taught me what it takes to make inclusion work, such as a lot of support in the

classroom. On a professional level, it taught me how to make a film."

"And on a personal level," he says, "Samuel has taught me patience, and how to listen to people, and how not to judge them so quickly. And that extends to anyone from new immigrants to people who are aging and are moving and talking more slowly."

He acknowledges he learned some of these lessons just by being Samuel's father. But he learned much of it from recording Samuel's life. "I think the film helped me pay closer attention to what I was experiencing," Habib says. "It helped me document and collect my feelings in a more cohesive way."

*For information about future screenings of "Including Samuel," visit [includingsamuel.com](http://includingsamuel.com).*