

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Advocates in Discussion with Uber on Need for On-Demand Accessible Transportation



The Uber Boston Disability Coalition (“Coalition”), comprised of the Disability Law Center (DLC), Disability Policy Consortium

(DPC), Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL), and Uber, is an initiative formed in early 2016 that aims to improve on-demand transportation options for people with disabilities, and particularly those who use wheelchairs.

The Coalition held a public forum in Boston at the end of October, presenting both existing accessible transportation options and new initiatives, and seeking input on transportation needs directly from the disability community. At the forum, people with disabilities repeated that they just want what everyone else has access to: cost effective, on-demand transportation.

First on the agenda was Ben Schutzman, Director of Transportation Innovation for the MBTA, who spoke about the MBTA’s new On-Demand Paratransit Pilot Program in which they are partnering with ride share companies Uber and Lyft.

People with disabilities who use The RIDE can sign up for this pilot program (although there is currently a waiting list to join). The pilot will allow them up to 20 rides with Uber or Lyft per month, in addition to the regular

(More on Uber Accessibility on Page 2)

Lecture Sheds Light on Autism Spectrum and Sensory Issues



Dr. Stephen Shore

As a proud new member of the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities, I am always seeking to enhance my experience working with children and teenagers with disabilities, including those on the autism spectrum.

Any opportunity I have to learn about inclusive education as a vehicle for empowerment, I seize. So when I had the great opportunity to attend a lecture about sensory issues related to the autism spectrum, I jumped.

Dr. Stephen Shore, a professor at Adelphi University, presented about “Senses and Sens-abilities: An Inside View on Autistic Sensory Issues” at Lesley University on January 5 as part of the Massachusetts Council for Exceptional Children’s 2016-2017 Professional Development Speaker Series.

Dr. Shore is a leading author and respected thought leader in the field of disabilities and special education. His world-renowned expertise is fueled by his own identity and experiences growing up on the autism spectrum.

My hope in relaying along several highlights from Dr. Shore’s lecture is to encourage others to learn more about his work and to translate his perspectives to their own education practices and policies.

(More on Autism Spectrum on Page 3)

Save the Date!

Tuesday, April 4, 2016
6 to 8:30 pm

ReelAbilities Film Festival
Boston screening of

Rachel Is

Cambridge Public Library
449 Broadway, Lecture Hall

For more information, visit:
WWW.REELBOSTON.ORG

Uber Accessibility (continued from page 1)

RIDE service they've been getting all along. Unlike The RIDE, which must be reserved a minimum of a day in advance, trips via on-demand ride share companies will be requested at the time a ride is needed; customers do so using a smartphone via the Uber app or they may use a phone-in option for Lyft. Participants pay the first \$2.00 of each trip; the MBTA pays for up to \$13, and any cost beyond that is the participant's responsibility.

The pilot's geographical service area is the same as The RIDE's, so there is really nothing to lose by signing up for the program. The pilot does require that customers provide feedback on the service, so that the MBTA has the information they need to tweak the program in order to make it more successful and convenient. As the MBTA's average cost of a roundtrip ride using The RIDE is \$70 regardless of how far or short a distance a person is traveling, the goal of this pilot program is to save money, while also improving transportation service to individuals with disabilities.

Chris Taylor of Uber noted that Uber X, the private ride option (rather than carpooling with other customers), is on average 40% cheaper than a taxicab in Boston, which makes it a more cost effective service. He addressed safety concerns, stating that customers will receive the vehicle type, license plate number, and the name and a photo of the driver as soon as their request is submitted, and they are provided a map of the vehicle's travel and an estimated time of arrival (often as soon as two or three minutes away), which means they can wait inside.

Additionally, customers have the ability to call or text a driver while they're on the way; this could be useful for someone who needs extra time to get outside. These calls and texts are sent through a

phone number scrambling system, so neither user gets the other's phone number. The Uber app has a fairly new feature called "Share my ETA", which allows customers to text a live map of their trip to others.

Uber stated they have a goal of launching ride sharing service using wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) with people who already own them. In the meantime, they are offering Uber Access, in which they partner with Boston WAV taxicabs to provide accessible rides to people who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices and are unable to transfer into the passenger compartment of a non-accessible vehicle. Uber Access rides have the same rates as other Uber rides and can be requested via the same app. The

company is looking into partnering with a group that can retrofit vans to make them accessible and then lease them to drivers. This would reduce wait times for Uber Access, allowing it to truly become more of an on-demand transportation service.



In emphasizing his company's commitment to accessibility, Mr. Taylor noted that they created a feature in their smartphone app that allows people who are deaf or hard of hearing to become drivers, opening up an employment opportunity for this population. In such a case, the app will disable the calling feature and will also inform the customer that they must text the driver information rather than calling or speaking it.

Mr. Taylor addressed some accessibility concerns that were brought up by members of the audience. Perhaps the hottest topic was service animals, as there were a number of stories of customers being refused rides because they were accompanied by their service dog. Mr. Taylor said that Uber has a settlement agreement with the National Federation for the Blind in which they created a service contract with drivers that they must accept service animals. Under this contract,

drivers get one warning if they did not know or understand that they were required to allow the service dog in their vehicle; if there is another denial or issue around a service animal, that driver will no longer be able to drive for Uber.

Christine Griffin, Executive Director of DLC, said that state legislation that applies to ride share companies was recently passed. One of the pieces of legislation looks at accessibility and requires that service dogs are allowed. A task force that includes a number of representatives from the disability community is being set up to look at access issues with ride share companies. She encouraged Uber to implement a statement at the beginning of the driver application process that says if they're not willing to take service animals in their vehicles, do not apply to be an Uber driver. Additionally, she suggested that all drivers be required to sign an agreement up front stating that they will not refuse service to individuals with service animals.

Several people complained of drivers canceling rides once the drivers saw that they had a service animal or were blind or had another type of disability. One gentleman who identified as blind said that he has had several drivers cancel on him when they see him with his white cane; the Uber app requires customers to re-request a ride when this happens and he strongly encouraged Uber to make this an automatic feature. As Uber does not currently collect data on canceled rides, including the reason for cancellation, Ms. Griffin noted that doing so would be a good way to proactively look at and address the issue. Drivers who cancel more frequently than others may be a good indicator of discrimination.

There was also a strong push from members of the public for Uber to provide more training for their drivers on a variety of issues, from their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to general disability etiquette and sensitivity, particularly around hidden disabilities.

Mr. Taylor reported that Uber has an online educational video for drivers created by a disability-related customer service training organization. However, this training is only required of Uber Assist drivers and is an optional training for all other drivers, who make up the vast majority. He will bring this feedback back to Uber so they can reconsider implementing it as a required training of all drivers.

Ms. Griffin thanked everyone who came out on a rainy night to share their experiences, noting that the very reason for the event was to gather feedback from the disability community on what needs to change and what work needs to be done. In fact, this one was the third such forum the Coalition has hosted around the Commonwealth. If you have feedback you would like to share directly with Uber, you may do so online at [Help.uber.com](https://help.uber.com); there's even a section specifically for accessibility.

Autism Spectrum (continued from page 1)

His overall message can be encapsulated in this quote: "Having autism is not an excuse to not do something, but a key to figuring out how to get things done."

The event centered on sensory issues associated with autism but included so much more. Early in his lecture, Dr. Shore separated participants into groups of five for a simulation activity of sensory overload.

After an over-stimulating five minutes, Dr. Shore debriefed with the group, asking how participants experienced the temporary sensory overload, how participants wanted to react, and how the activity might translate to working with people on the autism spectrum. As one might expect, common responses were: "It was so overwhelming that I wanted to scream and run out of the room!"

Looking around during the activity, several people flapped their hands, flinched, or jumped up and down in a panicked state. Sound familiar? These

responses, of course, bring to mind behaviors individuals with autism might exhibit when over-stimulated. Dr. Shore's activity was a simple yet powerful teaching tool that certainly deepened my personal understanding of sensory issues related to autism.

Throughout his lecture, Dr. Shore did a remarkable job of contextualizing self-stimulatory behaviors that are often viewed as non-functional: flapping, rocking, or running, as examples. He explained that, before the behaviors are labeled distracting and/or harmful, that they should first be understood as self-regulatory.

He also advocated for the use of perhaps-unconventional assistive devices as accommodations. The example he gave was wearing a baseball hat to work. In Dr. Shore's experience, a baseball hat can be a form of self-

advocacy and a reasonable accommodation if a person on the spectrum has sensory sensitivity to fluorescent lights. For an individual on the spectrum to advocate for accommodations is to leverage their strengths. As Dr. Shore remarked, "Everyone I know on the spectrum who is successful is successful because they use their own strengths."

Through Dr. Stephen Shore's lecture, I learned a great deal about sensory issues and advocacy for individuals on the autism spectrum. His personal story is inspiring and his message to educators is important and provocative. I encourage anyone interested in developing a richer understanding of autism spectrum disorders to follow Dr. Stephen Shore's work at www.autismasperger.net.

--Julie Miller

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

- Feb. 3 & 10 **"Planning a Life" Disability Transition Conference** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this conference will provide transition planning information and resources for and about students in special education ages 14 to 22. Middle school and high school is the time when students with disabilities and their families need to start thinking and planning for their future. Families must be active in the planning process to help a student with their post-secondary vision and to prepare for a full and productive life after high school. Topics include Creating a Vision for life beyond High School; Transition Laws & Assessments; The MA Transition Planning Form and IEP goals; Post-Secondary Education and Career preparation; and Community connections & Family involvement. The conference will be held at FCSN, which is located at The Schrafft Center, 529 Main Street, Suite 1M3 in Boston. Registration is required and fees apply (\$125 individual and \$175 family; scholarships are available). For more information, see <http://fcsn.org/linkcenter/pal-schedule>, or contact 617.236.7210, 800.331.0688, info@fcsn.org.
- Feb. 4 **Open Captioned (OC) Performance of CABARET**– OC will be provided at this 2pm performance at the Boston Opera House. Tickets start at \$44 and may be purchased online, at the Boston Opera House Box Office (539 Washington Street in Boston) or by phone at 617.880.2419. Be sure to request OC seating. For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit http://boston.broadway.com/accessible_services/. For information on the musical, click on the "Shows" tab.
- Feb. 5 **Audio Described (AD) Performance of CABARET** – AD will be provided at this 1pm performance at the Boston Opera House. All other details are the same as the Feb. 4 listing, but be sure to request AD seating.
- Feb. 5 **Adaptive skiing, Kicksledding & Snowshoeing in Weston** – Join Stavros Outdoor Access at DCR's Leo J. Martin Ski Track in Weston to enjoy these sports from noon to 4pm. Snow is made daily! See information at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/accessibility/accessible-events.html> or call Stavros, 413.259.0009. Pre-registration is required.

- Feb. 9 **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.
- Feb. 11 **American Sign Language (ASL) Performance of CABARET** – Same details as the Feb. 4 listing, but be sure to request ASL seating.
- Feb. 12 **Adaptive skiing, Kicksledding & Snowshoeing in Weston** – See Feb. 5 listing for details.
- Feb. 20 **Boston Children’s Museum Morningstar Access** – Morningstar Access offers children with special needs/medical needs the opportunity to visit the Museum from 8-10am, a time when there are only a few other visitors. At these times, there is a limit of 150 guests, so children and their families can explore the Museum with less concern about infections and large crowds. Fee is \$8 per person (half-priced admission; free for members) and registration is required. For more information or to register, visit www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar or email Saki Iwamoto, Health and Wellness Educator at Iwamoto@BostonChildrensMuseum.org or call 617.986.3697.
- Feb. 26 **Adaptive skiing, Kicksledding & Snowshoeing in Weston** – See Feb. 5 listing for details.
- Mar. 5 **Adaptive skiing, Kicksledding & Snowshoeing in Weston** – See Feb. 5 listing for details.
- Mar. 9 **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.
- Mar. 13-18 **Performing Arts and Disability: Leadership, Inclusion, and Training** – The Boston University Arts Initiative, Sargent College of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, The Dance Program, and Disability Services is pleased to host AXIS Dance Company for a residency March 13-18, 2017. AXIS Dance Company exists to change the face of dance and disability through three pillars of activity: Artistry, Engagement, and Advocacy. You are invited to join us for any of the following events:
- Mar. 13 Symposium: Performing Arts and Disability: Leadership, Inclusion, and Training – 1:00-5:30pm
 - The Symposium panel discussion will also be live-streamed
 - Mar. 15: Redefining Dance & Disability – 11:00am-12:30pm
 - Mar. 15: Fundamentals of Physically Integrated Dance (no dance experience necessary) – 3:30-5:00pm
 - Mar. 16: Physically Integrated Dance (some dance experience required) – 7:00-8:30pm
 - Mar. 18: Public Performance – 8:00pm
- All events are held in BU venues and are free, but RSVP is required and there is limited space. For more information, visit www.bu.edu/arts/axis/ or email artsinbu@bu.edu. For disability or communication access for those with impairments that may not allow them conventional access to the event's programming, please contact Christopher Robinson at Crobin@bu.edu.
- Mar. 18 **Boston Children’s Museum Morningstar Access, Evening Edition!** – Same details as Feb. 20 listing, except that it will be held from 6-8pm.
- Mar. 27 **Basic Rights in Special Education** – Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this workshop for parents and guardians provides a basic understanding of the complex special education laws and procedures. This workshop will be held from 6:30pm-8:30pm at the Kennedy School at 5 Cherry Street in Somerville. Although free, registration is required: www.fcsn.org, 617.236.7210, 800.331.0688, info@fcsn.org.

Mar. 14 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – You are invited to learn about these programs at a session presented by the Housing Division of the Community Development Department. Presently, the Housing Division is accepting applications for the Homeownership Pool and Rental Applicant Pool. Preference is given for Cambridge residents and families with Children. One-hour sessions will be offered at 6pm and 7pm in the 2nd floor of Trolley Square, 2401 Massachusetts Ave. Sessions are free and open to the public, no need to RSVP. Contact Michelle Moran at mmoran@cambridgema.gov or 617.349.4622 for more information.

Mar. 29-Apr. 6 **ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival** – Now in its sixth year, the ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival will be showcasing a wide and exciting variety of disability-related movies, including feature-length motion pictures, international films, documentaries, and short program films. One thing all of these films 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. Tune into www.boston.reelabilities.org for the soon-to-be posted schedule of films in this annual film festival!

April 4 **ReelAbilities Boston &**

Disability Reframed present: Rachel Is – Join Disability Reframed: A Community Film Series and the ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival for a FREE open-captioned screening of *Rachel Is*, a powerful documentary film. Rachel is mysterious, funny, difficult and full of contradictions, and, like most young people her age, she is ready to move out of her mother's house. This dream of independence seems impossible. Rachel, who is developmentally disabled, can't be left alone and the social services needed for her to live an "adult life" are unavailable. The relationship between mother and daughter is full of frustrations, as each wants independence from the other. What is Jane willing to sacrifice for Rachel to be independent? And what happens to a parent when they don't have the support they need to give their child a good life? Discussion to follow with Director and film subject Charlotte Glynn; and Susan Senator, Author: *Autism Adulthood: Strategies and Insights for a Fulfilling Life*. Cambridge Main Library, Lecture Hall, 449 Broadway, 6:00 to 8:30 pm. Communication access realtime translation (CART) will be provided. Contact ReelAbilities Boston for more information at 617.244.9899 or info@reelboston.org.

Weekly & Recurring Events

We recommend confirming dates and times of 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), 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 1st 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, 4th Floor Conference Room. RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our 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. To set up a meeting or more info, call 617.247.6827, or visit www.rsiaction.org.

Cambridge Women's Center Groups – The Cambridge Women's Center at 46 Pleasant Street is open to all who identify as women. It has a variety of groups such as yoga, sewing, feminist book group, support group for survivors of child sexual abuse, trauma survivors' writing group, teen group, narcotics anonymous, mah jongg, and others. There is also a kitchen where women can prepare a simple meal, and computers with internet access are available during open hours (M-F 10am-8pm; Sat 10am-3pm). Everything is free. A wheelchair lift is available, and every effort will be made to make a group accessible upon request. For up-to-date schedule listings or other information call the Women's Center support Helpline at 617.354.8807 or the business line at 617.354.6394, or visit www.cambridgewomenscenter.org

Mondays

Learn to Cope Support Group – If you have a family member who is battling addiction or know someone who does, invite them to attend our Learn to Cope (LTC) Support Group every Monday night from 7-8:30pm at Spaulding Hospital Cambridge, 1575 Cambridge Street (free parking; use the main entrance). 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. Learn to Cope is free 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 or call 508.738.5148

NAMI Support Group for Caregivers – A free support meeting sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for family members of people with mental illness where they can talk frankly about their challenges and support each other in coping with all the problems that arise in dealing with their loved ones. This group meets on the 1st, 3rd and 4th Mondays of each month from 7:30pm to 9:30pm at the Cambridge Hospital Learning Center, Conference Room A, 3rd Floor, 1493 Cambridge Street. For more information, see www.namimass.org/programs, or contact Elizabeth at elizabeth@nami-cambridgемiddlesex.org or 781.646.0397.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group – Open to adults with OCD, this group meets biweekly on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month from 7-8:30pm at the Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park, Cambridge. Parking is limited, but it is close to the Harvard Square T stop. OCD can feel extremely isolating; it can feel like living on an island. Having people to share experience with, especially people who are going through the exact same thing, seems invaluable. This group is a casual, open discussion of the trials (and triumphs!) of living with OCD. \$5.00 suggested donation. 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.

Living with MS Support Group in Lexington – Professionally facilitated Support Group offers an opportunity for people with MS to meet and share information and resources in a comfortable, confidential and supportive environment. This general group is open to people diagnosed with MS regardless of symptoms or disease course. Meets on the 3rd Tuesday of every month (September-June) from 4:00-5:30pm at Lahey Lexington, 16 Hayden Avenue. For more information, please contact Caitlin Dionne RN at 781-372-7098 or at Caitlin.A.Dionne@lahey.org.

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group – This is a support group run by and for people living with mental illness that provides a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope.

Connection groups are free of charge, and open to anyone with a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. You do not need to be a member of NAMI to attend. This group is held every Tuesday from 1-2:30pm at The Hope Center, Lindemann Mental Health Center, Plaza Level, 25 Staniford St. in Boston. Email Jessica at folgore1120@hotmail.com for more information.

Movie Showings for Guests & Families Living with Autism or Other Special Needs – AMC is proud to partner with the Autism Society to bring you unique movie showings where you can feel free to be you! We turn the lights up, and turn the sound down, so you can get up, dance, walk, shout or sing! Our Sensory Friendly Film program screens to four showings per month, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7pm (and Saturdays at 10am). These screenings are held in 7 AMC theaters in Massachusetts, including AMC Loews Boston Common 19. See www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films for the schedule of films and more information.

Wednesdays

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) meets 1 – 3 pm at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 and 3 on the 4th Wednesday of each month to coordinate with MBTA officials to identify accessibility problems in both the Fixed Route and Paratransit system and to work on solutions. There are also presentations on timely topics and updates on ongoing MBTA and Paratransit-vendor activities. For more information or to request reasonable accommodations, contact Janie Guion, the AACT Coordinator, at 857.702.3658 or aact@ctps.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. Usually meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 1-2:30pm on the 5th 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, contact Sally Johnson, LICSW at 617.952.6254 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or by email at sejohnson@partners.org.

Carroll Center for the Blind Information Day – Learn more about Carroll Center programs and our visual impairment services the 1st 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. 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 2nd and 4th 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 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 call 617.369.3302 (voice), 617.369.3395 (TTY) or e-mail access@mfa.org.

Housing Search Workshop – Learn how to conduct a successful housing search and how to communicate with housing authorities, agencies and landlords from 10am-noon on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at the Boston Center for Independent Living, 60 Temple Place, 5th Floor, Boston. For more information, call 617.338.6665.

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 111 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 Santa Maria 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 3-4:30pm 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 2nd 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.

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 Thursday 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 ATRC@eastersealsma.org for more information.

Brain Injury Survivor Support Group in Bedford – Sponsored by the Brain Injury Association of MA, this group is held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1-3pm in the Community Room at Village at Taylor Pond, 3000 Taylor Pond Ln. (59 Middlesex Tpk.) in Bedford. Please contact Joanne Stephen at joannejstp@aol.com or 781.698.6169 before attending.

Core Connections Group for People with MS – National MS Society affiliated support group for people living with MS, their families, friends and caregivers. Besides sharing the realities of living with MS, we share good times, laughter and information in a positive, upbeat environment. Everyone comes full of ideas to take home and perhaps try out. Join a monthly meeting for education, information and good company! Meets 7-9pm every 1st Thursday (except in July & August) at Accelerated Cure Project, 460 Totten Pond Rd in Waltham. For more information, contact Alan at info@coreconnections.org or 617.599.3001.

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@dbsaboston.org.

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.

OCD Support Group Informal Gatherings – The Monday OCD Support Group (see information listed under Mondays) has informal get-togethers at the Cosi restaurant next to the Kendall/MIT stop on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month from 5-6:30pm. Please join us for a nice meal and/or friendly conversation! Email ocdgroupcambridge@gmail.com for more information or to confirm a gathering.

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, Conference Rooms A and B, 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 visit 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. The program typically meets on the 1st OR 2nd 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 \$9 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.

Family-friendly Movie Showings for Guests & Families Living with Autism or Other Special Needs – AMC is proud to partner with the Autism Society to bring you unique movie showings where you can feel free to be you! We turn the lights up, and turn the sound down, so you can get up, dance, walk, shout or sing! Our Sensory Friendly Film program screens to four showings per month, on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays at 10am (other sensory friendly films are held on Tuesdays). These screenings are held in 7 AMC theaters in Massachusetts, including AMC Loews Boston Common 19. See www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films for the schedule of films and more information.

Sundays

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.

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. Call 617.369.3302 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 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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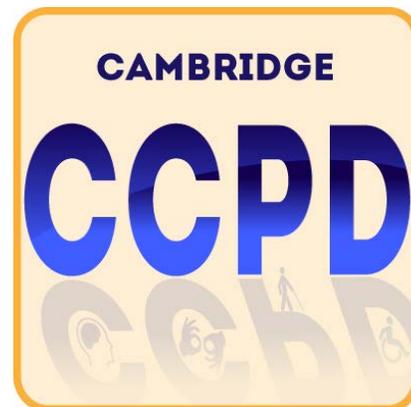
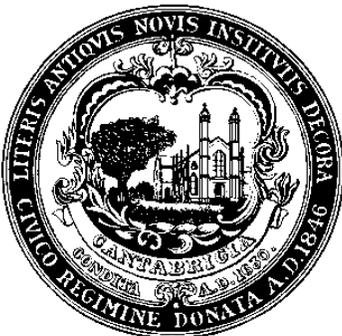
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