

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

National Council on Disability Promotes Social Security Reforms



In a new comprehensive report published in February, the National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a detailed analysis of flaws in Social Security disability programs that have a detrimental effect

on people with disabilities (PWD).

The report also suggests a number of specific reforms to these programs to allow PWD to escape overreliance on benefits and to improve opportunities for employment and self-sufficiency. Bringing Social Security disability programs more in line with the integration and inclusion mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) should be the overarching goal of these reforms, the report said.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs have come under increasing scrutiny and attack, especially in the past year.

National media outlets such as CBS and NPR have run stories criticizing these programs and suggesting they harbor widespread abuse such as eligibility fraud. But closer examination of these allegations reveals that fraud is actually at remarkably low levels, especially when compared with other government programs.

When the new Congress was seated in January, one of the first actions undertaken by the House of Representatives was a resolution to block transfers of funds from the Social Security Retirement Fund to the Social Security Disability

(More on SSI/SSDI Reform, page 3)

Disability Legislative Updates



There are several new laws and legislative initiatives in the pipeline that will be of great benefit to the disability community.

This article seeks to provide brief

summaries of four of them.

Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014

Prior to President Obama's signing of the bipartisan ABLE Act in December, people with disabilities (PWD) were not allowed to have more than \$2,000 in savings without potentially losing Social Security and other vital government benefit programs, such as Medicaid and Medicare. This made saving for anything, from a rainy day fund to education, housing or expensive durable medical equipment, virtually impossible.

The ABLE Act, based on 529 college savings plans, will enable an individual who has/had a qualifying disability prior to age 26 to open a special savings account in which they can hold up to \$100,000 without the threat of losing their benefits. Current tax law allows for deposits of up to \$14,000 per year, and interest accrued is tax-free.

While this is a federal law, it requires that states put regulations in place before financial institutions can offer ABLE accounts, but it is expected that all states will do so by the end of 2016. This money can be used for medical expenses, transportation, housing, education, and more.

(More on Legislative Updates, page 4)

Deaf Advocates Sue Harvard and MIT Over Communication Discrimination

In February, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and four deaf and hard of hearing individuals filed two federal class action lawsuits against Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), charging that the schools discriminate against deaf and hard of hearing people by failing to caption the vast and varied array of online content they make available to the general public, including massive open online courses (MOOCs).

The cases, filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts, assert that these universities violate the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act by denying deaf and hard of hearing people access to thousands of videos and audio tracks that each university makes publicly available, for free, on broad-ranging topics of general interest.

These include, for example, campus talks by luminaries such as President Barack Obama and Microsoft founder Bill Gates; educational videos made by MIT students for use by K-12 students; “self-help” talks; entire semesters’-worth of courses; and regular podcasts such as the “HBR IdeaCast” by the Harvard Business Review. The universities boast that their content is available free to anyone with an Internet connection. Millions of people have visited the websites.

“Online content represents the next frontier for learning and lifelong education,” said Howard A. Rosenblum, NAD’s CEO. “Yet both Harvard and MIT betray their legendary leadership in quality education by denying access to approximately 48 million Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing. All they have to do is provide accurate captioning to such online educational content, yet they provide no or inaccurate captioning which is

contrary to these schools’ ideals of excellence and service to all.”

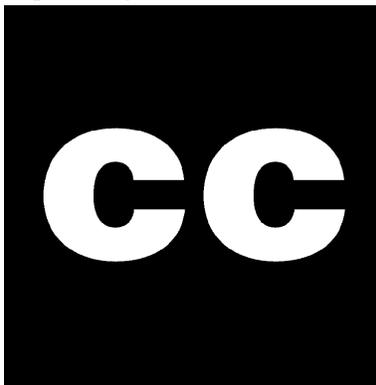
“Federal law prohibits MIT and Harvard from denying individuals with disabilities the benefits of their programs and services, including those provided to the public on the Internet,” said Timothy Fox, Executive Director of the Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center and a lawyer for the plaintiffs in both cases. “Both laws contain requirements for ‘auxiliary aids and services,’ including captioning, where necessary to ensure effective communication with individuals with a disability.”

“It is right that Harvard and MIT, which both receive millions of dollars of federal tax support, are mandated by our civil rights laws to provide equal access to their programs and services,” said Bill Lann Lee, plaintiffs’ lawyer on both cases and a former head of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division. Lee added, “The civil rights laws apply not only to services offered in brick and mortar places. They require equal access to electronic services on the Internet that modern technology makes possible.”

Arlene Mayerson, Directing Attorney for the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund who was intimately involved in drafting the

ADA and a lawyer for plaintiffs in the MIT case, said, “If you are a hearing person, you are welcomed into a world of lifelong learning through access to a community offering videos on virtually any topic imaginable, from climate change to world history or the arts. No captions is like no ramp for people in wheelchairs or signs stating ‘people with disabilities are not welcome.’”

“Harvard and MIT systematically discriminate against people who are deaf and hard of hearing and perpetuate the isolation of people with disabilities that the ADA was meant to eliminate,” said Christine M. Griffin, Executive Director of the Disability Law Center in Boston, Massachusetts.



“Our hope is that this lawsuit will change not only Harvard’s and MIT’s practices, but set an example for other universities to follow. These lawsuits seek to reform conduct. They do not seek money damages.”

SSI/SSDI Reform (continued from page 1)

Fund, even though such transfers have been routinely performed 11 times in the past two decades, in order to balance the two program funds. As a result, SSDI recipients may experience benefit cuts of nearly 20% later this year.

“Almost eight decades after the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935 and nearly [25] years after enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) antiquated attitudes, inadequate access, and public policies in need of reform remain barriers for people with disabilities living in our communities and earning a living,” said NCD member Alice Wong.



“No piece of legislation, no matter how sacrosanct or maligned, exists in a vacuum. Details can make all the difference. It is likely that discussions of Social Security reform will continue to dominate our airwaves and policy discussions. As they do, [this report] reminds us that how we modernize social security disability is as important as the need to do so,” said Wong.

Some of the key recommendations of the NCD report, entitled "Securing the Social Contract: Reforming Social Security Disability" include:

Decoupling Healthcare and Financial Benefits

One of the most problematic aspects of current Social Security disability programs is that eligibility for healthcare benefits (Medicaid and Medicare) is linked with eligibility for financial benefits (SSI and SSDI). Consequently, many individuals refrain from attempting to return to work out of fear that they will lose their healthcare benefits. The NCD report recommends that healthcare benefits and financial benefits be decoupled, without making it more difficult for individuals to sign up for both types of programs.

Wraparound Coverage and Medicaid Buy-In

While 45 states have some type of Medicaid Buy-In (MBI) program or wraparound coverage which allow people with disabilities to pay a monthly premium in order to maintain Medicaid coverage once they go back to work, these programs vary widely in measures such as scope of eligibility and paperwork requirements. The NCD report recommends that MBI programs become more standardized and be

available in all 50 states, without compromising strong programs that already exist on a state-by-state basis.

Redefining Disability

Once approved for benefits, the majority of individuals receiving Social Security disability and related benefits, including SSI, Medicare and Medicaid, tend to continue to receive these benefits for life. NCD recommends modernizing the definition of disability used for SSI/SSDI programs, to be more in sync with the ADA civil rights mandate. This will help pave the way to improve workplace access and accommodations for PWD, making it easier for them to return to work. For example, encouraging "early intervention" would help lessen the likelihood of

people losing their jobs upon the onset of the disability.

Also, the NCD report recommends identifying new ways to boost work incentives and implementing evidence-based practices that address youth and people with mental health needs among vulnerable groups. The full NCD report can be viewed online at

<www.ncd.gov/publications/2015/01292015>

Legislative Updates (continued from page 1)

Remote Participation

Local Commissions on Disabilities (CODs) often struggle to reach a quorum at Commission meetings due to barriers that members face, such as snow and ice blocking sidewalks and unreliable accessible transportation, that are beyond their control. Historically, the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law has required that a quorum, or majority of members, be present in the room in order for any business to be conducted.



On his last day in office, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law An Act relative to local commissions on disability, allowing members of CODs to fully participate in meetings remotely, via phone or webcam, for example. Once the Attorney General's Office advises that this remote participation may begin, this law will make these commission meetings more accessible to their members, many of whom have disabilities that can make it difficult to physically attend.

The full text of the bill can be found at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/Senate/S1985>

Fresh Air Rights

More than a decade in the making, Massachusetts House Bill 3804, An Act relative to rights of

persons receiving services from programs or facilities of the Department of Mental Health, known less formally as the bill for Fresh Air Rights, adds access to the outdoors as the sixth fundamental right of people who are receiving psychiatric inpatient services in the Commonwealth. Many of these people are hospitalized for weeks or even months at a time, and it is well known that the outdoors has a therapeutic effect for anyone.

Spearheaded by advocate Jonathan Dosick, this bill still lacks enforcement mechanisms for hospitals that deny patients access to the outdoors, but it is a step in the right direction. "This has been and continues to be a critical problem," Dosick said. "It is part of the long struggle for dignity and rights for a population that is all too often marginalized and denied basic civil liberties."

The full text of the bill can be found at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/House/H3804>.

An Act prohibiting discrimination against adults with disabilities in family and juvenile court proceedings

In the fall of 2012, the National Council on Disability (NCD) published a groundbreaking report documenting pervasive discrimination against parents with disabilities all across the country, including in Massachusetts, in custody and child welfare cases. The report, "Rocking the Cradle: Ensuring the Rights of Parents with Disabilities and Their Children," found that children were being removed from their homes far too often, based on rampant misperceptions about the ability of adults with disabilities to parent, resulting in unnecessary trauma to families. (See October/November 2013 issue of *AccessLetter*.)

Far too frequently, children of parents with disabilities are torn from their homes based solely

on their parent's disability without even a determination of how the disability affects the child. Even nearly 25 years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, these parents continue to be discriminated against when faced with custody battles or child welfare incidents. Massachusetts HD 241, An Act prohibiting discrimination against adults with disabilities in family and juvenile court proceedings, would not

only help protect fit parents who happen to have disabilities and their children, but it would also save the Commonwealth money by cutting down on unnecessary foster care. This bill is currently awaiting an assignment to a committee, after which a hearing will be held, followed by a vote.

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

- Mar 1 **FREE Outdoor Programs: Explore winter outdoors with instruction, equipment, and assistance** – Join DCR's UAP at the Weston Ski Track at Leo J. Martin Golf Course, 190 Park Road in Weston from 12-4pm and try cross-country skiing, kicksledding and snowshoeing on a groomed course. Call Stavros Outdoor Access at 413.259.0009 to sign up. Participants will need to fill out a waiver, available at <www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/universal-access/waiver-dcr.pdf>. Minors must have their waiver signed by their parent or legal guardian.
- Mar 4 **Massachusetts Adaptive Hockey Initiative** – Offered by the Spaulding Adaptive Sports Centers (SASC), this is a great opportunity offered at no cost to try introductory sled hockey. This session will be offered from 3:00-4:00pm at the Emmons Horrigan O'Neil Memorial Rink, 150 Rutherford Ave in Charlestown. For more information or to register (required), see <<http://spauldingrehab.org/conditions-and-treatments/adaptive-sports>> or contact Mark Priest at <mpriest1@partners.org> or 877.976.7272.
- Mar 7 **Visions of Community 2015: A Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals Who Serve Them** – Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this conference will feature 47 workshops on a range of topics including 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, and will showcase more than 75 exhibitors. This is also a great time to network with other families and to pick up free resources. Registration is \$90 per person and is available on a first come, first served basis. For more information, visit <<http://fcsn.org/voc2015/>>, call 617-236-7210, ext. 198 and leave a message or email <voc2015@fcsn.org>. The conference is being held from 7:30am - 5:00pm at the Seaport World Trade Center in Boston (on the MBTA Silver Line).
- Mar 7 **Spaulding Alpine Ski Club Lessons** – Offered by the Spaulding Adaptive Sports Center, this is an opportunity for people of all abilities to take ski lessons at Waterville Valley in New Hampshire. Lessons are held from 9:30am-12pm and 1-4pm, and transportation is provided from Spaulding Charlestown, 300 First Avenue. The cost for a participant needing adaptive ski equipment, including transportation, lift ticket, equipment and instruction is \$90 (\$70 without transportation). For more information or to register, contact Mark Priest at <mpriest1@partners.org> or 877.976.7272.

- Mar 10 **FREE Adaptive Skating and Games on Ice** – Play socialize on the whole rink! Come in your chair; take a spin on an ice sled or lace up some skates during the Department of Recreation and Conservation's (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP) from 11:30am-1:30pm at Cronin Rink, 850 Revere Beach Parkway in Revere. Call UAP at 617.626.1294 to sign up. Participants will need to fill out a waiver, available at <www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/universal-access/waiver-dcr.pdf>. Minors must have their waiver signed by their parent or legal guardian.
- Mar 11 **SASC's Learn to Ski Program: Mt. Wachusett** – Offered by the Spaulding Adaptive Sports Center, this is an opportunity for people of all abilities learn to ski at Mt. Wachusett. Lessons are given from 10am-2:30pm and transportation is provided from Spaulding Rehab in Charlestown, 300 First Avenue, leaving at 8am and returning at 5pm. This event costs \$50 and requires pre-registration; contact Mark Priest at <mpriest1@partners.org> or 877.976.7272.
- Mar 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.
- Mar 15 **Morningstar Access** –Program for children with special and medical needs at the Boston Children's Museum from 6-8pm. Morningstar Access at Boston Children's Museum offers children with special needs/medical needs the opportunity to visit the Museum at a time when there are only a few other visitors. At these times, we have a limit of 100 guests, and children and their families can explore the Museum with less concern about infections and large crowds. Fee is \$7 per person and registration is required. For more information or to register, visit <www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar> or contact Saki Iwamoto, Health and Wellness Educator at <Iwamoto@BostonChildrensMuseum.org> or 617.986.3697.
- Apr 4 **Beyond the Spectrum** – Offered by the Museum of Fine Art's (MFA) Healing Arts program, this is a specially designed program for children ages 8-12 on the Autism Spectrum, including Asperger's Syndrome, accompanied by a parent or caregiver. The program meets from 10:30am to 12pm and combines gallery exploration with an art-making activity. Upon arrival children will be divided into groups by age and/or needs. The cost is \$9.50 per child (includes materials and Museum admission), and one adult is admitted free with each purchased child ticket and also receives a discount on parking in Museum facilities. Tickets must be purchased in advance, and are only available online; for more information, including the exact location, or to purchase tickets, visit <www.mfa.org/programs/community-programs/beyond-the-spectrum>.
- Apr 9 **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.
- Apr 21 **Morningstar Access** –Program for children with special and medical needs at the Boston Children's Museum from 8-10am. Morningstar Access at Boston Children's Museum offers children with special needs/medical needs the opportunity to visit the Museum at a time when there are only a few other visitors. At these times, we have a limit of 100 guests, and children and their families can explore the Museum with less concern about infections and large crowds. Fee is \$7 per person and registration is required. For more information or to register, visit <www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org/morningstar> or contact Saki Iwamoto, Health and Wellness Educator at <Iwamoto@BostonChildrensMuseum.org> or 617.986.3697.

Apr 22 **BSA Access Committee** – Boston Society of Architects (BSA) works hard to ensure building regulations and codes to maximize accessibility. The Access Committee meeting is free and open to public from 12-1:30pm at BSA Space, 290 Congress Street, Boston. For more information, visit <architects.org/committees/access-committee>.

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), Valarie Burrow at 617.369.3302 (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 6-7pm 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 – Free support group sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, for family members, friends and other caregivers of persons with mental illness who provide understanding, comfort, hope and help. This group meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at 7:30pm at the Cambridge Hospital Learning Center, Conference Room A, 3rd Floor, 1493 Cambridge Street. For more information, <www.namimass.org/programs>, or call Elizabeth at 781.646.0397.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support 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. This group is open to anyone with OCD or related disorder and is a casual, open discussion of the trials and triumphs! of living with OCD. Suggested donation \$5. 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.

Wednesdays

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) meets 1 – 3 p.m. at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 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 1-2:30pm 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 (ATRC) Open House – The ATRC, which helps people with disabilities in Eastern Massachusetts make informed decisions about assistive technology they can use to increase their independence at home, on the job or in school, holds an open house on the 1st Wednesday of each month from 8:30am-4:30pm. These FREE monthly open houses provide an opportunity to see what kinds of assistive technology products are available, and to try them out. The ATRC is located at the Boston Easter Seals office, 89 South Street (one block from MBTA South Station). Visit <www.eastersealsma.org>, call 61 7.226.2634, 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. *Special dates are offered tours about summer offerings for youth.* 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 contact Valarie Burrows at 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! 7-8pm at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street in Cambridge. For more information, email <boston@ihollaback.com>.

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 6:30-8pm 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 10:30-12:00 at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 35 Medford Street, Suite 201 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>. *We are moving to the first floor, exact room# tba.*

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@thearc.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.

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

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 6:30-8pm. 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 12:45-1:30pm 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 4-5pm, 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.

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, and the program meets on the 1st Saturday of each month from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm. Each class lasts an hour and a half and combines gallery exploration with an art-making activity. Pre-registration is required by the prior Tuesday. The cost is \$8.00 per child (includes materials and museum admission), and one adult is admitted free with each child ticket, which also includes discounted parking. The program meets in the Education Center in Druker Family Pavilion, Room 159 at 10:20am before the start of each class. For more information, or to pre-register, go to <www.mfa.org/programs/community-programs/beyond-the-spectrum>, call 617.369.3303 or email <artfuladventures@mfa.org>.

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 contact Valarie Burrows at 617.369.3302 (voice) or email: <access@mfa.org>.

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. Contact Valarie Burrows at 617.369.3302 or <vburrows@mfa.org> 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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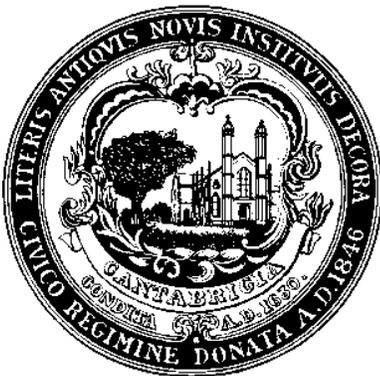
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51 Inman Street, 2nd Floor
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