

AccessLetter

***Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities***

Mental Health Advocates Express Concerns over Murphy Bill



There is no doubt that our nation's mental health system leaves much to be desired. Many people with psychiatric disabilities experience difficulty accessing treatment for a variety of reasons. These

reasons include lack of funding and resources, low reimbursement rates for mental health services, a shortage of culturally competent care, and stigma perpetuated by inaccurate portrayals of mental illness in media, particularly following acts of violence, among other things.

To this end, it is admirable that the U.S. House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, led by Representative Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania, conducted a review of the system beginning in early 2013, just after – and in response to – the Newtown shooting tragedy. The Subcommittee indeed found many systemic problems in our mental health system and made numerous recommendations that culminated in the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act (H.R. 2646), more widely known as the Murphy Bill.

However, many advocates argue that from the get go, this bill was informed by and written from a public safety standpoint, and while our nation certainly has a lot of work to do to curb violence, our broken mental health care system is one of the foremost public health crises of our time, and it must be addressed as such.

**(More on Murphy
Bill, page 2)**

Architectural Access Reform on Legislative Agenda



Advocates for civil rights for people with disabilities have long pressed for legislation to improve access. Better accessibility to buildings and facilities means more opportunities for training, jobs, housing, culture, entertainment and social

interaction, to name just a few.

In Massachusetts, one particular area of concern has been to eliminate peculiarities and loopholes in the Commonwealth's accessibility law that routinely allow facilities to be built or renovated that do not comply with federal accessibility standards.

One bill currently under consideration on Beacon Hill, Senate Bill 1323, would update the Massachusetts Architectural Access Law to align it with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Once passed, this bill would both improve access and make it easier for architects and builders to comply with sometimes complex accessibility standards.

Tom Hopkins, Director of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board said the main objective of the bill was to bring state accessibility law into alignment with the ADA in such areas as employment, housing, and parking.

To cite just one example of the need for alignment, presently the state access law exempts "employee-only" areas from

**(More on Access
Reform Bill, page 3)**

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Murphy Bill

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Rather than overhaul the system from the ground up, this bill calls for diverting attention and funding away from prevention and health maintenance care to late-stage crisis intervention for individuals with the most severe psychiatric disabilities. Creating a system to address violence rather than healthcare needs inevitably removes the focus from the very people it purports to help – people with psychiatric disabilities – and creates concerns for civil rights.

If the Murphy Bill were to pass as it is currently written, many people with psychiatric disabilities could be turned away from help if their levels of illness are not determined to be severe enough; there is no clear standard as to what constitutes severity. Additionally, like many so-called physical illnesses, mental illnesses tend to operate on a spectrum; there are times when people are stabilized and doing well and there are other times when they may have more acute symptoms. In no other medical specialty would anyone consider cutting access to care at any point along the spectrum; think of medical centers removing resources for outpatient care and investing in just intensive care units.

Also, generally speaking, the earlier someone receives treatment, the better her or his outcome. This bill calls for cutting funding for community-based supports that have a proven record for being effective. Funding would be increased for assisted outpatient treatment (AOT), which is court-mandated treatment that patients must follow or face punitive action, and for long-term involuntary inpatient hospitalizations, also known as institutionalization.

“We already know what works,” said Jennifer Mathis, Deputy Legal Director of the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. “Proven programs such as supportive housing, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), peer

support, mobile crisis services, and supported employment have extremely successful outcomes, including for people with the most significant mental health needs. The problem is that these services are not widely available to people who need them. This bill would make it even more difficult to take these services to scale, as it would invest mental health dollars elsewhere,” Mathis said.

The Murphy Bill also proposes changing portions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) by easing current privacy protection for patients with psychiatric disabilities, and allowing family members to access to portions of their mental health records. The protection of healthcare information is an important civil right currently

afforded to all patients in the United States. This change would affect only those with mental health needs. This disparate treatment of one segment of the population is arguably discriminatory. Additionally, knowing that their families could access treatment information would likely deter many people from getting the help they need.

Each state has a federally funded protection and advocacy (P&A) agency that is charged with protecting

the legal rights of individuals with disabilities (the Disability Law Center, a private non-profit in Boston, is the P&A for Massachusetts). The country’s Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program provides a vital resource for individuals who experience discrimination due to having a mental illness. The Murphy Bill proposes cutting PAIMI funding from its current annual level of \$36.1 million to \$5 million; this greater than 87% cut in funding would drastically reduce the ability of P&A legal service agencies to protect the rights of this population.

In addition, the bill significantly reduces the authority of P&A agencies. According to the Bazelon Center, “the bill would prohibit the PAIMI program from providing advocacy and legal representation to help people with mental illness with a host of important issues,



including housing, employment, education, community living, Medicaid benefits. Advocacy concerning anything other than abuse and neglect would be barred.”¹

Some provisions of the Murphy Bill could result in positive change. For example, it would provide funding for mental health awareness training for first responders. It also calls for increasing funding for brain research. But, while this bill may be well intended and include some provisions that may result in some improvements, many advocates feel that this bill fails to actually reform the mental health system and instead makes treatment more difficult to access for many, infringes upon the civil rights of people with psychiatric disabilities and removes key protections of a vulnerable population.

The full bill can be found online at <http://murphy.house.gov/helpingfamiliesinmentalhealthcrisisact>

If you would like to express an opinion regarding the Murphy Bill, contact your district’s U.S. House Representative (www.house.gov/representatives/) and the U.S. Senators for Massachusetts: Edward Markey (www.markey.senate.gov/contact) and Elizabeth Warren (www.warren.senate.gov)

--by Kate Thurman

Access Reform Bill

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accessibility requirements, although the ADA has no such exemption. Since municipal building departments issue construction permits based solely on state accessibility law, all too often, ADA accessibility standards are ignored or overlooked.

“As grassroots representatives of people with disabilities, we see every day how badly the lack of accessible housing and the lack of employment hurt people with disabilities,” said Colin Killick, Community Organizer for the Disability Policy Consortium. “Nationwide, persons with disabilities are more than twice as likely as able-bodied people to be homeless, and only 16% of people with disabilities have jobs. We believe that a major contributor to these problems is Massachusetts’ significantly outdated state building [access] code, which lags far behind federal...ADA standards.”



Killick continued: “There is no requirement in state law, even for brand-new buildings, that employee-only areas of commercial buildings be accessible. For instance, a grocery store could be built tomorrow in which the stockrooms, the employee restrooms, the break room, etc. could not be entered by disabled employees, and state authorities could do nothing about it.”

“As state law currently stands, when apartment buildings built prior to 1991 are substantially renovated, or [factory or other commercial] buildings built before 1991 are converted to multifamily residential use, only 5% of units in the building need to be made accessible, while the remaining 95% can remain completely inaccessible,” said Killick.

Because state building inspectors and the state’s Architectural Access Board can only enforce state law, frequently buildings are constructed or renovated in violation of ADA standards. For a person with a disability who is denied a place to live or a job as a result, their only recourse is to file a complaint with the Department of Justice in Washington D.C. and wait years, or to file a federal lawsuit. Meanwhile, architects and developers in Massachusetts are faced with the need to comply with two sometimes conflicting rulebooks, and, all too often, are simply not aware that following state law does not mean they are complying with federal law.

SB 1323, sponsored by Senator James Timilty, would fix all of these problems. It would set state standards on residential and commercial buildings in line with those in the ADA. It would lead to more accessible housing being built, and more workplaces becoming accessible. It would empower state building inspectors to address problems at the local level, reducing the chance of costly and difficult lawsuits, and let the

Architectural Access Board require accessibility at the planning stage, instead of struggling to fix problems once construction has already occurred.

Finally, SB 1323 would allow Massachusetts AAB to obtain Substantial Equivalency status from the Justice Department, letting developers follow just one set of rules with the confidence that federal law is also being followed. The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities strongly supports SB 1323, and we urge you to do so as well. Find your state legislators by visiting www.openstates.org/find_your_legislator.

UAP's New Work to Play Initiative

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's Universal Access Program (UAP) is excited to partner with Spaulding Rehab Hospital to expand the range of accessible recreation opportunities for working people with disabilities in the Boston area.

This Work to Play Initiative (W2P) will bring more weekend and evening programs to the UAP program schedule, to provide programming outside of regular working hours. [See Feb. 24 listing in the calendar for the first W2P event!]

UAP is looking for your help to expand this initiative in the coming seasons so that working people can take advantage of all of the great recreational opportunities at parks across the state. If you are a person with a disability who works, or know someone who is, please take a few minutes to fill out the UAP survey at goo.gl/DDRMmW

Cambridge Citizen Requests, Now Online & On the Go!

Commonwealth Connect is your direct connection for commonly requested City services, like fixing broken curb ramps, replacing missing sidewalk bricks, or reporting icy or unshoveled sidewalks. By using Commonwealth Connect, your request is automatically



assigned to the responsible department, and you are given a tracking number and contact information in order to be able to follow up on your request if needed. Reporting an issue takes only a minute and helps make our city a better place

to live, work and visit! You can now view interactive maps of open service requests for select report types:

- View map of pothole requests
- View map of icy or snowy street requests
- View map of unshoveled or icy sidewalk requests

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

Make Your Accessible Campground Reservations Now! – Plan your summer vacation now! Try an accessible yurt in July or September at Shawme-Crowell State Forest, Nickerson State Park, or Wells State Park. Reservations go quickly! To reserve a yurt or for more information about accessible camping, contact Rachael at rachael.lee@state.ma.us or 413.545.5745, or visit <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/accessibility/accessible-camping-generic.html>

Feb. 2 **The Behavioral Challenges of the Anxious Child: A Parents' Survival Guide** – Sponsored by OCD Massachusetts, this lecture will feature Dr. David Stember of McLean Hospital and Harvard Medical School. It will be held from 7pm to 8:00pm in the De Marneffe Cafeteria Building, Room 132 at McLean Hospital, 115 Mill Street in Belmont. www.ocdmassachusetts.org/belmont-lecture-series/ or contact carla@ocd-therapy.net or 781.775.1127 for more information on this lecture series.

Feb. 4 **Boston Comics Roundtable** – The Boston Comics Roundtable (BCR) is an ongoing forum for artists and writers at all levels of experience who work in the comics medium or wish to. They are dedicated to the premise that comics is an art form that can encompass any genre—not just humor, action, etc. but autobiography, history, journalism and fiction, poetry and even abstraction, to name a few. Bring your work for creative feedback and motivation, discuss comics and graphic novels you're reading, and share experiences and advice on how to manage a creative life and meet professional challenges. Above all, they encourage friendly interactions and conversations with others who share your interests. BCR is free and open to anyone, from students and beginners to old pros, and they strive for diversity. This roundtable will be held from 7pm to 8pm in the Community Room at the Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway.

Feb. 5 & 6 **"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. Registration is required and fees apply (\$125 individual and \$175 family; scholarships are available). For more information, see <http://fcsn.org/linkcenter/pal>, or contact 617.236.7210, 800.331.0688, info@fcsn.org.

- Feb. 6 **Open Captioned (OC) Performance of PIPPIN**– 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. 7 **Audio Described (AD) Performance of PIPPIN**– AD will be provided at this 1pm performance at the Boston Opera House. All other details are the same as the Feb. 6 listing, but be sure to request AD seating.
- Feb. 7 **Adaptive Cross-country Skiing, Kicksledding and Snowshoeing** – Come enjoy these winter activities from noon to 4:00pm at the Leo J. Martin Ski Track in Weston, where snow is made daily! For more information or to register, call Stavros Outdoor Access at 413.259.0009.
- Feb. 11 **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. Sessions will be offered at 1pm and 2pm in the 2nd floor conference room of City Hall Annex at 344 Broadway. Contact Michelle Moran at mmoran@cambridgema.gov or 617.349.4622 for more information.
- Feb. 11 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street from 5:30 to 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. 13 **ASL Performance of PIPPIN**– Same details as Feb. 6 listing, but be sure to request ASL seating.
- Feb. 15 **Boston Children’s Museum Morningstar Access** –Morningstar Access offers children with special needs/medical needs the opportunity to visit the Museum from 8 to 10am, a time when there are only a few other visitors. At these times, there is a limit of 100 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. 15 **Adaptive Cross-country Skiing, Kicksledding and Snowshoeing** – Same details as Feb. 7 listing.
- Feb. 16 **FREE Adaptive Ice Skating** – Join DCR’s Universal Access Program (UAP) for an afternoon of skating and socializing, from 11:30am-1:20pm at Cronin Rink, 870 Revere Beach Pkwy in Revere. Lace up a pair of conventional skates or slide around the ice on your manual or power wheelchair. Ice sleds are also available to glide around—propel yourself with small hockey sticks or be pushed around the rink by a friend. The whole rink is ours to play on! Activities on the ice include obstacle courses, a tower of blocks for building up and crashing down, races, colorful balls and pucks to shoot around, power chair games, and gently competitive hockey matches. Admission and equipment is provided free of cost. Ice sleds, skate walkers, helmets, ice grippers, and ice skates are available. Spin, race, slalom, socialize, and play gently competitive games with others! Call the UAP to register: 413.545.5758 or email marcy.marchello@state.ma.us.

- Feb. 21 **Adaptive Cross-country Skiing, Kicksledding and Snowshoeing** – Same details as Feb. 7 listing.
- Feb. 24 **Outdoor Skating at The Frog Pond** – Join us for outdoor adaptive skating after work, our first Work to Play event! Come to the Frog Pond on the Boston Common and enjoy adaptive skating at a beautiful location in the heart of the city during public skating time from 5 to 8pm. Call All Out Adventures at 413.584.2052 to [register](#).
- Feb. 25 **Boston Comics Roundtable** – Same details as Feb. 4 listing.
- Feb. 28 **Adaptive Cross-country Skiing, Kicksledding and Snowshoeing** – Same details as Feb. 7 listing.
- Feb. 29 **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 Cheery Street in Somerville. Although free, registration is required: www.fcsn.org, 617.236.7210, 800.331.0688, info@fcsn.org.
- March 1 **First Session of Back in the Swing (BITS): Golf**– In collaboration with Golfsmith, Spaulding's adaptive golf programs are designed to assist persons of all ages with disabling conditions in returning to or learning to play the game of golf. It is appropriate for those with physical limitations due to arthritis, stroke, hip or knee surgery, amputation, paraplegia, and any other physically or cognitive limiting illness or injury. BITS consists of three, two-hour sessions with indoor golf simulators at the Golfsmith store at 615 Arsenal Street in Watertown. The sessions are held on 3 consecutive Tuesdays from 10am to noon. Registration is required and costs \$40 for all three sessions. To register, please call 877.976.7272 or email mpriest1@partners.org. For more information, see <http://spauldingrehab.org/conditions-and-treatments/adaptive-sports>.
- March 3 **Boston Comics Roundtable** – Same details as Feb. 4 listing.
- March 5 **Visions of Community 2016** – This day long conference is sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, including its projects: the Parent Training & Information Center, Recruitment, Training and Support Center, Family TIES of Massachusetts and Massachusetts Family Voices. In addition, the Federation is proud to have as partners and co-sponsors for the conference the Early Intervention Parent Leadership Project, Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change, and the Parent/Professional Advocacy League. Attend your choice of workshops about early childhood, special education, transition to adult life, special healthcare needs, managing challenging behaviors, mental health services and supports, inclusion, autism, fostering friendships, assistive technology, stress management for parents, parent leadership, and more. This conference is being held at the Seaport World Trade Center, 200 Seaport Blvd in Boston, Registration is required and is \$80 per person (\$95 after February 12th), although limited scholarships are available by leaving a message at 617.236.7210, ext 198 or emailing voc@fcsn.org. For more information or to register, visit <http://fcsn.org/voc/>.
- March 6 **Adaptive Cross-country Skiing, Kicksledding and Snowshoeing** – Same details as Feb. 7 listing.
- March 10 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street from 5:30 to 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.
- March 10 **Boston Comics Roundtable** – Same details as Feb. 4 listing.
- March 15 **FREE Adaptive Ice Skating** – Same details as Feb. 16 listing.
- March 22 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – Same details as Feb. 11 listing.

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), 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 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 to 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 – 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 at 7:30pm 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-cambridgemiddlesex.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 to 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 to 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 to 3 p.m. at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 and 3 on the 4th 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 1st Wednesday of each month from 1 to 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, 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 (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 to 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 – 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 with 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 to 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 to 8pm, then group from 8 to 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.

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 to 8pm at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street in Cambridge. For more information, email boston@ihollaback.com.

Housing Search Workshop – Learn how to conduct a successful housing search and how to communicate with housing authorities, agencies and landlords from 10am to 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.

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 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month from 6:30 to 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 to 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 to 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 to 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 of each month, at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 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.

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 to 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.

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

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 to 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 3rd Thursday from 12:45 to 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 to 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 to 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.

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 to 8pm on the 2nd Friday of every month. The Museum is located in Building N51 at 265 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. See web.mit.edu/museum/programs/secondfridays.html or call 617.253.5927 for more information.

Saturdays

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

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

Sundays

Computer Lab Open to Public – Every Sunday from 4 to 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 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. 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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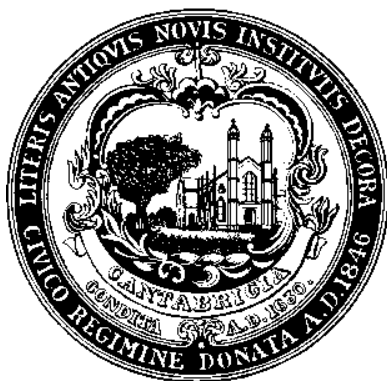
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51 Inman Street, 2nd Floor
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