

***The Cambridge Program***  
***“Helping Turn Disabilities Into Capabilities”***  
***680 Huron Avenue Cambridge, MA 02138***  
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*Program History*

The Cambridge Program began over 35 years ago in Cambridge, MA, with the support of the Cambridge Recreation Department. Yearly events were set up in parks and gymnasiums specifically for physically and mentally challenged individuals. As ‘mainstreaming’ and integration were emerging in schools, the Recreation Department began holding events that catered to all individuals, regardless of mental or physical challenge, race, color, or religion. Over 30 years ago, the program became Camp Rainbow, and offered various programs on Saturdays for teens and adults with disabilities. In 1994, the program changed its name to stress the ‘person’, rather than his or her disability, and became The Cambridge Program for Individuals with Special Needs. In 2007, the program once again changed its name to simply The Cambridge Program, with the motto: “Helping Turn Disabilities into Capabilities.”

*Location*

The Cambridge Program is located at the Sheila Russell Teen Center at 680 Huron Avenue in Cambridge, MA. The fully handicapped accessible building is located across from the entrance of the Fresh Pond Golf Course and is situated in a quiet neighborhood with basketball and tennis parks within walking distance. The facility is equipped with classrooms, offices, a gym, game room, weight room, a dance hall, and a full kitchen. We have weekly access to the War Memorial Pool located at CRLS High School at 1640 Cambridge Street every Saturday from 9:00-10:30am.

*The Staff*

The Cambridge Program staff is made up of a variety of special educators, teachers, a health care consultant, counselors, youth workers, college students, and several volunteers. These men and women work collaboratively to ensure a safe, positive quality program.

*The Clients*

The Cambridge Program services any Cambridge resident that is mentally or physically challenged. We do accept residents from neighboring communities to participate in all of our Special Olympic training programs and events. There is a very diverse population of male and female clients with a range of disabilities, including mental retardation, developmental delays, emotional and behavioral challenges, traumatic post stress syndrome due to physical or mental abuse, and clients within the autism spectrum. Clients range from as young as 8 years old to as old as 60 years old, and many come from low income brackets.

*Program Statement*

The Cambridge Program makes every attempt to accommodate any individual with special needs residing in Cambridge. All individuals are accepted and it is ensured that no one person is excluded from any activities in this program, although the program is not equipped to service those with severe medical needs.

The program is designed to enhance the lives of its clients by providing quality programs that are geared to promote self-esteem, encourage social interaction, and increase physical well being. Its goal is to help create an inclusive and empathetic community through programs and activities that promote health and fitness, care, respect, and understanding differences.

## *Services Provided*

### *Saturday Program: 9am-3pm*

The program is held every Saturday for clients age 8 and up and offers a variety of activities, including field trips, swimming, fitness, arts and crafts, cooking, weightlifting, hygiene, ADL skills, and sports such as soccer, basketball, track and field, and volleyball. Groups are divided by age and ability levels. There are adult men and women's groups, a teen and preteen group, and a children's group. Lunch can be ordered for \$5.00, or clients may chose to bring their own. Transportation is also provided free of charge. Each client is picked up and dropped off at their home by the program bus.

Program Fee: \$100.00 per year

### *Adult Bowling Program: Tuesdays 5-7pm*

Bowling is offered every Tuesday night for adult clients ages 18 and up. Clients are picked up and dropped off at their homes. Members bowl 2 strings and need to bring \$10.00 for shoe rentals and bowling fees. Bowlers compete in different competitions run by the Massachusetts Special Olympics, and members get to enjoy each other's company.

### *Health & Fitness Club: Mondays & Wednesdays 6-8pm*

Our new program is offered every Monday and Wednesday for clients ages 18 and up. Participants are picked up and dropped off at their homes. This program will feature weekly walks, aerobics classes, instruction and use of fitness machines, and light weight training. Clients will also get classes and information on nutrition, healthy eating choices, and the benefits of an active life style. All activities are supervised by an experienced staff, which have trained and worked with Special Olympic athletes.

Program Fee: \$60.00 per year

### *Special Olympic Program*

Clients train and compete throughout the year in a variety of events sponsored by the Massachusetts Special Olympics. Every client is given the opportunity to participate in events, such as bowling, swimming, basketball, power lifting, volleyball, tennis, and track and field. Every client must have a current Special Olympic medical form signed by his or her doctor in order to compete. Participating in the Special Olympics is very rewarding for the clients and helps to promote self-esteem and boosts the client's confidence in themselves and their abilities. Fees are paid by a Boston Marathon fundraiser. There is also an end of the year awards banquet to celebrate every athlete's participation and achievements.

*\*All programs are moderately priced, and two annual fundraisers are held to help keep the costs low. \**