

# AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for  
Persons with Disabilities

## MIT Students Design Assistive Technology for Clients with Disabilities



Principles and Practice of Assistive Technology (PPAT) is an interdisciplinary fall semester course at MIT

founded in 2011 by the late Professor Seth Teller that examines the multifaceted design process of AT for persons with disabilities (PWD).

In addition to attending lectures—often with guest speakers—throughout the semester on everything from the economics of AT and the principles of successful design to ethical and social considerations around disability, the students work in small teams along with a PWD (the “client”) to design a product and create prototypes that will allow the client to live and function with greater independence.

I had the great honor this semester of being a client and the namesake of Team Kate. Once or twice a week, I met with a team of four students, who worked very closely with me to create solutions to a few challenges I have with my cochlear implants.

These are devices consisting of external sound processors and transmitters (“coils”) that work in conjunction with surgically placed implants to bypass the damaged parts of my ears, allowing me to hear.

While I do very well with my “ears,” as I refer to my implants, cochlear implants do not restore normal hearing and are limited in what they can do.

**(More on MIT Designs AT, page 3)**

## ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival 2015 is Just Around the Corner



Now in its fourth year, ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival will be screening a wide and exciting variety of disability-related movies between February 19 and March 2 in 2015.

Included in the film mix this year will be feature-length motion pictures, international films, documentaries, short program films, and some movies that may just defy categorization.

One thing all of these films do have in common: they have all been selected in fulfillment of ReelAbilities' mission -- dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of people with different disabilities from a variety of communities.

One in five Americans has a disability, according to the U.S. Census. “Yet the experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities are too often marginalized, or misunderstood,” says ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival Director Ellie Pierce. “Quality films that engage and challenge can play a role in changing this.”

Disability Reframed: A Community Film Series is pleased to be partnering with ReelAbilities Boston again in 2015 for a free screening of *Stand Clear of the Closing Doors* on Tuesday, February 24 at 6:00 PM.

This award-winning film features Ricky, a 13-year-old boy with autism, who lives in Rockaway Beach with his family.

**(More on ReelAbilities 2015, page 4)**

## 'Assistive Technology in the Workplace' Event Highlights Successful Employment Approaches

"We live in a world right now where technology leads the way in allowing us to change our circumstances, to empower ourselves, [and] to expect to be employed," said Sassy Outwater at a recent event in Cambridge entitled "Expect. Employ. Empower. Assistive Technology in the Workplace."

Sassy, Small Business Solutions Director for EZFire, was one of a panel of experts from government, healthcare, information technology and entrepreneurial fields who gathered on October 29 to focus on employment issues for workers with disabilities.

The event, held in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, was geared for employers, managers, job seekers and the community to gain a better understanding of incentives for hiring employees with disabilities, as well as learn about a variety of assistive technologies that enhance productivity.

Serving as keynote speakers for the event were Sassy Outwater and Peter Fay, Advocacy & Outreach Manager for IBM Accessibility. Each speaker described how advancing technology for people with disabilities has improved workplace opportunities over the past decades. While Peter described several of the many ways that IBM is developing tools for an accessible workplace and spreading this technology around the world, Sassy outlined how small businesses like her company can play a vital role in creating and promoting assistive technology.

Both speakers emphasized the importance of not only developing job opportunities for workers with disabilities, but also recognizing the talent and

productivity companies often discover when they tap into this candidate pool. With the unemployment-rate for people with disabilities hovering at more than double that for the nondisabled public, there is ample room for improvement.

Sponsored by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs, the evening event was graciously hosted by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Cambridge.



**Event Keynote Speakers Peter Fay (left) and Sassy Outwater**

Elizabeth Dean-Clover, Chair, Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities; Sue Walsh, Assistant Director for Adult and Family Services for the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs; and David Storto, President of Spaulding offered welcoming remarks. There was also a robust question

and answer panel focusing on employment issues moderated by Dr. Cheri Blauwet, Disability Access and Awareness Director, Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, who was joined by Gregg Ames, Job Placement Specialist, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Catherine Bly, Easter Seals as well as Peter Fay and Sassy Outwater.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Easter Seals provided information tables with assistive technology displays and workforce development sign ups. For all the speakers and panel participants the main message of the evening was delivering a challenge to employers to recruit people with disabilities and a plea for those from the job seeking public to use the resources available to advocate for their talents.

*Photo and story credit: Jack Carroll*

## MIT Designs AT (continued from page 1)

For example, neither my sound processors nor my coils are water resistant (and are very expensive to replace!), so I am always careful to carry raingear with me everywhere I go.

There have been a few times over the years where I've gotten caught in a rainstorm with no protection for my ears, forcing me to take them off, which significantly impairs my ability to communicate and be aware of what is going on around me. It can also be burdensome to carry a raincoat around with me all the time. Thus, my first request of Team Kate was that they design covers that would protect my processors and coils from getting wet in the rain. My hope was that they would be small enough to fit in my pocket.

Another difficulty I have is hearing when background noise is present. In such situations, I often find myself cupping my hands over my ears to help filter out unwanted sounds and “catch” the sound of a person speaking directly to me. Taking this information, the students set out to design accessories for my ears that would help to remedy these two limitations of my cochlear implants.

I am thrilled to report that after numerous prototypes and lots of feedback from me, Team Kate developed gEAR, a set of accessories that enhance both the functionality and wearability of my cochlear implants. Rain-gEAR consists of water resistant 3D printed and handmade covers for the sound processors and coils, and Sound-gEAR are a set of “cups” that slip on the processors, focusing my microphones on what I am facing.

Sound gEAR is really a very simple solution and yet provides a truly significant improvement in

hearing and understanding speech in crowded environments. I am left with working prototypes that allow me to allow me to get caught in the rain without worry of ruining my processors and to feel more confident in social situations, the vast majority of which tend to involve background noise.

This year's PPAT course included 10 other teams, each working with a client with disabilities affecting different areas of function, such as mobility, sight, or cognition. They developed products such as the Touch 'n Sign, consisting of software that searches for the signature line of a scanned document and reads its coordinates aloud to a blind user, allowing that person to then place the hard copy on a specially designed clipboard containing Braille rulers and vertical and horizontal magnetic bars that the user may independently slide to the correct coordinates in order to locate the signature line without

relying on a sighted person for assistance.

Another team worked with a client who resides at The Boston Home (TBH). Their client expressed difficulty in being limited to pushing a call button attached to her bed in order to get staff assistance for anything from needing a glass of water to an emergency. Oftentimes, the client would be using her wheelchair on the other side of her room when she needed assistance, sometimes urgently. Her team designed InstaAid, an iPad app that allows any resident with an iPad to tap the screen for different needs or even to videochat with staff at the nurse's station. This app has been so helpful to their client that TBH plans to roll it out to the rest of their residents and install a permanent iPad at the nurse's station for responding to requests.

The Coffee Crane was designed for Paul, who uses forearm crutches and struggled to carry a cup of



**Photo of a cochlear implant processor and coil with (right) and without (left) Rain-gEAR**

coffee around his home without spilling it. Team Paul added custom parts to an existing market product, allowing Paul to attach to one of his crutches the Coffee Crane, which is a type of swinging platform that holds a mug and uses simple physics to avoid spillage. Paul's dream was to be able to bring his wife a cup of coffee in bed in the mornings and he is now able to do just that.

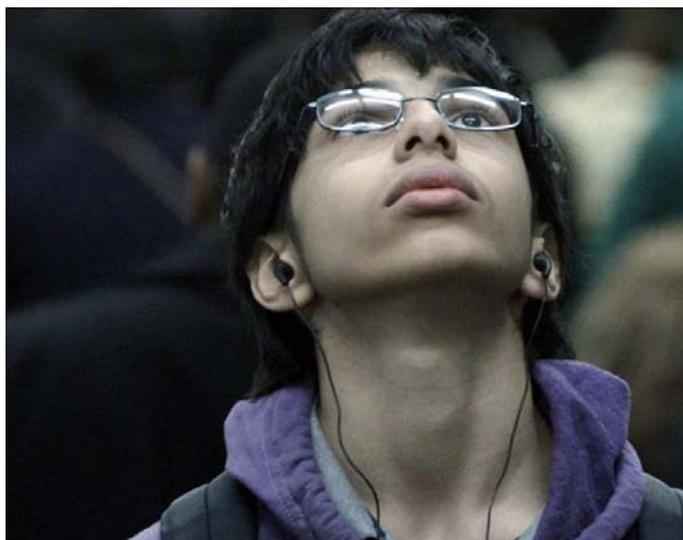
Although not all of the projects resulted in fully functioning prototypes for clients, due to both time and financial constraints, this fall's PPAT course was hugely successful for both students and clients. Students came away with a real-world perspective on the unique challenges—and rewards—of AT design and prototyping, and clients were given an opportunity to provide user expertise throughout the whole process, from beginning to end. Speaking for myself, working with Team Kate has been one of the most thrilling and rewarding experiences I have ever had.

For more information about MIT's Principles and Practices of Assistive Technology, see <<http://courses.csail.mit.edu/PPAT>>

--Kate Thurman

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## ReelAbilities 2015 (continued from page 1)



***Stand Clear of the Closing Doors***

His mother, Mariana, an undocumented immigrant from Mexico, works long days; Ricky, deeply imaginative but painfully isolated, struggles to cope.

One day Mariana yells at Ricky for skipping school and, in a panic, he escapes into the New York City subway system. Overwhelmed by his surroundings, he loses track of space and time in the massive underground labyrinth. Ricky embarks on an odyssey of self-discovery, observing scenes of urban pathos and oddity while his body weakens from hunger.

***Stand Clear of the Closing Doors*** will be screened at the Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway, Main Lecture Hall in Cambridge. Following the screening, there will be a lively discussion of the film facilitated by Goldie Eder, MSW, and featuring panelists: Norma Casaya, Federation for Children with Special Needs; Joe Foley, National Geographic Traveler of the Year; and Andy Novis, artist and endurance athlete. Disability Reframed: A Community Film Series is a collaboration of the Boston Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Co-presented by the Boston Jewish Film Festival, the ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival 2015 will be screening over two dozen films in 14 different venues from Boston and Cambridge to Springfield and Longmeadow. Most films are free, but some do require ticket purchase. For tickets, updates and more information, including descriptions of all the films, visit <[www.reelboston.org](http://www.reelboston.org)> or call 617-244-9899.

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### **Researchers Seek Assault Victims for Study**

Are you a person with a disability or a Deaf person who is 18 years or older and has been a victim of sexual assault? You could be eligible to take part in a Vera Institute of Justice study exploring what happens after an assault, including experiences with any help sought. They are conducting interviews during the month of February in an accessible location in Boston. Accommodations

will be provided, including qualified ASL interpreters, and participants will be compensated for their time. All information shared will be confidential. For more information

or to schedule an interview, please call, text, or email Ashley Demyan at 646-957-0376 or <ademyan@vera.org>.

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

- Jan 7        **Central Square Resume Writing/Job Hunting** – Free assistance at Central Square Public Library on 45 Pearl Street in Cambridge from 1-3 pm. They help with professional resumes and online job applications.
- Jan 8        **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street from 5:30-7pm with opportunity for public comment. Call 617.349.4692 (voice), 617.492.0235 (TTY), or e-mail <ccpd@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Jan 13      **FREE Adaptive Skating and Games on Ice** – Play socialize on the whole rink! Come in your chair; take a spin on an ice sled or lace up some skates during the Department of Recreation and Conservation's (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP) from 11:30am-1:30pm at Cronin Rink, 850 Revere Beach Parkway in Revere. Call UAP at 617.626.1294 to sign up. Participants will need to fill out a waiver, available at <[www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/universal-access/waiver-dcr.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/universal-access/waiver-dcr.pdf)>. Minors must have their waiver signed by their parent or legal guardian.
- Jan 14      **Workshop: Basic Rights in Special Education** –This workshop introduces federal and state special education laws, special education process, parent and student rights and how to resolve differences with the school. Register online with the Federation of Children with Special Needs at <<http://fcsn.org/ptic/home/events/>>. Workshop will be held at Thayer Public Library in Braintree from 6:30–8:30pm.
- Jan 19      **Morningstar Access** –Program for children with special and medical needs at the Boston Children's Museum from 8-10am. Enjoy the Museum in an uncrowded environment with few visitors. Fee is \$7 and registration is required. Call 617.986.3697 or register online, <[www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar](http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar)>.
- Jan 22      **Tremors, Carpel Tunnel Syndrome: Options for the Hands** –Learn about the popular anti-tremor spoon by LiftLabs, as well as other gadgets that may reduce pain and tremors. Demonstrations are free and held from 12noon-1pm at Easter Seals Technology Center, 89 South Street, Boston. Please RSVP for the event by January 15, and request accommodations by January 8. Call 617.226.2634 or email <[atrc@easternsealsma.org](mailto:atrc@easternsealsma.org)>.
- Jan 28      **Access Committee** –Boston Society of Architects (BSA) works hard to ensure building regulations and codes to maximize accessibility. The Access Committee meeting is free and open to public from 12noon-1:30pm at BSA Space on 290 Congress Street, Boston. For more information visit <[www.architects.org](http://www.architects.org)>.
- Feb 8        **Audio Described Performances** – Boston Opera House will have a specially trained describer narrate what is happening on stage for the musical, *Motown*. The describer uses a headset and microphone while the patron who is visually impaired listens through an earpiece receiver. Performance starts 1pm at 539 Washington Street, Boston. For more information about purchasing tickets and/or accessibility services please call (ASL/OC/AD) 617.880.2419, (TDD) 800.943.4327, or email

<ADABoston@BroadwayInBoston.com>, or visit the web page,  
<[http://boston.broadway.com/accessible\\_services/](http://boston.broadway.com/accessible_services/)>.

- Feb 12      **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street from 5:30-7pm with opportunity for public comment. Call 617.349.4692 (voice), 617.492.0235 (TTY), or e-mail <[ccpd@cambridgema.gov](mailto:ccpd@cambridgema.gov)> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Feb 15      **American Sign Language Performance** – Boston Opera House will have qualified ASL interpreters convey the musical, *Motown*. Performance starts 1pm at 539 Washington Street, Boston. For more information about purchasing tickets and/or accessibility services please call (ASL/OC/AD) 617.880.2419, (TDD) 800.943.4327, or email <ADABoston@BroadwayInBoston.com>, or visit the web page, <[http://boston.broadway.com/accessible\\_services/](http://boston.broadway.com/accessible_services/)>.
- Feb 16      **Morningstar Access** –Program for children with special and medical needs at the Boston Children’s Museum from 8-10am. Enjoy the Museum in an uncrowded environment with few visitors. Fee is \$7 and registration is required. Call 617.986.3697 or register online, <[www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar](http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar)>.
- Feb 17      **FREE Adaptive Skating and Games on Ice** – See January 13 listing for details.

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- Feb 19-Mar 2      **ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival 2015** – Over two dozen disability-related films will be screened in 14 different venues in Massachusetts is no, from Cambridge to Longmeadow. See page 1 for more details, or visit <[www.reelboston.org](http://www.reelboston.org)>.
- Feb 19      **ReelAbilities Gallery Reception, “Homage to Film”** –Event at 7pm at Gateway Arts in Brookline. Tickets for all Reel Abilities Film Festival in Boston are on sale early-January. Please visit their web page for more information at <[www.reelboston.org](http://www.reelboston.org)>.
- Feb 19      **Smart Pens and Smart Apps** –Free demonstration of the Iris and Livescribe smart pens and literacy-based APPS. Event is held from 12noon-1pm at Easter Seals Technology Center, 89 South Street, Boston. Please RSVP for the event by February 12, and request accommodations by February 5. Call 617.226.2634 or email <[atrc@easternsealsma.org](mailto:atrc@easternsealsma.org)>.
- Feb 23      **ReelAbilities Opening Night! “Little World”** –Film at 7pm at Bright Family Screening Room, Emerson College. Tickets for all Reel Abilities Film Festival in Boston are on sale early-January. Please visit their web page for more information at <[www.reelboston.org](http://www.reelboston.org)>.
- Feb 24      **ReelAbilities Film Festival: Stand Clear of the Closing Doors** –FREE film screening at 6pm at Main Public Library, 449 Broadway, Cambridge. See page 1 of this issue for more details.

- Feb 24      **All Access Pass Tour** –Learn more about VSA Massachusetts, their art gallery, and mission for educational and cultural inclusion for people of all abilities. The tour is free and goes from 12noon-1pm at 89 South Street, Suite 101, Boston. To reserve a spot and request ASL or other accommodations please call Charlie Washburn at 617.350.7713 x102 or email <cjwashburn@vsamass.org>.
- Mar 2      **ReelAbilities Film Festival Closing Night! Short films including “Stumped”** –Starts at 7pm at Somerville Theatre. Will Lautzenheiser and Robin Berghaus will be in attendance. Tickets for all Reel Abilities Film Festival in Boston are on sale early-January. Please visit their web page for more information at <www.reelboston.org>.

## Weekly & Recurring Events

**Access to Art tours** – the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of visitor centered, interactive tours designed for groups with disabilities or if persons with disabilities prefer an individual tour with a companion or care partner. There is no fee for these tours but most require pre-registration. Contact us for a sighted guide or other access accommodation: Hannah Goodwin at 617.369.3189 (voice), Valarie Burrow at 617.369.3302 (voice), 617.369.3395 (TTY), or email <access@mfa.org>. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue and is accessible by the Green line “Museum of Fine Arts” stop, or the Orange line “Ruggles” stop. Please visit <www.mfa.org> for more information.

**Injured Worker Support Meetings** – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm, but other times can be arranged. Appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room. RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support to people with RSIs (Repetitive Strain Injuries) or other workplace injuries. To set up a meeting or more info, call 617.247.6827, or visit <www.rsiaction.org>.

### **Mondays**

**FREE Basic Yoga for Women** – Offered by the Cambridge Women’s Center at 46 Pleasant Street, this group meets each Monday from 6-7pm and uses basic breath work and poses to relax and rejuvenate the mind, body and spirit. Space is limited, so pre-registration is required at 617.354.6394 or <maddybeauregard@gmail.com>.

**NAMI Support Group for Caregivers** – Free support group sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, for family members, friends and other caregivers of persons with mental illness who provide understanding, comfort, hope and help. This group meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month at 7:30pm at the Cambridge Hospital Learning Center, Conference Room A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 1493 Cambridge Street. For more information, <www.namimass.org/programs>, or call Elizabeth at 781.646.0397.

**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group** – meets biweekly on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month from 7-8:30pm at the Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge. This group is open to anyone with OCD or related disorder and is a casual, open discussion of the trials and triumphs! of living with OCD. Suggested donation \$5. For more information e-mail <ocdgroupcambridge@gmail.com>.

### **Tuesdays**

**Computer Lab Open to Public** – Every Tuesday from 3-5:45 pm Cambridge Community Television at 438 Massachusetts Avenue offers free computer access, plus assistance from a friendly volunteer who can help with job searching, online job applications, basic computer skills, and much more. This drop-in time is open to the public and there is no need to sign up, just stop by! Call 617.661.6900 for more information.

## 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 and 3 on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. Call 617.973.7507 (voice) or 617.973.7089 (TTY) or email <aact@ctps.org> to request interpreters.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month from 1-2:30pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, in the Lantern Room 5, 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 617.952.6254 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or by email at <sejohnson@partners.org>.

**Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) Open House** – The ATRC, 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 ATRC is located at the Boston Easter Seals office, 89 South Street (one block from MBTA South Station). Visit <www.eastersealsma.org>, call 61 7.226.2634, or email <ATRC@eastersealsma.org> for more information.

**Carroll Center for the Blind Information Day** – Learn more about Carroll Center programs and our visual impairment services the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month (except in January and July). See the campus, learn from rehabilitation instructors, and talk to graduates about their experience in adult and senior rehabilitation and technology programs. And lunch is provided free of charge! Sessions start promptly at 10am and end at 2pm. *Special dates are offered tours about summer offerings for youth.* Staff loves the chance to help participants become informed, relaxed, and motivated! To make a reservation (required), email <maureen.foley@carroll.org> or call 1.800.852.3131 ext. 225 w. the name of each guest attending. Family and friends are welcome!). The Carroll Center is located at 770 Centre Street in Newton.

**DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group** meets every Wednesday from 7-9pm in the cafeteria in de Marneffe Building at McLean Hospital in Belmont. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday there is a lecture from 7-8pm, then group from 8-9pm. Call 617.855.2795 or visit <www.dbsaboston.org> for more information.

**Free tour of MFA in American Sign Language (ASL)** – for visitors and their family and friends who are fluent in ASL. Monthly offering at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, the tour explores a different part of the Museum each month. These tours will start at 6:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month. No pre-registration is required; meet at the Sharf Visitor Center in the MFA. For more information about accessible programs contact Valarie Burrows at 617.369.3302 (voice), 617.369.3395 (TTY) or e-mail <access@mfa.org>.

**HOLLAoffline: We've Got Your Back!** – Join the Cambridge Women's Center on the last Wednesday of every month for a free street harassment support and discussion group, open to all who identify as women. We're here as a resource and we've got your back! 7-8pm at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street in Cambridge. For more information, email <boston@ihollaback.com>.

**Life Changes Support Group for Women** – Change happens in life whether we choose it or whether it catches us by surprise. Either way, you don't have to be alone. Whatever new or different thing you're dealing with, whether the start of something new, an ending or a changing situation, come and let us hold your hand through it. Together we'll pool our wisdom; we'll look at what got you here, offer some tools for getting through and guidance for next steps. We'll use some writing, art, a little ritual but mostly good old

fashioned support. This group is held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month from 6:30-8pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. For more information, email Susan at <changegroup26@gmail.com>.

**NAMI Connection** – 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>. *We are moving to the first floor, exact room# tba.*

**Open Support Group for Adults on the Autism Spectrum** – Meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Santa Maria at 781.942.4888, x4022 or <familysupport@thearc.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 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 3-4:30pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). Contact Karen Halfon at 617.952.6560 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or e-mail at <khalfon@partners.org>. Visit us at <www.spauldingrehab.org>.

## **Thursdays**

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

**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@dsaboston.org>.

**Ladies, Let's Talk About It: Women's Narcotic Anonymous (NA) Meeting** – meets every Thursday at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street, from 6:30-8pm. This is a support group for women recovering from drug and alcohol abuse. For more information, call 617.354.8807

**One-on-One for Women with Nurse Pat** – Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday from 12:45-1:30pm at the Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street. Need any health related support or questions answered? Sign up in advance or walk in for a 15-min individual consulting time with Pat Maher, Nurse Practitioner from Cambridge Health Alliance. For more information or to sign up, call 617.591.6731

**Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Support Group** – Offered by the Greater Boston Chapter, National Spinal Cord Injury Association. Weekly support group 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 held at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, 6th floor, Lantern Room, 300 First Ave, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). E-mail <sciboston@aol.com> for more information.

## **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 10:30am-12:00pm at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center. See Wednesday listing for details.

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of every month. The Museum is located in Building N51 at 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. See <[web.mit.edu/museum/programs/secondfridays.html](http://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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:babisgroup@hotmail.com)>, or visit <[www.babis.info](http://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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.mfa.org/programs/community-programs/beyond-the-spectrum)>, call 617.369.3303 or email <[artfuladventures@mfa.org](mailto:artfuladventures@mfa.org)>.

**Access to Art: Second Saturdays** -- For individuals with memory loss or dementia, and their care partners. Second Saturdays meet at 10am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to register for a tour please contact Valarie Burrows at 617.369.3302 (voice) or email: <[access@mfa.org](mailto:access@mfa.org)>.

## **Sundays**

**FREE Outdoor Programs: Explore winter outdoors with instruction, equipment, and assistance** – Join DCR's UAP at the Weston Ski Track at Leo J. Martin Golf Course, 190 Park Road in Weston from 12-4pm and try cross-country skiing, kicksledding and snowshoeing on a groomed course. Offered on the following Sundays: Jan. 25, Feb. 1, Feb. 8, Feb. 22, and March 1. Call Stavros Outdoor Access at 413.259.0009 to sign up. Participants will need to fill out a waiver, available at <[www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/universal-access/waiver-dcr.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/universal-access/waiver-dcr.pdf)>. Minors must have their waiver signed by their parent or legal guardian.

**Computer Lab Open to Public** – Every Sunday from 4-5:30pm Cambridge Community Television at 438 Massachusetts Avenue offers free computer access, plus assistance from a friendly volunteer who can help with job searching, online job applications, basic computer skills, and much more. This drop-in time is open to the public and there is no need to sign up, just stop by! Call 617.661.6900 for more information.

**Wenham Museum Spectrum Express** -- Welcomes families with members on the autism spectrum to come enjoy the model railroad trains and their other favorite exhibits the 1st Sunday of each month at 9am at regular admission prices or free for members. The museum opens to the general public at 10am. Visit <[www.wenhammuseum.org/youth\\_families.html](http://www.wenhammuseum.org/youth_families.html)> or call our Welcome Desk at 978.468.2377 with any questions.

**Feeling for Form Tours of MFA for blind & low vision visitors** -- The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of guided tours for visitors who are blind or have low vision 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. The Sunday tours are held on the 1st Sunday of the month at 1pm, with the exception of some holiday weekends, and require pre-registration at least one week in advance. Contact Valarie Burrows at 617.369.3302 or <[vburrows@mfa.org](mailto:vburrows@mfa.org)> to register. Family and friends are invited to come along. Guided tours can also be scheduled on request, please contact Hannah Goodwin at 617.369.3189 or <[access@mfa.org](mailto:access@mfa.org)> for more information.

**Access Notice:** The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) does not discriminate on the basis of disability. **AccessLetter** newsletter is available via email, in large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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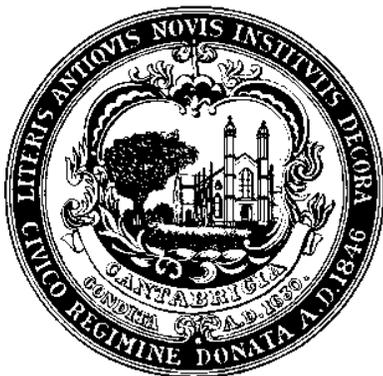
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**AccessLetter** is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities  
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