

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Universal Design in Architectural School Curriculum



The Center for Universal Design (CUD) at North Carolina State University defines universal design (UD) as “the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or

specialized design.” The CUD has established seven principles of UD (see <http://bit.ly/CUDprinciples> for details):

1. Equitable Use – the design is usable by people of all abilities
2. Flexibility in Use
3. Simple and Intuitive Use
4. Perceptible Information
5. Tolerance for Error
6. Low Physical Effort
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use

Dr. Zuzana Ceresnova is an Associate Professor in Architecture at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (FA STU) and a researcher at the University’s Centre of Design for All (CEDA) who is spending this semester in Boston working with the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD).

CEDA is a member of the European Institute for Design and Disability (EIDD), the mission of which is “Enhancing the quality of life through Design for All”. Dr. Ceresnova’s expertise is in applying the principles of UD to three areas

(More on UD Curriculum, page 2)

Amid MBTA Fare Hikes, Transportation Options Increase for People with Disabilities



Two steps forward, one step back. That’s one way to view the gains and setbacks faced by members of the disability community recently on the transportation front.

On the positive side, over the past several months, new choices and more options for accessible transportation have been opening up for people with disabilities living in the greater Boston area.

On the negative side, the MBTA Board of Directors recently voted to impose 5% fare increases on average, both for buses and subways, as well as The RIDE paratransit service for passengers with disabilities.

While that may seem like a modest increase, for those living on a fixed income, including people with disabilities, even moderate hikes in transportation fares can make a serious dent in the wallet.

Also, it is worth remembering that people with disabilities are 2 to 3 times more likely to be living in poverty than their nondisabled counterparts, according to U.S. Census data.

So the burden of these fare increases is likely to fall more heavily on the shoulders of people with disabilities.

Starting July 1, customers of The RIDE will pay \$3.15 (up from \$3.00) for most one-way trips. In so-called “premium” areas of The RIDE —those locations more than three-quarters of a mile from an MBTA station or bus stop—fares increase from \$5.00 to \$5.25.

(More on Transportation Access, page 3)

ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL

BOSTON

**and Disability Reframed: A
Community Film Series present**

Mimi and Dona

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 6–8:30 pm
Cambridge Public Library, Lecture Hall,
449 Broadway

Pre-screening reception 6–6:30 pm
More info on page 5
WWW.REELBOSTON.ORG

UD Curriculum (continued from page 1)

of higher education: education (instruction), services and communication, and the physical environment.

In an engaging presentation at the IHCD titled *Inclusive Learning Spaces for Higher Education: Examples from Europe*, Dr. Ceresnova spoke of the importance of educating architecture students in both UD and disability awareness. In fact, the FA STU was ahead of the game, requiring all architecture students to take a course in UD beginning in 1987 (then called Barrier-free Design, renamed UD in 1995). Dr. Ceresnova cited three principles of UD for Learning (UDL), providing accessibility of both teaching and learning methods for diverse users:

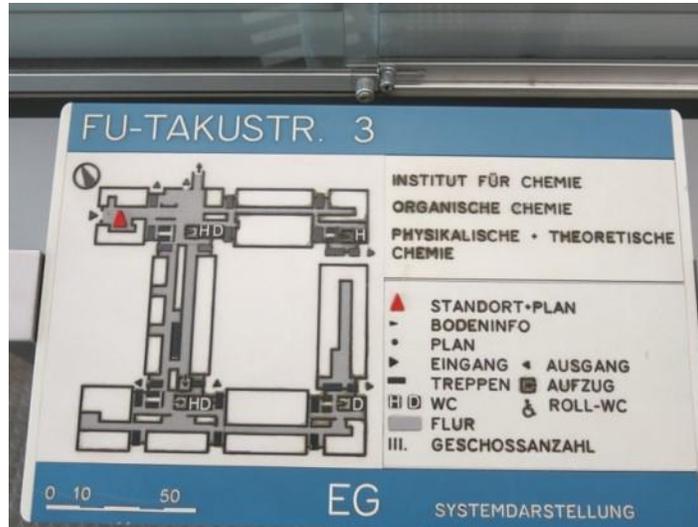
- Multiple means of representation – how a teacher presents information to students
- Multiple means of expression – how students demonstrate knowledge
- Multiple means of engagement – how to motivate students

FA STU uses a variety of teaching methods to engage students. Simulation exercises in which students navigate public building spaces using wheelchairs or blindfolds and white canes, alongside people who actually are wheelchair or white cane users, heighten their awareness of barriers that are not obvious to most able-bodied people, thus better preparing them to conduct building accessibility surveys. Thus, in addition to studying architectural accessibility standards, students learn about the ways in which, for example, a blind person uses their other senses to feel the space around them and about the physical effort required of manual wheelchair users to traverse up ramps and open doors. They develop a multi-sensory approach to design and discover that the built environment plays a significant role in contributing to

the functional limitations of persons with disabilities (PWD).

Likewise, students are encouraged to use a variety of ways in which to present their findings from accessibility surveys. They do everything from creating video and comics to writing essays in order to illustrate barriers.

In her presentation, Dr. Ceresnova displayed photos of higher education building spaces in Europe illustrating both good and problematic elements of design, as well as how often barriers are missed in the design process. For example, the School of Civil Engineering STU in



Tactile orientation plan at a University in Berlin

Credit: Dr. Zuzana Ceresnova

Bratislava underwent significant accessibility improvements in 2010. A walking bridge was added between buildings to shorten walking distances, accessibility to rooms was provided, a new ramp was constructed at the entrance, etc. However, while wheelchair users were then able to access spaces they couldn't before, inclusive usage of the spaces' interiors was not always provided. For example, the entrance to the library is now accessible, but its computer kiosks are mounted too high. This is why it is important to engage with user experts who have first-hand knowledge of common design elements that are problematic.

Dr. Ceresnova explained that even in a new STU facility, built in 2012, in which designers expected perfect accessibility, problems were discovered. This beautiful building offers a color-coded orientation system to aid in visitors' navigation throughout the space, but it is not in a multisensory form that can be accessed by people with low vision. This could have been resolved by installing tactile guiding lines on the floor, leading to important elements such as an information desk and lecture halls, which are provided by Vienna University of Economics. Additionally, due to steep terrain, there are long walking distances to get to the building, including from the facility's designated

bus stop. It was also discovered that the glass doors at the main entrance are not easily identifiable.

In closing, universal design is much more a journey than a destination. Individuals and groups employing its principles must continually assess diverse user experiences in order to identify solutions that were missed – and add them to their repertoire going forward, because, as stated in the EIDD Stockholm’s declaration in 2004, “good design enables, bad design disables.”

--by Kate Thurman

Transportation Access

(continued from page 1)

Despite this negative news, here are some examples of new and potential transportation options for people with disabilities unveiled in recent weeks and months:

Government Center MBTA Station Reopens

On March 21, completing an \$88 million renovation project, the MBTA reopened the Government Center station in Boston, providing new access to the Blue Line and the Green Line for passengers with disabilities. With the reopening of the Government Center station, a milestone was reached: the last of the original 80 key stations designated by the T under the Americans with Disabilities Act is now accessible.



Ribbon cutting ceremony at Government Center March 21

Photo: Susana Hey, MBTA

When the ADA was passed into law over 25 years ago, it provided new opportunities for people with disabilities and public transit authorities to work together to improve transportation options and services. Among these opportunities was the

mandatory creation of a key station accessibility plan, which identified essential transit stations in the MBTA network and targeted those stations for access improvements. While disability advocates and MBTA officials didn’t always see eye to eye on all the details of this plan, working together, they created a comprehensive ADA key station plan which identified a total of 80 stations for accessibility upgrades.

This milestone is both practical and symbolic. Government Center accessibility now means better access to the many elected and appointed officials creating disability policy, and it means greater access to federal, state and local government services overall. In the longer term, completion of the MBTA’s ADA key station plan does not mean the end of its efforts to improve accessibility. New (replacement) elevators at Harvard and Central stations on the MBTA Red Line will begin construction within the next few months. Also on the horizon is a long-range infrastructure plan which will examine all T stations and earmark an additional \$250 million for accessibility upgrades.

New Taxi Subsidy Program

With nearly 60,000 registered users and an aging population in the greater Boston area, the MBTA faces steadily increasing costs associated with running The RIDE paratransit program. Currently, the MBTA pays an average of nearly \$50 for each one-way trip on The RIDE.

In one of several efforts to explore more cost-effective approaches for paratransit, the MBTA recently unveiled a new pilot taxicab subsidy program (TSP). Once enrolled, TSP customers will be issued a dedicated TSP prepaid debit card, which they will use to pay for taxi trips with TSP-participating taxi companies. Under the TSP, the customer will pay \$2.00 for each one-way taxi trip, a savings of 33% over the usual RIDE fare. The MBTA will subsidize a maximum amount of \$13 for each taxi ride provided.

One of the biggest advantages of TSP is that customers can book trips on the spur of the moment, rather than having to schedule trips on the business day before, as is the case with The RIDE. Participating TSP customers are limited to two trips per 24-hour period and a maximum of eight trips for each seven-day period. Officially dubbed the “Non-ADA Paratransit Taxi Subsidy Pilot Program”, TSP will initially be open to only 500 participants. TSP participants must be current customers of The RIDE, and need to pay a one-time enrollment fee of \$2.00. Interested persons can

contact the MBTA at 617.222.6038 or tsp@mbta.com to find out more about TSP.

Accessible Ride-Hailing

So-called ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft, powered by smartphone apps, while increasingly popular among the public, are coming under growing scrutiny from disability rights advocates for not providing equal service opportunities to customers with disabilities. Among the complaints lodged by advocates include failure to accommodate people with disabilities who use service animals, and having few, if any wheelchair accessible vehicles available.

Drawing the ire of advocates, Uber has even claimed publicly that, because they are a technology company and not a transportation company, they're not legally obligated to comply with transportation regulations under the ADA. Earlier this year, three prominent

disability rights organizations, the Boston Center for Independent Living, the Disability Law Center, and the Disability Policy Consortium announced a collaboration with Uber Boston to begin to address these issues. Dubbed the Uber Boston Disability Coalition, this partnership will conduct several focus groups in the coming months to explore ways Uber can provide meaningfully accessible ride hailing services.

Accessible transportation is a cornerstone of the disability rights agenda. It is key towards breaking down the barriers of isolation and discrimination faced by people with disabilities every day. Advocates for disability rights pledge to continue this work until all forms of public transportation are accessible and affordable.

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

- April 2 **Open Captioned (OC) Performance of THE SOUND OF MUSIC** – 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, visit http://boston.broadway.com/accessible_services/. For information on the musical, click on the “Shows” tab.
- April 3 **ReelAbilities Boston Special Event: TRANSFATTY LIVES** – At 30, Patrick O'Brien was TransFatty, a NYC DJ, internet personality, and filmmaker. Then his legs started shaking. *Transfatty Lives* takes you on an emotional rollercoaster into the dark heart of ALS. As the director and star of his own documentary, Patrick films every step of his debilitating journey from first diagnosis through paralysis. Forcefully lacking in self-pity, he captures the emotion, humor, and absurdity of life as he makes art, gets political, falls in love, fathers a son, and fights depression. Presented by the Chelsea Jewish Foundation, this screening and following reception will be held at 10am at Showcase Cinema de lux Revere, 565 Squire Road. \$20 tickets can be purchased online at www.reelboston.org; all proceeds benefit the Patrick O'Brien Foundation. This film is not captioned. Contact ReelAbilities Boston for more information at 617.244.9899 or info@reelboston.org.
- April 3 **Boston Premiere of BLINDSIDED** – Directed by Watertown resident Lisa Olivieri, this documentary tells the story of how Patricia Livingstone, who was trapped in a downward spiral of blindness, deafness and domestic abuse, reclaimed her life. Part of the National Association of Social Workers Film Series, the screening is at 2pm at Belmont's Studio Cinema, 376 Trapelo Road. This screening is FREE and no tickets are required; a \$10 optional donation goes to NASW. See www.lisaolivieri.com for more information.
- April 3 **Audio Described (AD) Performance of THE SOUND OF MUSIC**– AD will be provided at this 1pm performance at the Boston Opera House. All other details are the same as the April 2 listing, but be sure to request AD seating.
- April 4 **ReelAbilities Boston Opening Night: THE WAY HE LOOKS** – In this romantic and gentle coming-of-age story, Leo, a blind teenager, is determined to leave Sao Paulo to study abroad—to the dismay of his best friend, Giovana. But Leo's plans change when he is paired on a school project with Gabriel, the handsome new kid in town. As the boys' interest in each other grows, Giovana begins to reveal her own feelings, growing

increasingly jealous of Gabriel. This film is in Portuguese with English subtitles and audio description. The screening will be held at 6:30pm, followed by a discussion with Director Daniel Ribeiro, in the Bright Family Screening Room at Emerson College, Paramount Center, 559 Washington Street in Boston. Free admission, suggested donation of \$10. Contact ReelAbilities Boston for more information at 617.244.9899 or info@reelboston.org.

April 4 **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 Community Room at 808 Memorial Drive. 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.

April 5 **ReelAbilities Boston & Disability Reframed present MIMI AND DONA** – Join Disability Reframed: A Community Film Series and the ReelAbilities Boston Film Festival for a FREE open-captioned screening of *Mimi and Dona*, a powerful documentary about 92 year old Mimi who is no longer able to care for her beloved 64 year old daughter, Dona, who has an intellectual disability. Directed by Mimi's granddaughter and Dona's niece, Sophie Sartain, this personal and touching film spotlights the growing challenge confronting aging caregivers of adult children with disabilities, and details the ripple effects of Dona's disability on three generations of this Texas family. A pre-screening reception will be held from 6-6:30pm, followed by the film and a panel presentation featuring the film director and Susan Pacheco, Executive Director of the Cambridge Council on Aging. Cambridge Main Library, Lecture Hall, 449 Broadway. Event ends at 8:30. Communication access realtime translation (CART) will be provided. Contact ReelAbilities Boston for more information at 617.244.9899 or info@reelboston.org.



April 6 **Autism Adulthood: Strategies & Insights for a Fulfilling Life** – Local author, educator, and parent Susan Senator will discuss her new book, *Autism Adulthood: Strategies and Insights for a Fulfilling Life*. Susan will cover taking the mystery out of adult life on the autism spectrum and convey the positive message that even though autism adulthood is complicated and challenging, there are many ways to make it enjoyable. This event will feature a book talk followed by a meet and greet opportunity. This event will be held from 7:30-9pm at the Lincoln School Auditorium, 19 Kennard Road in Brookline. Although free, online registration is required: <http://bit.ly/1RiUMGF>

April 9 **ASL Performance of THE SOUND OF MUSIC**– Same details as April 2 listing, but be sure to request ASL seating.

April 14 **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. Agenda will be posted on CCPD's calendar at bit.ly/CCPDcalendar.

April 14 **ReelAbilities Boston Closing Night: HOW TO DANCE IN OHIO** – A first kiss, a first dance. These rites of passage can be exciting and terrifying, but for many teenagers and young adults on the autism spectrum, they are debilitating. In *How to Dance in Ohio*, we join a group of young people with developmental challenges as they prepare for their first formal dance. From practicing social skills to picking dates and dresses, the teens develop their ability to connect, navigate social rules, and take part in a longstanding American tradition – the spring dance. This open-captioned screening begins at 7pm at the Somerville Theater, 55 Davis Square, and is followed by a discussion with film subject Dr. Amigo, Founder and Director of

Amigo Family Counseling and Karen Lean, Board Member of Asperger/Autism Network. Tickets are \$10. Contact ReelAbilities Boston for more information at 617.244.9899 or info@reelboston.org.

- April 15-24 **Annual Cambridge Science Festival** – We take curiosity to a new level! The Cambridge Science Festival is an annual 10-day celebration of science, technology, engineering, art and math in Cambridge and New England and the global impact of those endeavors. Every spring, the Cambridge Science Festival makes science accessible, engaging and fun for everyone through multifaceted, multicultural events. Our founding collaborators are MIT, Harvard University, the City of Cambridge and the Museum of Science. These ten days are chock-full of activities and workshops all over Cambridge! See www.cambridgesciencefestival.org for details and more information.
- April 19 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – Same details as the April 4 listing, except these sessions will be held in the 2nd Floor Conference Room of City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway at noon and 1pm.
- April 19 **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 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.
- April 27 **MassDOT and MBTA Public Meeting in Cambridge on Green Line Extension Project** – These two entities are currently working through a re-evaluation of the Green Line Extension project, focusing on four key areas: project management; redesign; re-procurement; and the development of a reliable cost estimate and schedule. This has been prompted by significant cost overruns on the project, and is expected to be completed and submitted to the MassDOT Board of Directors and the MBTA Fiscal & Management Control Board in May. They are holding public meetings in order to seek ideas and input on the re-evaluation. This one will be held at St. Anthony’s Parish Hall, 400 Cardinal Medeiros Avenue in Cambridge, with an open house from 5:30-6:30pm and the presentation and Q&A from 6:30-8pm. More information on the project can be found at <http://greenlineextension.eot.state.ma.us/>. For language or access accommodations contact Joseph Sgroi at 617.996.0771 or info@gjxinfo.com at least a week in advance.
- April 29 **FREE Screening of HEALING VOICES** – Co-sponsored by the Disability Law Center and CCPD, this film is a new feature-length documentary exploring the experiences commonly labeled as "psychosis" or "mental illness" through the real-life stories of individuals working to overcome extreme mental states, and integrate these experiences into their lives in meaningful ways. Screening will be held during the day in the Lecture Hall of the Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway. Remaining details TBD, but will be posted on CCPD’s calendar at bit.ly/CCPDcalendar. See more information on the film at bit.ly/1RopTSh.
- April 30 **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 noon to 2pm at One Broadway in Cambridge. Although free, registration is required: www.fcsn.org, 617.236.7210, 800.331.0688, info@fcsn.org.
- May 5 **MassDOT and MBTA Public Meeting in Medford on Green Line Extension Project** – Same details and time as the April 27 listing, except that this meeting will be held at St. Clement’s Parish Hall, 579 Boston Avenue in Medford.
- May 12 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor Conference Room at 51 Inman Street from 5:30-7pm with opportunity for public comment. Call 617.349.4692 (voice), 617.492.0235 (TTY), or e-mail ccpd@cambridgema.gov for more information or to request accommodations. Agenda will be posted on CCPD’s calendar at bit.ly/CCPDcalendar.

- May 14 **Families of Children with Down Syndrome & Special Health Care Needs** – This support group is to help families learn how to best support their needs, network with other families, share resources. The support group is a collaboration between the MA Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) and the Children's Hospital Down Syndrome Program, and you can meet staff from both programs. All family members welcome. Volunteers available for children's recreation and support. RSVP required to Jeanne Doherty, MDSC at 978.761.3950 or jdoherty@mdsc.org with the names of each person who will be attending and whether or not you are bringing your child (limited child care available).
- May 26 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – Exact same details at April 19 listing.
- May 30 **Boston Children's Museum Morningstar Access** – Same details as April 19 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 scheduled by appointment, often the 1st Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm, but other times can be arranged, and they are usually held at 650 Beacon Street, 4th Floor Conference Room in Boston. 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

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-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 7-8:30pm 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.

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group – This is a support group run by and for people living with mental illness that provides a place of 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. Contact Sally Johnson, LICSW for more info at 617.952.6254 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or 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 (AT) they can use to increase their independence at home, on the job or in school, holds a FREE open house on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 8:30am-4:30pm. These open houses provide an opportunity to see what kinds of AT is available and to try it out. The ARTC is located at the Boston Easter Seals office, 89 South Street (near 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 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.

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.

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 mhgroup@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.

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

Saturdays

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

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.

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.

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Cambridge City Council

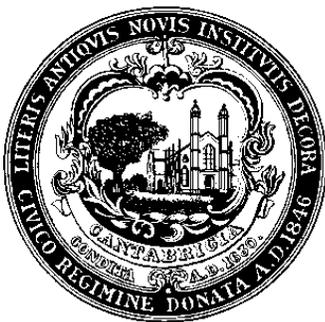
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Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

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