

AccessLetter

*Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities*

City of Cambridge Announces Enhanced Accessibility Program for Businesses

To encourage accessibility, the City of Cambridge is announcing an increase in the reimbursement for approved façade improvement projects to 90% of the cost of removing architectural barriers to access. A commercial district is only as successful as the ability for businesses to get customers in the door.



While improvements to the city’s sidewalks and streets help create a pedestrian-friendly environment, it is up to individual businesses and building owners to remove architectural barriers, creating a vibrant and inviting commercial district for all.

More than enhancing the visual appearance of the city’s commercial districts, this program assists individual businesses and building owners make improvements that both maintain the commercial building stock and increase accessibility for all residents, commuters, and consumers.

These improvements follow accessibility design standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). The City knows that businesses that remove architectural barriers by creating accessible entrances, paths of travel and parking open

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Parents with Disabilities and Their Children Face Discrimination

(Part two of a two-part series)



In part one of this series, this author wrote about a comprehensive report published by the National Council on Disability (NCD) documenting pervasive discrimination against parents with disabilities and their children in family court cases across the country. In this issue, we will look more closely at other parts of the report, including barriers these parents face in the legal system and additional NCD recommendations for policy change.

Few would argue that custody case decisions should be based on the best interest of the child. However, the processes of determining both what is in the child’s best interest and the fitness of a person with a disability to parent are largely driven by personal biases of child welfare social workers.

Rather than properly assess a parent’s ability to parent, it is far too often assumed that parents with certain types of disabilities couldn’t possibly care for children. Take, for example, the case of Jeanne, a mother with intellectual disabilities.

As reported by NCD, Jeanne had been successfully raising daughter Leya in a supported living facility for five years, yet based solely on Jeanne’s

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SAVE THE DATE!

**Disability Reframed hosts a
REELABILITIES BOSTON
FILM FESTIVAL EVENT:**

Getting Up

Tuesday, February 4, 2014
Reception: 5:30 PM
Screening: 6:30 PM

**Cambridge Main Library
449 Broadway**
See page 7 for more info

Public Works: Construction Corner

With winter fast approaching, the Cambridge Department of Public Works begins a shift of focus from construction to winter storm preparation. Come late November residents will notice less construction activity in the public right-of-way as the DPW limits private contractors to

emergency work only during the winter months. In efforts to advance the progress on some of the City's utility infrastructure projects, a few key projects will continue with construction throughout the winter. Please see below a summary of these key projects. For additional information on these projects please visit the Construction Tab of the DPW website at <www.cambridgema.gov/theworks>.

To help facilitate construction activities associated with these projects, traffic and pedestrian detours may be required. The City requires that contractors maintain accessibility for all users at their construction sites. To report a concern about access or with general questions, please contact DPW at 617-349-4800.

Western Avenue Reconstruction Project

The City is a year into the Western Avenue Reconstruction project which will continue through the summer of 2015. Significant progress has been made on the subsurface utility work, which will be on-going throughout the winter. Completion of some sections of the subsurface work has allowed the contractor to complete portions of the final street and sidewalk restoration work, giving the residents a glimpse of the what the entire Avenue will look like at the completion of Construction. Next spring, as additional areas of the subsurface work are completed, surface restoration work will continue as the Contractor works to implement all of the proposed improvements. Western Avenue users can look forward to new sidewalks with improved access for all pedestrians, including those with disabilities, improved and new crosswalks, additional tree plantings, the addition of a cycle track and installations of public art.



New Western Avenue sidewalks

Alewife Sewer Separation Projects

The neighborhoods east of Fresh Pond along Huron Ave and Concord Ave are part of the large Alewife Sewer Separation Project that will separate combined stormwater and wastewater infrastructure in the streets resulting improved water quality in our local rivers. Two of the three phases of this project are currently under way, Huron A and Huron B, and will continue with subsurface utility work throughout the winter months. The third phase of the project, Concord Ave Neighborhoods, is currently out to bid and is anticipated to start construction early in 2014.

The subsurface work in Huron A, the first phase of the project, is anticipated to near completion in the early months of 2014. Come spring the surface restoration work on the streets and sidewalks in this area will begin establishing the long planned streetscape improvements. Similar to improvements along Western Avenue, new accessible sidewalks with features to improve the pedestrian experience, street tree plantings and newly paved streets will be welcomed in the neighborhood that has seen many months of construction related disruptions.

Longfellow Bridge Rehabilitation Project

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation, MassDOT, will continue work on the Longfellow Bridge Rehabilitation Project throughout the winter. Interested residents are encouraged to contact MassDOT for updates on the project or to report any issues or concerns to: (617) 519-9892 or <longfellowbridge@state.ma.gov>. Website: <www.massdot.state.ma.us/charlesriverbridges/LongfellowBridge.aspx>.

General Winter Updates

With winter just around the corner, here are a few important reminders regarding snow emergency parking bans and the responsibilities of property owners following a snowstorm. During substantial winter storms, the City may declare a Snow Emergency and a Parking Ban will go into effect at a specific time. When a snow emergency is declared, information is available via phone at 617-349-4700, and is posted online as soon as possible at <www.cambridgema.gov> and on 22-CityView. Visit the Cambridge Alert Network at <www.cambridgema.gov/AlertNetwork> to sign up to receive snow emergency alerts via phone call, text message or Email. For school closings, call

617-349-6513. DPW will clear streets as soon as possible after a snow storm, starting with major arteries. City Ordinance requires property owners to remove snow from sidewalks next to their property or business within 12 hours of daytime snowfall and before 1 p.m. when it has fallen overnight. Property owners must also remove or melt all ice within 6 hours of the time it forms.

To report an unshoveled or icy sidewalk, please visit <www.cambridgema.gov/snow>, or call 617-349-4903, or download the Cambridge iReport app on your mobile device. All reports will be inspected by Traffic or DPW staff, and a ticket will be issued if the property is found to be in violation of the city's Snow Ordinance.

--Kara Falise

Business Access (cont. from page 1)

themselves up to a new group of patrons, such as people with disabilities, who have discretionary spending power of \$175 million (according the U.S. Department of Labor).

The City of Cambridge also recognizes that architectural barrier removal can sometimes be the most cost prohibitive part of any façade project. The city will therefore provide a 90% reimbursement, up to an additional \$20,000, for expenses directly related to improving accessibility on approved projects.

The City of Cambridge has always recognized the important bond between the public space and the commercial experience. In 1995 the City's Community Development Department launched the Façade Improvement Program, providing matching grants for the funding of well-designed improvements that coordinate important storefront features into a more attractive face. This includes the restoration of architectural details, installation of energy efficient storefront systems, accessible entrances, well-proportioned signage, energy efficient lighting, and attractive awnings. Since the program was expanded in 2002 and offered to building and business owners citywide, 178 business and building owners have received design services and 138 façade, signage and/or lighting improvement projects were financed throughout the city.

If you would like more information about the Cambridge Façade Improvement Program and the

extensive accessibility resources, please visit the website at <www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/econdev/smallbusiness/facadesignagelighting.aspx> or contact the program coordinator, Chris Basler, at the CDD Economic Development Division at 617-349-4601 or e-mail him at <cbasler@cambridgema.gov>.

Parents with Disabilities (cont. from page 1)

IQ, social workers became concerned when Leya started kindergarten that Jeanne would not be able to help her with homework once she reached middle school.

Social workers concluded that an intellectually disabled parent would be unable to ensure a child's well-being, and required visitation with Leya's estranged, but non-disabled father, with the ultimate goal – unbeknownst to Jeanne – of transitioning full custody to him, yet at no point were Jeanne's parenting skills assessed or deemed inadequate.

Despite Jeanne's request that the visits cease after Leya expressed fear in going there and returned home upset each time and showed significant developmental regression, such as bed wetting, the social workers dismissed her concerns and the visits continued.

It wasn't until Jeanne saw signs of sexual abuse while bathing Leya after a visit with her father and called the police that the visits stopped. The police launched an investigation and Leya's father was ultimately convicted of child sexual abuse and sent to prison.

Even after all this, the child welfare social workers were sure that Jeanne was unfit to parent Leya simply because she carries a diagnosis of an intellectual disability, without any behaviors on Jeanne's part to indicate abuse or neglect. These social workers were too clouded by their own biases and presumptions to ever stop and actually consider what was in Leya's best interests.

Instead, they made a blanket determination that individuals with intellectual disabilities are inherently unable to parent. In addition to these biases, there were no attempts to assess Jeanne's parenting skills, only her IQ. Fortunately, she was able to get legal help

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Parents with Disabilities (cont. from page 3)

in closing child welfare's unfounded investigation, but she now lives in constant fear of having her daughter ripped from her loving home.

However, Jeanne is one of a fortunate few parents with disabilities who were able to access legal assistance when she needed it. The NCD report discusses numerous barriers to the legal system for these parents. Due to the nature of these cases, it is vital for parents with disabilities to have culturally competent legal assistance, yet is very difficult to find attorneys who have expertise in disability issues.

It is far too often the case that attorneys share many of the biases that the child welfare system has against parents with disabilities. For parents with physical disabilities, it can be difficult to find attorneys who have fully accessible offices, and many courts remain inaccessible, with architectural barriers prohibiting some parents from being present for their cases.

Furthermore, many parents are afraid to ask attorneys or the court for reasonable accommodations, such as sign language interpreters, out of fear that their need for such will be used against them in child custody or welfare cases. As a result, these parents are unable to have meaningful participation in their cases.

Additionally, when parenting skills are evaluated, the assessments of parents with disabilities tend to be inappropriate. NCD notes that biases are often present even in referrals to evaluators, with questions phrased in such a way as to assume negative outcomes directly related to a parent's disability.

Moreover, standard methods of assessing parenting skills are not adapted for individuals with disabilities and are typically conducted in the absence of adaptations and modifications the parent has at home. Incredibly, many evaluators submit findings without ever observing the parent and child interact. The report cites one example in which a mother with cerebral palsy and a speech disability was evaluated in a psychologist's office, absent her child, with her abusive partner translating her response to questions.



Aside from this obvious ethical violation, the report made no mention of using her partner as her translator.

NCD implores child welfare and family court systems to require evaluators to be in compliance with the 2012 American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines for Assessment of and Intervention with Persons with Disabilities. The APA developed these robust guidelines

in response to the devastating psychological effects that removal from their homes has on children. In the case of parents with disabilities, and particularly those with intellectual or psychiatric disabilities, children are unnecessarily ripped from loving and fully capable parents at rates far greater than any other population. NCD further recommends that attorneys, judges and professionals who conduct parenting evaluations receive regular mandatory

training on parents with disabilities and their children.

The NCD report states that the Department of Justice, which is charged with enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), "must issue guidance to family courts and attorneys, reinforcing their legal obligations pursuant to the ADA."

NCD stresses: "Such guidance must address (1) the applicability of the ADA to custody and visitation proceedings; (2) the courts' duty to provide reasonable accommodations to parents with disabilities; and (3) the fact that presumptions of parental incompetence based on disability violate the ADA." Included in the report is draft language for policy change, which some states have adopted since its publication. Without implementation and enforcement of such policy change, children will continue to experience unnecessary trauma simply because of their parents' disability status.

For more info, see "Rocking the Cradle: Ensuring the Rights of Parents with Disabilities and Their Children," at www.ncd.gov. For part one of this series, see the August-September, 2013 issue of *AccessLetter*, "Feds Find Discrimination against Parents with Disabilities and Their Children" on page 1 of that issue, online at www.cambridgema.gov/ccpd.

--Kate Thurman

Disability Mentoring Day



On October 30, the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) hosted its first ever Disability Mentoring Day. Ten jobseekers with disabilities were paired with City workers from various City government departments, and given job shadowing opportunities. An afternoon plenary session provided mentees with useful information on Cambridge employment leads and on how to conduct a successful job search.

Emergency Preparedness Workshop



On November 5, CCPD hosted an emergency preparedness workshop for people with disabilities and first responders. About 35 people attended this workshop, which provided practical advice on how to prepare for emergencies, and all received an emergency go-pack, full of essential supplies and equipment. In this photo, Jeff Dougan from the Massachusetts Office on Disability demonstrates the contents of the go-pack.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (See end of Calendar for all weekly/recurring events)

- Dec. 3 **Information Session on Building Pathways: A Building Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program** – Building Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Program is looking for qualified people who want to begin careers as electricians, plumbers, sprinkler fitters, laborers and more. Building Pathways provides seven weeks of career exploration and hands-on experience in the building trades followed by placement in a union apprenticeship. In order to apply, individuals must attend this information session, held at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave at 6pm. No RSVP required. For more information, including eligibility criteria, see the listing on the City's online calendar at <www.cambridgema.gov> or call Brett Thomason at 617.348.6750.
- Dec. 3 **The Road to Recovery: Personal Stories** – Offered by NAMI Cambridge Middlesex, this evening event will feature Mark Vonnegut, pediatrician and author of the memoir *Just like Someone Without Mental Illness Only More So*; Lisa Halpern, director of recovery services for Vinfen; and Lenny Mulcahy, fitness/nutrition coordinator at the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, each of whom will share their personal experiences with recovery from mental illness. This event is being held from 6:30-8:30pm in the Macht Auditorium of Cambridge Hospital, 1493 Cambridge Street. For more information, see <www.nami-cambridgемiddlesex.org>.
- Dec. 5 **Opening Reception: Handmade Holiday Market** – Shop this holiday season at the state's alternative craft and art market. Handmade Holiday features scarves, jewelry, felted ornaments, cards, painting, and other gifts by local crafters and artists who happen to have disabilities. The opening reception will be held from 4-7pm at the Open Door Gallery, 89 South Street in Boston, and the market will be open through January 10. For more information, including market hours, visit <www.opendoorgallery.org> or call 617.350.7713 (voice) or 617.350.6536 (TTY).
- Dec. 7 **Community Partners Day at the Museum of Science** -- Come experience MoS's newest exhibit, The Hall of Human Life, with more than 70 interactive components, this exhibition revolutionizes how you engage

with your biology and manage your health. This state-of-the-art exhibit allows visitors to become part of the story by contributing your own data and perspectives in an unending process of learning and discovery. Also, as a part of the Museum's Sounds of the Season musical series, there will be special performances in the Blue Wing of the exhibit halls by Braches Steel Drum Orchestra at 1:30 and 3:30. Registered guests will receive up to 4 free exhibit hall passes per reservation. Guests can view the exhibits until 5:00pm, when the Museum closes. ASL interpreters will be available. Please indicate if you need an interpreter. Guests can pick up their reserved tickets at the Community Relations registration table in the Museum lobby on Dec. 7 between 10:00 AM & 1:00 PM. Register at <www.communitypartnersdaydec7.eventbrite.com>. If you have any questions, please contact Maria Cabrera <mcabrera@mos.org>, 617-589-0418 or James Boyd <jboyd@mos.org>, 617-589-0315.

- Dec. 12 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30pm-7pm, with a shortened business meeting followed by a potluck holiday celebration. Call 617.349.4692 (voice) or 617.492.0235 (TTY) or e-mail <ccpd@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Dec. 12 **Building a Basic Website for Your Business** – Do you need a website for your business but are not sure where to start? Whether you are building your first website or hoping to get pointers to rebuild an aging website, you will leave this workshop with many resources and tips to get you on the right path to website success. In this two hour workshop, participants will receive a guided tour through the process of starting a website and learn tools around choosing and purchasing a domain name, publishing a site and building a site requiring complex Content Management Systems (CMS). Presented by the Center for Women and Enterprise, this workshop will be held from 8:30-10:30am in the 2nd floor conference room of City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway. Free to eligible Cambridge residents and business owners, \$20.00 for others. Pre-registration is recommended. To pre-register and determine your eligibility status please contact Rona Abrahams at <rabrahams@cambridgema.gov> or 617.349.4637 or Pardis Saffari at <psaffari@cambridgema.gov> or 617.349.4654. To learn more about the City of Cambridge's business development workshops, visit: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/business> .
- Dec. 16 **Affordable Housing Informational Session** – The Community Development Department would like to invite you to attend an Informational Session to learn about the City's Rental and Home Ownership Programs. Presently, the Housing Division is accepting applications for the Homeownership Pool and Rental Pool. Preference is given for Cambridge residents and families with Children. This session will be held in the Beech Room of the Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway from 6-8pm. For more information, contact Michelle Moran at <mmoran@cambridgema.gov> or 617.349.4622
- Jan. 9 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30pm-7pm, with opportunity for public comment. Call 617.349.4692 (voice) or 617.492.0235 (TTY) or e-mail <ccpd@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Jan. 18 **K'sharim: Connecting People with Disabilities to Jewish Life** – K'sharim (Hebrew for "connections") is an innovative undertaking by Boston's Jewish community designed to involve people with disabilities in all facets of Jewish life. K'sharim is for teens and adults with disabilities, their families and caregivers as well as for the host synagogue communities. Newcomers are always welcome to any and all K'sharim activities. Havdallah Happening: Annual Service, dinner & program. 6:30-8:15 PM at Temple Emunah, 9 Piper Road in Lexington. Cost is \$9; please register by sending a check by January 14. For more information about K'sharim and its programs, contact Terri Swartz Russell at 781.861.6399 or <terrisrussell@yahoo.com>.
- Jan. 19 **K'sharim: Connecting People with Disabilities to Jewish Life** – K'sharim (Hebrew for "connections") is an innovative undertaking by Boston's Jewish community designed to involve people with disabilities in all facets of Jewish life. K'sharim is for teens and adults with disabilities, their families and caregivers as well as for the host synagogue communities. Newcomers are always welcome to any and all K'sharim activities. TuB'Shevat Program will be held from 6-8 PM at Congregation Sha'arei Tefillah, 35 Morseland Ave in Newton.

The cost is \$5 per person and pre-registration is required. To register or for more information, contact Sandy Slavet of Jewish Family & Children's Services at 781.693.5640 or <sslavet@jfcbsoston.org>.

Jan. 30 to Feb. 6 **Third Annual ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival** -- showcasing films about the lives of people with different disabilities from a variety of communities. Film screenings at various locations throughout the greater Boston area. For more info, visit <www.boston.reelabilities.org>.

Feb. 4 **ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival screening of *Getting Up*** – This 2012 documentary profiles renowned graffiti artist Tempt One, who loses his creative voice after sustaining amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. In 2009, Mick Ebeling and his Not Impossible Foundation brought a motley crew of international hackers and artists to Los Angeles to invent a low-cost, open source DIY device that allows Tempt to once again create art, using the only part of his body that still moves: his eyes. After months of harrowing trial and error, the EyeWriter was born and Tempt was once again able to exercise his creative muscle. Disability Reframed: A Community Film Series is pleased to host a reception at 5:30 PM and screening at 6:30 PM in the Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway.

Weekly & Recurring Events

Ongoing

Injured Worker Support Meetings – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1st Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm, but other times can be arranged. Meetings/appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4th Floor Conference Room (close to the Kenmore Square MBTA station, a few doors to the right of Barnes & Noble). RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view their provider evaluation book, to people with RSIs (Repetitive Strain Injuries) or other workplace injuries. Discussion topics have included medical treatment, insurance/legal issues, and speech recognition software. For more information or to set up a meeting, call 617.247.6827, or go to <www.rsiaction.org>.

Mondays

Low Vision Support Group – meets on the 2nd Monday of each month from 10-11:30am at the North Cambridge Senior Center, 2050 Mass Ave. While geared towards seniors, the group is open to all ages. For more information, contact Barbara Duford at <marksgirl4951@gmail.com>.

NAMI Support Group for Caregivers – Sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, this is a free support group for family members, friends and other caregivers of persons with mental illness that provides understanding, comfort, hope and help. This group meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at 7:30pm at the Cambridge Hospital Learning Center A, 3rd Floor, 1493 Cambridge Street. For more information, see <www.namimass.org/programs>, e-mail <helpline@namimass.org>, or call Elizabeth at 781.646.0397.

Learn to Cope Support Group – If you have a family member who is battling addiction or know someone who does, invite them to attend the Learn to Cope (LTC) Support Group every Monday from 7:00-8:30pm. This group is sponsored by OPEN (Overdose Prevention and Education Network), a program of the Cambridge Prevention Coalition, and is for the parents, family members, spouses, and caregivers of people who have addictions to opiates, alcohol, or other drugs. This FREE group is held at Spaulding Rehabilitation Cambridge, 1575 Cambridge Street (use main entrance), and offers a unique format that has experienced facilitators who have been there, resources, informational material, guest speakers (in long term recovery or professionals in the field), overdose education, and most of all, HOPE! For more information visit <www.learn2cope.org>.

Tuesdays

Computer Help for Job Seekers – Every Tuesday from 3:30-5pm Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) offers individualized, flexible computer assistance from a friendly volunteer who can help with job searching, resume writing, online job applications, computer skills, and much more. Work alone or with a group to learn

more about computers. This program is open to all job seekers, and there is no need to sign up, just stop by! Please call 617.661.6900 with questions or for more information.

Boston Voice Users – this group for people who use or are interested in using speech recognition or dictation software meets from approximately 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm.135. Members explore the developments, available tools and products, and best use of personal computer-based speech-recognition, and invite both commercial and noncommercial entities to present at meetings. To find out more about meetings and discussions go to <www.bostonvoiceusers.org>.

Wednesdays

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) meets 1 – 3 p.m. at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Call 617.973.7507 voice or 617.973.7089 TTY or e-mail <aact@ctps.org> for more information or to request interpreters. Security measures require proper ID for access to meetings.

Access to Art: Explorations – Offered by the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, this is an interactive, multidisciplinary evening workshop that meets at 6pm in the Huntington Avenue Entrance Lobby on the 1st Wednesday of the month for adults with disabilities, with a focus on cognitive disabilities and disabilities that may affect verbal communication. This program is always multi-sensory and does not require one to be verbal. This program was developed with the intention of having it be as inclusive as possible, thus friends and family members are welcome and encouraged to come and take part. This program is led by a facilitator with experience in both art and theatre and one or more musicians. This program is NOT for groups, and advance notice is appreciated. For more information, see <www.mfa.org> or contact Valarie Burrows at 617.369.3302 or Hannah Goodwin at 617.369.3189, or e-mail <access@mfa.org>.

Amputee Support Group – Offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, all amputees, their family and friends are invited to socialize and discuss common areas of interest, including accessibility and resources, as well as to provide support and share coping strategies. Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 1-2pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). For more information, see <www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents> or contact Sally Johnson, LICSW at 617.573.2539 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or by e-mail at <sejohnson@partners.org>.

Assistive Technology Resource Center (ARTC) Open House – The ARTC, which helps people with disabilities in Eastern Massachusetts make informed decisions about assistive technology they can use to increase their independence at home, on the job or in school, holds an open house on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 8:30am-4:30pm. These FREE monthly open houses provide an opportunity to see what kinds of assistive technology products are available, and to try them out. The ARTC is located at the Boston Easter Seals office, 89 South Street (one block from MBTA South Station). Visit <www.eastersealsma.org>, call 617.226.2634, or email <ARTC@eastersealsma.org> for more information.

Carroll Center for the Blind Information Day – In order to provide answers to many of the questions people frequently ask about Carroll Center programs and other visual impairment services, they hold monthly information days on the 1st Wednesday of every month. See the campus, learn from rehabilitation instructors, and talk to graduates about their experience in Carroll Center adult and senior rehabilitation and technology programs. Special dates are offered for those seeking tours and information about summer offerings for youth. The staff loves this chance to help participants become informed, relaxed, and motivated! And the lunch is provided free of charge! The sessions start promptly at 10am and end at 2pm. To make a reservation (required), email <renee.hall@carroll.org> or call 1.800.852.3131 ext. 225 with the name of each guest attending (family and friends are welcome!). The Carroll Center is located at 770 Centre Street in Newton.

Resume Writing & Job Hunting, FREE Drop-in Assistance – Free help for adults needing assistance with making resumes or job hunting, offered on a first come, first served basis. Offered every Wednesday from 1-3pm in the Beech Room of the Cambridge Main Library (449 Broadway), this opportunity for assistance is

open to all. For more information, contact Maria Balestrieri at <mbalestrieri@cambridgema.gov> or 617.349.4013.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group meets every Wednesday evening, 7-9pm at McLean Hospital in Belmont (de Marneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Call 617.855.2795 or see <www.dbsaboston.org> for more information.

Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors – The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of introductory one-on-one guided tours to the Museum and its collections for blind and low vision individuals who want to build a deeper relationship with the Museum. Each monthly session focuses on a different collection and includes wayfinding and verbal description of spaces. These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am and the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Individuals can attend one or more sessions, whichever interests them. Guided tours can also be scheduled at other times. Pre-registration is not required unless a visitor needs a sighted guide or other access accommodation. Contact Valerie Burrows at 617.369.3302 or <vburrows@mfa.org> to register. Call 617.369.3189 or e-mail <access@mfa.org> or go to <www.mfa.org> for more information. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston, and is accessible by the Green line “E” train to the “Museum of Fine Arts” stop, or the Orange line train to the “Ruggles” stop.

Free introductory tour of MFA in sign language & with assistive listening devices – A new monthly offering at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. These tours will be given at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. No pre-registration is required; meet at the Sharf Visitor Center in the MFA. For more information about accessible programs Valerie Burrows at 617.369.3302 voice, 617.267.9703 TTY or e-mail <access@mfa.org>.

NAMI Connection – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), meets every Wednesday and Friday 10:30-12:00 at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 35 Medford Street, Suite 201 in Somerville. The group is free and open to all who self-identify as having a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. For more information, contact Janel Tan at 617.863.5388 or <tanj@vinfen.org>.

Open Support Group for Adults on the Autism Spectrum – Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 pm at the offices of the Asperger’s Association of New England (AANE), 85 Main St., Suite 101, Watertown, MA. A \$5 donation is suggested. RSVP to 617.393.3824, x310 or <Jamie.Freed@aane.org>.

Senior Support Group for Caregivers over 60 – meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Family Resource Center, 20 Gould Street in Reading. Share and learn with other seniors who have adult family members with developmental disabilities. For meeting times or more information, contact Judy SantaMaria at 781.942.4888, x4022 or <familysupport@theemarc.org>.

Spaulding Stroke Support Group – This community-based support group offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH) provides socialization and education for stroke survivors, meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 3-4pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). See <www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents> or contact Karen Halfon at 617.573.7143 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or by e-mail at <khalfon@partners.org>.

Thursdays

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting – generally meets on the 2nd Thursday, at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617.349.4692 (voice), 617.492.0235 (TTY) or e-mail <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.

AppShare – Offered by the Easter Seals Assistive Technology Regional Center (ARTC), AppShare is a new drop-in series for people to come to their Boston center with their “smart” devices (both Apple and Android)

to share and learn about apps in an informal and relaxed setting. If you enjoy talking about apps or want to learn about new ones - this is the place to be! The ARTC will announce themes for each series prior to the meeting date. All AppShare days are on the 2nd Thursday of the month, and drop-in times are 11:00am-12:00pm and 1:00-2:00pm. For more information, or to request accommodations, see <www.eastersealsma.org> or contact the ARTC, 89 South Street in Boston (near MBTA South Station) at 617.226.2634 or by email at <atrc@eastersealsma.org>. The themes for the April 11 and May 9 series are TBD.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group – meets at Mass. General Hospital every Thursday, 7 - 9 p.m. in the Schiff Conference Center Room, Suite 4A on the 4th floor in the Yawkey Building. Follow the signs. Meetings are free and open to public. For more information call 617.855.2795 or e-mail <mghgroup@dbstaboston.org>.

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Support Group – Offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH), this weekly support group, which meets every Thursday from 4-5pm, is for anyone affected by SCI, to help and inspire the newly injured through role models and peer mentors, and to support individuals and family members as they begin their post-injury journeys. This group is run by Dr. Chris Carter and is held in GBC Office at SRH, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). For more information, see: <www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents> or 617.573.2081 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or by e-mail at <sciboston@aol.com>.

Fridays

NAMI Connection – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), meets every Wednesday and Friday 10:30-12:00 at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 35 Medford Street, Suite 201 in Somerville. The group is free and open to all who self-identify as having a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. For more information, contact Janel Tan at 617.863.5388 or <tanj@vinfen.org>.

Second Fridays are FREE at the MIT Museum – Jump-start your weekend with the MIT Museum! Get up close and personal with Kismet the Robot, or see the world in 3-D through our one-of-a-kind holography exhibit. Enjoy performances, demonstrations, and lectures throughout our galleries. Mix and mingle; relax and unwind. Museum admission, including the galleries and additional activities, is free from 5-8pm on the 2nd Friday of every month. The Museum is located in Building N51 at 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. See <web.mit.edu/museum/programs/secondfridays.html> or call 617.253.5927 for more information.

Saturdays

Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support Group (BABIS) – The mission of this free support group is to provide a positive forum for peer socialization, hope and education for people with acquired brain injury, their family and friends. This group is held on the 1st Saturday of the month, from 10am-12pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). No registration required, just show up! For more information, call Sally Johnson, LICSW at 617.573.2539 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), e-mail <babisgroup@hotmail.com>, or see <www.babis.info>.

Beyond the Spectrum: Adventures in Art for Children with Autism – Offered by the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) Artful Adventures offers a specially designed program for children ages 8-12 on the Autism Spectrum, including Asperger's Syndrome, accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Upon arrival children will be divided into groups by age and/or needs, and the program meets on the 1st Saturday of each month from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. Each class lasts an hour and a half and combines gallery exploration with an art-making activity. Pre-registration is required by the prior Tuesday. The cost is \$8.00 per child (includes materials and museum admission), and one adult is admitted free with each child ticket, which also includes discounted parking. The program meets in the Education Center in Druker Family Pavilion, Room 159 at 10:20am before the start of each class. For more information, or to pre-register, go to <www.mfa.org/programs/community-programs/beyond-the-spectrum>, call 617.369.3303 or email <artfuladventures@mfa.org>.

Sundays

Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors –These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am. Pre-registration is not required for the Sunday tours unless a sighted guide or other access accommodation is needed. See Wednesday listing for details.

“Quiet Day” at the Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation: The Charles River Museum of Industry & Innovation in Waltham hosts "Quiet Day" for children with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), which affects a variety of disabilities, on the last Sunday of the month from 10am to 5pm. During Quiet Day, the museum will disable any exhibit that produces uncomfortable noise levels, equipment such as sound block headphones, weighted blankets will be offered, and a separate space for reducing stimuli will be available. Admission is \$7.00 per adult and \$5.00 per child, student or senior. Free to children under 6, active and retired US Military, and Museum members. For more information, email <info@crmi.org> or call 781.893.5410 or 617.823.5081.

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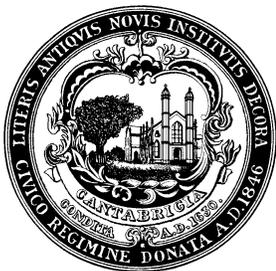
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AccessLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
part of the Department of Human Service Programs,

51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139.

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