

AccessLetter

*Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities*

People with Disabilities Protest New PCA Rules



Across Massachusetts, advocates for people with disabilities are protesting a new Commonwealth plan to end overtime payments for personal care attendants (PCAs). New MassHealth rules issued in July would severely curtail payments for most PCAs working more than 40 hours per week.

On September 1st, dozens of activists flooded the office of Governor Charlie Baker to protest the new PCA rules. “[This] catastrophic disruption to our ability to live independently is life-threatening,” said John Kelly, an advocate who sustained a spinal cord injury decades ago, and has used PCA services ever since. PCAs are skilled workers, argued Kelly, and “PCAs are people, not things; they cannot be replaced like widgets.”

Known as “consumers” in MassHealth parlance, people with disabilities often rely heavily on PCAs to live independently in the community. “[MassHealth regulators] are picking on vulnerable people,” said Kelly.

Having PCAs available makes a crucial difference for Kelly and many other consumers, between being able to live independently versus being forced into a nursing home or other chronic care institution.

Consumers use PCAs for assistance with a variety of personal tasks, including bathing, toileting, dressing, meal preparation, and light housekeeping.

**(More on PCA Overtime
on Page 3)**

How Do You Find the Bus Stop if You Can't See It? Perkins has an App for That!



Today's commercially available GPS leaves a traveler within a 30-50 foot radius of their destination, which is a micro-navigation challenge often referred to by people in the visually impaired community as

the “last 50 feet of frustration.” Despite accessible smartphones and navigation app improvements, pedestrians who are visually impaired still face challenges when navigating to public transportation.

Perkins School for the Blind is closing the gap between GPS and reality, starting with bus stops. Perkins developed the iOS app BlindWays to help people who are visually impaired locate MBTA bus stops via crowdsourced landmark clues and provide predictive bus arrival information.

There are hundreds of bus stops in the Boston area, and Perkins needs your help entering clues for each one. If you are interested in volunteering to be part of

the BlindWays solution, these three simple steps allow you to give back quickly and easily:

- Download the app at: www.perkins.org/blindways
- Check the map on the app!
- Visit an MBTA bus stop

Whether you are waiting at a bus stop or walking past one, a few taps in the BlindWays app lets you quickly and easily describe surrounding landmarks. Your contributions are what make BlindWays useful for people who are blind. Consider using your organization’s next volunteer day to support Perkins.

**Are You Ready?
Fire Emergency
Evacuation for People
with Disabilities
Fri., October 14, 2016
10 AM to 3 PM
Cambridge Public Library
449 Broadway
For more info on this event, see
Calendar section. RSVP (required)
by Oct. 7 at www.dlc-ma.org**

CCPD Welcomes Aboard Five New Members

CCPD is thrilled to announce City Manager Richard C. Rossi's appointment of five new members to the Commission's Advisory Board, effective September 12. These new members, who were chosen from a large pool of highly qualified candidates, join Chair Gary Dmytryk, Secretary Nicole Horton-Stimpson, Maria Fontellio, Bet MacArthur, Debbie Cheng, and Alicia Zeh-Dean.



Katie Ashwill Allen, MSW grew up in northeast Ohio and moved to Cambridge four years ago. She went to Ohio State University for her undergraduate social work degree and to Boston University for her Master of

Social Work degree. She has worked as a volunteer at the CCPD, writing letters to local businesses and the Cambridge License Commission with accessibility improvement suggestions. Katie currently works as a Knowledge Translation Associate at the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston, working to improve employment practices in the public Vocational Rehabilitation system. Katie lives with her husband, sister, and famous cat, Artemis. She loves mornings, coffee, and exploring New England.



Stelios Gragoudas, Ed.D has over 20 years of experience working in the disability field. His primary focus is in the special education arena and improving transitional outcomes for youth with cognitive disabilities. His research examines strategies

that can be used to build self-determination and leadership qualities in youth with disabilities.



Mike Langlois, LICSW wears many hats, from clinical social worker to public speaker to corporate consultant for Fortune 500 companies & non-profits. Mike's work focuses on gaming, social media, & psychology, as well as the impact of social networks on

relationships. A gamer-affirmative psychotherapist & educator, he's interested in team-building between the video game industry, consumers & mental health. Mike serves as a resource on digital literacy & social justice issues such as LGBT awareness & safety, disability awareness, cultural awareness, & non-traditional families. He has also served on several boards and commissions, including the Commonwealth's Commission for LGBT Youth.



Luis Loya has been an accessibility planner since 2006. Luis is dedicated to raising awareness of issues that impact people with disabilities and promoting the ideas of universal design. Through his work as an accessibility planner, he has learned how to prioritize barrier removal endeavors in ways that bring the most benefit to persons with

disabilities. Luis is excited to use his time on the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities to continue improving the accessibility of the City as well as raising the social conscience around disability rights.



Julie Miller, MSW is a Research Associate at the MIT AgeLab and a Lecturer at Northeastern University. Leading up to her current doctoral studies at Boston College, she received her Master's in Social Welfare with a concentration in gerontology from The University of California, Berkeley. Prior to her MSW training, Julie earned

her Bachelors of Science from Northeastern University, where she studied American Sign Language and Human Services. Julie has served in a variety of direct service, program support, and research roles in the United States and around the globe. As a researcher and social worker, Julie is particularly interested in the intersection of aging, disabilities, demographic change, and social justice.

CCPD thanks all candidates who applied for Board openings and welcomes these new members!

PCA Overtime (continued from page 1)

These new MassHealth policies on PCA overtime have flowed from new U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) rules which took effect at the beginning of 2016, requiring that home care workers of nearly all types become eligible for overtime pay. Propagated under DOL's Fair Labor Standards Act, the new rules also stipulate that, in cases where state agencies (like MassHealth) have a role in paying home care workers, the agencies are deemed to be "joint employers."

This stipulation has a huge impact on consumers enrolled in MassHealth's PCA program. According to MassHealth statistics, about 7,100 consumers currently have PCAs working more than 40 hours per week. However, many thousands more consumers have PCAs who each work cumulatively more than 40 hours per week, because these PCAs work for two or more consumers. Many of these consumers (and PCAs) will be adversely affected by the new MassHealth rules. PCAs often say they need to work more than 40 hours each week, just to pay their rent and other basic living expenses, especially in metropolitan areas like Boston, where the cost of living is much higher than average.

Charlie Carr, a PCA consumer and an advocate from the Disability Policy Consortium, said that MassHealth is now unfairly requiring consumers to "police their PCAs" to ensure they don't work more than 40 hours a week, even when many of these hours involve working for other consumers. MassHealth officials have argued that they need to curtail overtime pay for PCAs, because these payments cost the Commonwealth \$1 million per week. But advocates counter that the Baker administration is exaggerating these costs, since each MassHealth dollar is matched with a dollar from the federal government. "What this does to our ability to live independently is getting blown up in the name of saving some money," said Kelly.

While MassHealth is proposing to exempt some consumers from the new overtime cutoff rules, these exemptions are too narrowly tailored, argue independent living advocates. For example, a consumer who has a single live-in PCA that performs all of his or her care may be eligible for an exemption, while two or more consumers who share a live-in PCA would not be eligible. Dennis Heaphy, another advocate and consumer, pointed out that many PCAs perform complex medical tasks for consumers, and cannot be easily replaced. "From my perspective [overtime] is actually saving the state money," because otherwise his health would be placed at risk, which would actually cost the Commonwealth more money. "By taking away the ability for PCAs to work more than 40 hours a week, they're actually cutting a lifeline... for consumers," said Heaphy.



The new MassHealth rules "are really draconian and poorly thought out," said Carr. He and other advocates also expressed concerns that the new rules could force many people with disabilities into nursing homes and other institutions, because they could not manage to hire and

retain a sufficient number of PCAs. According to Carr, MassHealth currently spends about \$700 million on PCA services for 26,000 consumers living independently, whereas it spends \$1.3 billion for 36,000 people with disabilities living in nursing homes. The PCA program is a relative bargain, points out Carr and other advocates.

Advocates also point out that the new MassHealth overtime rules would violate the spirit, if not the letter of *Olmstead v. L.C.*, the Supreme Court decision in 1999 which ruled that, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), states were required to provide services to people with disabilities in the community, rather than institutions.

More protests are planned by advocates in the coming weeks, with the goal of persuading the Baker administration and MassHealth to rescind the new PCA overtime rules.

Are You a Musician in Mental Health Recovery?

Tunefoolery Music is looking for new musicians!

This non-profit organization for musicians in mental health recovery offers gig opportunities, music lessons, workshops, and a supportive community of 60 devoted musicians who sing and play all kinds of music.



They are especially looking for musicians who play piano, classical music, jazz, and R&B.

Auditions will be held in the fall and winter.

If you are interested, contact Tunefoolery at 617.626.8991 or info@tunefoolery.org.

For more information on the organization, visit www.tunefoolery.org.

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

- Oct. 7 **Disability and Equity @ Work: The Power of Policy, Myth and Practice from Higher Education to Employment** sponsored by Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Law School Project on Disability & the New England HERC, from 8:30am-4pm at Monroe C Gutman Library, 6 Appian Way, Cambridge, this conference brings together leading experts to explore the ways that inclusive policies benefit diverse organizations by gaining the essential talents of people with disabilities. Presenters will explore the elements of academic and professional success from higher education to employment. A panel of professionals with disabilities will discuss the conditions that support a successful transition from academic life to professional life. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/disability-and-equity-work-the-power-of-policy-myth-and-practice-from-higher-education-to-employment-tickets-27548135214>
- Oct. 8 **Open Captioned (OC) Performance of JERSEY BOYS** – 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.
- Oct. 9 **Audio Described (AD) Performance of JERSEY BOYS** – AD will be provided at this 1pm performance at the Boston Opera House. All other details are the same as the Oct. 8 listing, but be sure to request AD seating.
- Oct. 10 **Boston Children’s Museum Morningstar Access** – Morningstar Access offers children with special needs/medical needs the opportunity to visit the Museum from 8-10am, a time when there are only a few other visitors. At these times, there is a limit of 150 guests, so children and their families can explore the Museum with less concern about infections and large crowds. Fee is \$8 per person (half-priced admission; free for members) and registration is required. For more information or to register, visit www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar or email Saki Iwamoto, Health and Wellness Educator at Iwamoto@BostonChildrensMuseum.org or call 617.986.3697.
- Oct. 13 **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.

- Oct. 14 **Are you Ready? Fire Emergency Evacuation for People with Disabilities** – The ADA has been in effect for more than 26 years, but emergency evacuation plans for people with physical disabilities have changed little. Join the Disability Law Center (DLC), CCPD & the Cambridge Fire Department in the Lecture Hall of the Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway, for a discussion on current strategies for evacuation of individuals with disabilities in fire emergencies and new concepts that can be implemented. The event runs from 10am to 3pm, including a light lunch provided by DLC. This event is free & open to the public, but pre-registration is required at www.dlc-ma.org (where you will find the full agenda), agasparonis@dlc-ma.org, or 617.723.8455, x123. RSVP & request accommodations by October 7. CART will be provided.
- Oct. 17 **International White Cane Day Celebration at the State House** – Did you know? Massachusetts White Cane Law: General Law Chapter 90 Section 14A requires motorists to stop for white cane and guide dog users at street crossings-It's the LAW! White cane & Guide Dog users bring family, friends, orientation & mobility specialists, vision professionals and others to raise White Cane Awareness from 10am to noon in the Great Hall of Flags at the State House! For more information on this Celebration, contact the Orientation and Mobility Department at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind at 617.626.7581.
- Oct. 17 **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 12pm and 1pm in the 2nd floor conference room of City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway. 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.
- Oct. 18 **6th Annual Job Fair for Individuals with Vision Impairments** – At Perkins, we know that people who are blind or visually impaired are just as qualified for the world of work as their sighted peers. And yet many adults who are blind find themselves out of work and unable to secure an interview despite their capabilities. At this event presented by Vision Works, we will bring these qualified candidates face to face with recruiters and representatives from dozens of respected nonprofits and businesses. The result is an afternoon of proactive networking and conversation, where candidates are judged by their knowledge and experience, not their disability. The job fair will be held from 10am to noon at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, 3 James Street Knafel Center/Gymnasium in Cambridge. For more information contact Karen McCormack, Job Developer for Educational Programs at Perkins School for the Blind at 617.972.7381 or Karen.McCormack@Perkins.org. Pre-register online at <http://www.perkins.org/get-involved/events/job-fair-for-individuals-with-visual-impairments>.
- Oct. 25 **Raise the Bar Hire! Conference** – Presented by Work Without Limits, this conference will feature keynote speaker Heather Abbott, who will tell her story of resilience following the amputation of her left leg in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. It will also feature break-out sessions on topics such as the 2016 Best Places to Work for People with Disabilities, the Impact of Stigma in the Workplace, Making Online Recruitment More Accessible, Disability Supplier Diversity, and more, followed by a second keynote address by Randy Lewis, Founder of the NOGWOG Disability Initiative to assist businesses and communities developing and launching disability hiring programs. The conference will be held from 8am-4pm at the Four Points Sheraton in Norwood (see Oct 25 listing for location, contact & more info on Work Without Limits), and costs \$25 for an individual with a disability or family member. Register online at <http://raisethebar2016.org/>.
- Oct. 26 **Raise the Bar Hire! Statewide Career Fair in Norwood for Job Seekers with Disabilities** – This half-day career fair is presented by Work Without Limits, a program of The University of Massachusetts Medical School that is a statewide network of engaged employers and innovative, collaborative partners that aims to increase employment among individuals with disabilities. The career fair is a free opportunity for job seekers with disabilities to meet and network with some of Massachusetts' leading employers. It will be held from 8am to noon at Four Points by Sheraton, 1125 Boston-Providence Turnpike (Route 1) in Norwood,

02062. Register online at <http://raisethebar2016.org/>. Contact Michelle Nowers with questions at 508.856.8359 or michelle.nowers@umassmed.edu.

- Nov. 3 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – Same as Oct. 17 listing, except that these sessions will be offered at 6:00 and 7:00pm at the North Cambridge Senior Center, 2050 Massachusetts Ave.
- Nov. 10 **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.
- Nov. 14 **Info Session: Cambridge Affordable Rental and Home Ownership Programs** – Same details as Oct. 17 listing, except these sessions will be held at the Main Library, 449 Broadway.
- Nov. 19 **Boston Children’s Museum Morningstar Access – Evening Edition!** – This session of Morningstar Access offers children with special needs/medical needs the opportunity to visit the Museum from 6-8pm, a time when there are only a few other visitors. At these times, there is a limit of 150 guests, so children and their families can explore the Museum with less concern about infections and large crowds. Fee is \$8 per person (half-priced admission; free for members) and registration is required. For more information or to register, visit www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar or email Saki Iwamoto, Health and Wellness Educator at Iwamoto@BostonChildrensMuseum.org or call 617.986.3697.
- Nov. 30 **DBSA-Boston’s Mill Street Open Mic Session** – Hosted by the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) of Boston in the de Marneffe Building at McLean Hospital, 115 Mill Street in Belmont, this 6:30-8pm event provides a chance for musicians and poets to share their music and writing with the DBSA-Boston community at the new Mill Street Open Mic Session! The purpose of the open mic session is to appreciate and showcase creative individuals in our community. Each performer will have a 10-minute time slot for 2 songs or poetry pieces that are family friendly (i.e. no swearing, drug/sexual content). All music and poetry must be live; no karaoke tracks, loud amplifiers, or drum-kits allowed. If you are interested in performing, sign-up sheets will be found at the Welcome Table. For any questions, please see Christian or email him at christian@dbsaboston.org.

Weekly & Recurring Events

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

Injured Worker Support Meetings – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1st Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm, but other times can be arranged. Appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4th Floor Conference Room. RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our provider evaluation book, to people with RSIs (Repetitive Strain Injuries) or other workplace injuries. Discussion topics have included medical treatment, insurance/legal issues, and speech recognition software. To set up a meeting or more info, call 617.247.6827, or visit www.rsiaction.org.

Cambridge Women’s Center Groups – The Cambridge Women's Center at 46 Pleasant Street is open to all who identify as women. It has a variety of groups such as yoga, sewing, feminist book group, support group for

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

Mondays

Learn to Cope Support Group –If you have a family member who is battling addiction or know someone who does, invite them to attend our Learn to Cope (LTC) Support Group every Monday night from 7-8:30pm at Spaulding Hospital Cambridge, 1575 Cambridge Street (free parking; use the main entrance). This group is sponsored by OPEN (Overdose Prevention and Education Network), a program of the Cambridge Prevention Coalition, and is for the parents, family members, spouses, and caregivers of people who have addictions to opiates, alcohol, or other drugs. Learn to Cope is free and offers a unique format that has experienced facilitators who have been there, resources, informational material, guest speakers (in long term recovery or professionals in the field), overdose education, and most of all, HOPE! For more information visit www.learn2cope.org or call 508.738.5148

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

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

NAMI Connection Recovery Support Group – This is a support group run by and for people living with mental illness that provides a place that offers respect, understanding, encouragement, and hope. Connection groups are free of charge, and open to anyone with a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. You do not need to be a member of NAMI to attend. This group is held every Tuesday from 1-2:30pm at The Hope Center, Lindemann Mental Health Center, Plaza Level, 25 Staniford St. in Boston. Email Jessica at folgore1120@hotmail.com for more information.

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

Wednesdays

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

Amputee Support Group – Offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, all amputees, their family and friends are invited to socialize and discuss common areas of interest, including accessibility and resources, as well as to provide support and share coping strategies. Usually meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 1-2:30pm on the 5th floor, in the Lantern Room 5, at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). For more information, contact Sally Johnson, LICSW at 617.952.6254 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or by email at sejohnson@partners.org.

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

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

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

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

NAMI Connection – Support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), meets every Wednesday and Friday 10:30-12:00 at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 35 Medford Street, Suite 111 in Somerville. The group is free and open to all who self-identify as having a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. For more information, contact Janel Tan at 617.863.5388 or tanj@vinfen.org.

Open Support Group for Adults on the Autism Spectrum – Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 pm at the offices of the Asperger's Association of New England (AANE), 85 Main St., Suite 101, Watertown, MA. A \$5 donation is suggested. RSVP to 617.393.3824, x310 or Jamie.Freed@aane.org.

Senior Support Group for Caregivers over 60 – meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Family Resource Center, 20 Gould Street in Reading. Share and learn with other seniors who have adult family members with developmental disabilities. For meeting times or more information, contact Judy Santa Maria at 781.942.4888, x4022 or familysupport@theemarc.org.

Spaulding Stroke Support Group – This community-based support group offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH) provides socialization and education for stroke survivors, meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 3-4:30pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 300 First Avenue, Charlestown Navy Yard (accessible by MBTA bus routes 89 & 93). Contact Karen Halfon at 617.952.6560 (voice), 1.800.439.2370 (TTY), or e-mail at khalfon@partners.org. Visit us at www.spauldingrehab.org.

Thursdays

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

Assistive Technology Resource Center (ARTC) Open House – The ARTC, which helps people with disabilities in Eastern Massachusetts make informed decisions about assistive technology they can use to increase their independence at home, on the job or in school, holds an open house on the 1st Thursday of each month from 8:30am-4:30pm. These FREE monthly open houses provide an opportunity to see what kinds of assistive technology products are available, and to try them out. The ARTC is located at the Boston Easter Seals office, 89 South Street (one block from MBTA South Station). Visit www.eastersealsma.org, call 617.226.2634, or email ATRC@eastersealsma.org for more information.

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

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

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

Saturdays

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

Beyond the Spectrum: Adventures in Art for Children with Autism – Offered by the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Artful Adventures offers a specially designed program for children ages 8-12 on the Autism Spectrum, including Asperger's Syndrome, accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Upon arrival children will be divided into groups by age and/or needs. The program typically meets on the 1st OR 2nd Saturday of each month from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. Each class lasts an hour and a half and combines gallery exploration with an art-making activity. Pre-registration is required by the prior Tuesday. The cost is \$9 per child (includes materials and museum admission), and one adult is admitted free with each child ticket, which also includes discounted parking. The program meets in the Education Center in Druker Family Pavilion, Room 159 at 10:20am before the start of each class. For more information, or to pre-register, go to www.mfa.org/programs/community-programs/beyond-the-spectrum, call 617.369.3303 or email artfuladventures@mfa.org.

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

Sundays

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

Feeling for Form Tours of MFA for blind & low vision visitors -- The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of guided tours for visitors who are blind or have low vision who want to build a deeper relationship with the Museum. Each monthly session focuses on a different collection and includes wayfinding and verbal description of spaces. The Sunday tours are held on the 1st Sunday of the month at 1pm, with the

exception of some holiday weekends, and require pre-registration at least one week in advance. Call 617.369.3302 to register. Family and friends are invited to come along. Guided tours can also be scheduled on request, please contact Hannah Goodwin at 617.369.3189 or access@mfa.org for more information.

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

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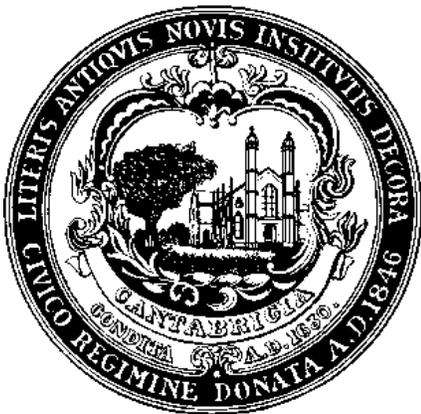
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