

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Dr. Jonathan Lazar, Web Accessibility Expert, Speaks at CCPD Meeting



Dr. Jonathan Lazar

CCPD has been fortunate to connect with Dr. Jonathan Lazar, an expert in the field of web accessibility who focuses his research on understanding how people with disabilities interact with technologies, how improved interface design of such technology can change the quality of life, and how human-computer

interaction and public policy influence each other.

Dr. Lazar is a professor of computer and information sciences, as well as the founder and director of the Universal Usability Laboratory at Towson University in Maryland, but is spending the current academic year on sabbatical in Cambridge as the Shutzer Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.

He provided a brief “tour” of web accessibility at the January 10, 2013 CCPD Meeting, touching on assistive technology (AT), web accessibility guidelines, methods for evaluating web accessibility, transparency, and university/community partnerships. One factor that web designers must consider in creating a fully accessible website is that there are multiple types of AT that people with (and without) disabilities employ to access operating systems, applications, and the internet.

(More on Web Accessibility, page 2)

New Mentoring Program for Youth with Mental Illness in their Families



Heads Up is a free Cambridge-based mentoring program connecting youth and mentors who share the experience of having a family member with a mental illness. It is the only program in the Greater Boston Area specifically serving this group of young people.

For 140 years, Cambridge Family and Children’s Service (CFCS), a nonprofit human services agency, has served youth and families across the Commonwealth. Since 1991, the Volunteer Mentor Program has been a part of that vision, and Heads Up is its latest initiative.

Mentors and mentees meet in the community weekly, doing creative and goal-based activities that appeal to both of them—such as playing a game, shooting hoops, or discussing mental health—it’s up to them. All mentors are trained in youth development, as well as how to engage young people in conversations around mental health.

Heads Up began when a community member approached Sophia Gardner, Mentor Coordinator. He had grown up with a mother who had a serious mental illness and, in his own words, “It would have made all the difference if I’d had a chance to connect with somebody else in similar circumstances.”

(More on Heads Up Mentoring, page 3)

**Disability Reframed: A
Community Film Series
presents:**

BENDA BILILI!

Saturday, March 2, 2013
2 PM to 5 PM at the Salvation Army
Kroc Community Center
650 Dudley Street, Dorchester

See calendar listing on page 6 for
more information.

Web Accessibility (cont. from page 1)

For example, some people who are blind or partially sighted use screen readers, which read text aloud, while others rely on Braille displays, which translate text into Braille on a tactile device.

Some people with certain mobility impairments use speech recognition software to dictate rather than type on a keyboard, and many folks who are deaf or hard of hearing depend on captioning to enjoy online video content. These are just a few of the nearly limitless and constantly evolving assistive technologies that exist for this purpose, and they all have limitations of some sort that must be taken into consideration.

For example, a screen reader cannot describe an image, unless it contains code with descriptive text that is recognizable to the screen reader, something that must be added by the designer who posted the image. A website that is designed to be universally usable is one that is usable to people regardless of whether or not they have a disability and regardless of what type, if any, AT they use to access it. You cannot simply look at a website and determine whether or not it is accessible because an accessible website does not visually appear any differently than an inaccessible website.

Dr. Lazar noted that Cambridge, no stranger to innovation, is the home of the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI), which develops the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG); these guidelines are widely considered the international standard for web accessibility. He said that while the current version of the guidelines are WCAG 2.0, published in 2008, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, which requires Federal government websites to be accessible, contains guidelines that are a modified version of WCAG 1.0. However, Dr. Lazar reported that the Federal government is starting to transition to WCAG 2.0 standards, which are more stringent than 1.0 standards. He also said that many states simply use the same technical standards as the Federal government, although they may have differing legal requirements.

Dr. Lazar spoke about the three most common methods for evaluating website accessibility, and the benefits and limits of each:

- Usability testing involving people with disabilities (PWD)
 - Pros: representative users attempting representative tasks; most accurate for complex tasks involving a series of web pages, a process or a transaction
 - Cons: generally evaluates only the accessibility functions that the specific tester needs, it may not address the functions that the tester does not rely on
- Expert inspections (Interface experts performing structured inspections using assistive technologies)
 - Pro: most accurate for determining strict compliance with laws, as the inspections check every guideline
 - Cons: won't determine if a web site is easy to use, only if it's legally compliant, and the inspections can be time consuming and expensive; not practical for huge amounts of content
- Automated testing tools
 - Pro: Good for testing thousands of web pages
 - Con: Inaccurate and sometimes misleading results

Aside from continuing efforts to reach and maintain compliance with accessibility standards, Dr. Lazar also recommends that websites provide transparency about website accessibility, openly stating online the following:

1. a description of the accessibility features built into the site
2. a description of the user testing, expert inspection, and automated review methods utilized to check for accessibility before new information or pages get posted on the site
3. a description of how often the site is checked for accessibility compliance
4. a contact person for accessibility compliance within the agency (where complaints or problems can get sent)
5. a link to where results of accessibility testing are posted (Olalere and Lazar, 2011)

Lastly, Dr. Lazar offered the idea of forging partnerships between universities and communities in order to assist local governments check their websites for compliance. For example, he assigns projects to his students at the Towson University, to evaluate Maryland websites that are required by law to be accessible. They do multi-stage accessibility evaluations, and then write reports of their findings, which are provided to the web site providers and also made public. Such partnerships provide great learning opportunities for students, and free technical assistance on maintaining accessible websites to local governments, as well as motivation to ensure ongoing compliance!

Many thanks to Dr. Lazar for taking the time to speak with CCPD, and for much of the content of this article. Photo courtesy of Dr. Lazar. For more information on Dr. Lazar and his work, see <<http://triton.towson.edu/~jlazar/>>. See <www.w3.org/WAI/> for more information on the Web Accessibility Initiative, which is located at MIT.

Heads Up Mentoring (cont. from page 1)

These children and teens may feel confused, conflicted, or isolated—needs often overlooked during traditional treatment. Through supportive and lasting relationships, Heads Up mentors help youth process their emotions, learn about mental health, and build self-confidence.

Heads Up is fully coordinated by CFCS staff who recruit, screen, train, and supervise volunteer mentors, typically young professionals or recent retirees, all of whom have undergone a criminal background check. The matching process is highly individualized by interests, preferences, and the mentees' needs.

Heads Up is free of charge and now open to new mentees and mentors!

Eligible youth should be between the ages of 8-22, live or have lived with a family member (e.g. a sibling or caregiver) with a mental illness, reside in the Greater Boston area, and be willing to meet weekly with a mentor for at least one year.

Mentors should be over the age of 21, have grown up with a family member with a mental illness, and be

able to make the minimum one-year commitment to support a young person.

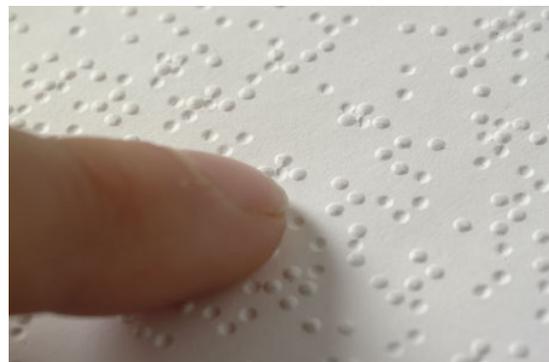
"I'm thrilled to offer this opportunity to the community," says Sophia Gardner. "Knowing this is a population that can be overlooked, we're really excited to offer our support."

To learn more about Heads Up, contact Yelena Tsilker, Mentoring Fellow, at 617-876-4210 x141 or <ytsilker@helpfamilies.org>. Photo courtesy CFCS.

Braille Embosser Now Available at Cambridge Main Library

The Cambridge Public Library recently announced the arrival of a braille embosser to allow embossing of documents for library patrons who are blind. Located at the Main Library at 449 Broadway in Cambridge, the Braille Blazer embosser and accompanying braille translation software allows Library patrons to emboss quality braille documents. This machine is for the exclusive use of the Library's patrons who are blind.

The braille embosser is situated in the Fuller Room, near the Information Commons, on the first floor of the Main Library. Patrons may reserve a two-hour block, up to twenty-four hours in advance in person or by calling the Information Commons at 617-349-4425. If no one is waiting, patrons may continue to use the braille embosser in two-hour increments. Braille embossing is available at no cost to Cambridge Library patrons who are blind.



In a press release, the Cambridge Public Library expressed its appreciation to the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities for its support of this service.

Commission Seeks New Members

Cambridge City Manager Robert W. Healy is seeking persons interested in serving on the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) advisory board. Made up of 11 Members who serve three-year terms in a volunteer capacity, the CCPD board meets on the second Thursday of every month at 5:30 PM.

CCPD seeks to build a membership that reflects the cultural and racial diversity of the city, is cross-disability in nature and representative of the different geographical areas of the community. Members must be current residents of Cambridge.

Together we work to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life for individuals with disabilities, and strives to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory. CCPD Members are expected to work with other Members

and CCPD staff to fulfill the goals and objectives of the CCPD Ordinance (CMC Chapter 2.96).

Members of CCPD are expected to attend monthly meetings, participate in subcommittees, and work on various short and/or long-term projects, as needed.

For more information, contact Kate Thurman, Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities at 617-349-4692 (voice), 617-492-0235 (TTY) or <ccpd@cambridgema.gov>. Interested persons should submit a letter by Friday, March 29, 2013 describing their relevant experience and the kinds of disability-related issues or projects that interest them (along with a resume if possible) to:

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
Fax: 617-349-4307
E-mail: <citymanager@cambridgema.gov>

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

- Feb. 2 **Second Annual ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival presents *The Straight Line* with Audio Description at the MFA** – Run in Boston by the Boston Jewish Film Festival, this film festival is dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories and artistic expressions of people with different disabilities. This film is in French with English open captions and Audio Descriptions (including English translation and scene description). *The Straight Line* is a taut French sports drama about a blind runner, who trains with a former athlete with a criminal past. Josh Crary, who authors the Boston Blind Runner blog and will run the Boston Marathon for the second time in April, will speak after the film, which is being held at 7pm at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston. Tickets are \$10. Visit <www.bjff.org/reelabilities>, email <info@bjff.org> or call 617-244-9899 for more info.
- Feb. 3 **ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival presents *Body and Soul* at the MFA** – This powerful and uplifting documentary, which is in Portuguese with English open captions, follows three young Mozambicans with physical disabilities. Their resilient daily lives reveal their physical, psychological and emotional challenges. Dr. Jeanne Marie Penvenne, social and labor historian of colonial Mozambique and history professor at Tufts University, will be present to introduce *Body and Soul*. The film will be screened at the MFA at noon, and tickets are \$4. See Feb. 2 ReelAbilities listing for more information, including location and contact.
- Feb. 3 **ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival presents *Me, Too* at the MFA** – In this gripping Spanish drama (with English open captions), Daniel, a recent college graduate with Down Syndrome forges a strong bond with vivacious workmate Laura, but their burgeoning relationship turns complicated when he professes his love to her. This film questions modern relationships and conceptions of “normality” as the couple grapples with their need to connect. The film will be screened at the MFA at 2:15pm and tickets are \$4. See Feb. 2 ReelAbilities listing for more information, including location and contact.

- Feb. 4 **Parent Information Session for Heads Up** – Did you know that mentoring can improve friendships, family relationships, and school attendance? Heads Up is a new mentoring program at Cambridge Family & Children's Service (CFCS), connecting youth and caring adults who have a family member with a mental health need. Come learn how Heads Up staff engage mentors, mentees, and families in order to ensure a safe, successful, and fulfilling relationship for your child. The Information Session will from 6-7pm at CFCS, 60 Gore St. in Cambridge, right by the Lechmere MBTA & bus stop. Limited childcare is available upon request. To RSVP or for more information, contact Yelena Tsilker at 617-876-4210 x141 or by email at <ytsilker@helpfamilies.org>.
- Feb. 4 **ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival presents a FREE screening of *Mabul* at the JCC in Newton** – In this award-winning Israeli film (in Hebrew with English open captions), Yoni studies his bar mitzvah portion about the story of Noah's Ark amidst a troubled family, and life gets complicated when older brother Tomer, who is autistic, returns home. Note: mild sexual content. This screening will be held at 6:30pm at the Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center (JCC), 333 Nahanton St. in Newton. For more information about the JCC, email <info@jccgb.org> or call 617-558-6522. See Feb. 2 ReelAbilities listing for more information about the Film Festival.
- Feb. 5 **ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival presents *Princess in West Newton*** – Cheerful, delusional Anna lives in a Finnish psychiatric hospital believing she is an English royal. Can "Princess" escape a dangerous lobotomy, a cutting-edge psychiatric treatment in the mid-20th century, the period in which the film is set? The film is in Finnish with English open captions and will be held 7pm at the West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington Street/Route 16 in West Newton. Social worker and local therapist Goldie Eder will moderate a panel about the portrayal of mentally ill characters in contemporary film following the screening. Tickets are \$10 each. See <www.westnewtoncinema.com> or call 617-964-8074 for information about the Cinema, and please refer to the Feb. 2 ReelAbilities listing for more information about the Film Festival.
- Feb. 6 **Babson College presents Temple Grandin: *Thinking in Pictures*** – This presentation by Temple Grandin, a professor of animal science who has autism, is FREE and open to the public and will be held at 5pm at Babson's Sorenson Center for the Arts, located on College Drive in Wellesley, MA (note: the building does not have a street number, but the main address for Babson's campus is 231 Forest Street, Wellesley). For more information on the event or directions, call the Sorenson Center for the Arts at 781-239-5622. For information about Temple Grandin, visit <www.templegrandin.com>.
- Feb. 14 **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 on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 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.
- Feb. 19 **FREE Adaptive Skating: Games on Ice!** – Offered by the Department of Recreation (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP), this is an opportunity to use your wheelchair, an ice sled, or conventional skates to slide around the ice at The Cronin Skating Rink, 850 Revere Beach Parkway! The whole rink is ours to play on from 11:30am to 1:30pm. Spin, slide, race, slalom, socialize and play gently competitive games with others! Ice sleds and conventional skates available. Admission and equipment is provided free of cost. For more information or to register, call 617-626-1294 or email <Gigi.Ranno@state.ma.us>.
- Feb. 25 **FREE Parent Training: Basic Rights in Special Education** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this workshop provides families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is designed to help parents learn how to be effective partners with their child's school to decide the child's eligibility for special education, and to plan, make

decisions and monitor their child's progress in school. Workshop materials are also available in Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese. This workshop will be held at the Kennedy School Library, 5 Cherry Street in Somerville from 7-9pm. Although free and open to the public, pre-registration is required. For more information, see <www.fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php>, call 617-236-7210, or email <info@fcsn.org>.

- Mar. 2 **Disability Reframed Presents: *Benda Bilili!*** – Join us for a free screening of this 2010 documentary film, followed by a lively audience discussion. This screening will be held from 2pm to 5pm at the Salvation Army Kroc Community Center, 650 Dudley Street in Dorchester. *Benda Bilili!* follows a group of homeless musicians with disabilities living on the streets of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as they form a group called Staff Benda Bilili and eventually reach a worldwide acclaim. "Benda Bilili" means "look beyond appearances" in Lingala, one of the native languages of the Congo. For sign language interpreters or other accommodations, please contact the Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities by February 22 at 617--635--3682 (voice) or 617-635-2541 (TTY) or e-mail disability@cityofboston.gov. Sponsored by the Salvation Army Kroc Center, Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities and Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Join Disability Reframed: A Community Film Series on Facebook!
- Mar. 5 **Cognitive Enhancement Therapy, A Presentation at Cambridge Hospital by Matcheri Keshavan, M.D. on Evidence-based CET** – Explore the promise of Cognitive Enhancement Therapy (CET) with Dr. Matcheri S. Keshavan, the Stanley Cobb Professor and Vice-Chair for Public Psychiatry at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Harvard Medical School, and his colleague Kristen Woodberry, MSW, Ph.D. Dr. Keshavan will address "Cognitive Enhancement and Brain Plasticity." CET improves cognitive skills and social cognition for persons in recovery from mental illness. He will explain why CET is so important in treating cognitive deficits in persons with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression and how CET can support vocational success. Offered by the Cambridge Middlesex Chapter of NAMI, this event will be held in the Cambridge Hospital Macht Auditorium, 1493 Cambridge Street and will start with refreshments from 6:30-7pm, followed by the presentation from 7-8pm, with time for questions from 8-8:30pm. For more information, see <www.nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org> or contact Jane at <jane@nami-cambridgemiddlesex.org> or 617-491-3459.
- Mar. 9 **Visions of Community 2013: A Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals Who Serve Them** – Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this conference will feature over 30 workshops in multiple languages on a range of topics including the IEP process, advocacy, transition, & recreation, and showcasing more than 75 exhibitors. This is also a great time to network with other families and to pick up free resources. Registration is \$75 per person until Feb. 9th, after which registration goes up to \$90 per person. To inquire about a limited number of scholarships, call 617-236-7210, ext. 198 or email <voc2013@fcsn.org> and leave a message. The conference is being held from 7:30am - 5:00pm at The Seaport World Trade Center in Boston (on the MBTA Silver Line), and will feature keynote speakers Professor Thomas Hehir, Ed.D. of Harvard University, author of *Effective Inclusive Schools: Designing Successful Schoolwide Programs*, and Brian Heffernan, a young adult and self-advocate with Down syndrome who attends MassBay Community College.
- Mar. 12 **FREE Adaptive Skating: Games on Ice!** – Please see Feb. 19 listing for details.
- Mar. 14 **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 on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 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.

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 Connection – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), meets every Monday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 153 South St, 2nd Floor 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>.

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.

Tuesdays

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 in Conference Room 8A on the 8th floor of Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 125 Nashua Street in Boston (adjacent to the TD Bank Garden; near MBTA North Station). 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 <ATRC@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.

Central Square 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 at the Central Square Branch of the Cambridge Public Library (45 Pearl Street), 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 Valarie 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>.

OCD Support Group – A casual, peer-led, open discussion of the trials (and triumphs!) of living with OCD and anxiety. All are welcome, all are encouraged to come, although the group strives to keep private and secure, as confidentiality is and will remain of highest priority. The group meets from 7-8:30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month (excluding holidays) at the Friends Meeting House, 5 Longfellow Park in Cambridge, with a suggested donation of \$6-\$7. For more information, contact Brandon Kalashian at <brandex07@gmail.com> or Cal Louis at <mahoganybrown16@gmail.com>.

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. Hosted by Jamie Freed; 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 and meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 3-4pm in Conference Room 8A on the 8th floor of SRH, 125 Nashua Street in Boston (adjacent to the TD Bank Garden; near MBTA North Station). For more information, 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>. Upcoming themes are as follows:

Feb. 14 – Academics, Grades K-5

Mar. 14 – Early Childhood

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 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 on the 9th Floor at SRH (take elevator to 9th Floor, make a left off the elevator; second to last door on the right), 125 Nashua Street in Boston (adjacent to the TD Bank Garden; near MBTA North Station). 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

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, conference rooms 8A & AB, 125 Nashua Street, Boston. 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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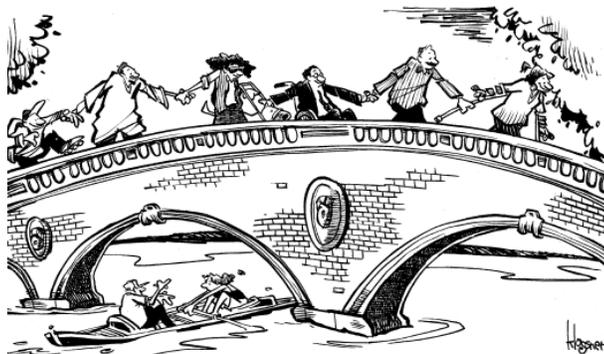
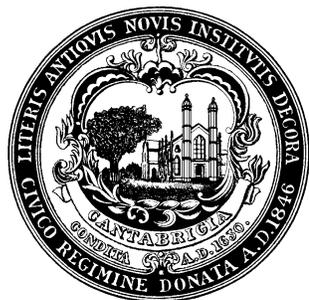
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AccessLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
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