

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Governor Patrick on Disability Issues

As Deval Patrick takes the corner office at the State House in January, people with disabilities will be watching to see whether he fulfills the promises he made during the gubernatorial campaign.



Governor Deval Patrick

Summarizing his disability platform, Patrick stated, “The untapped potential of persons with disabilities is a resource that we must unleash... For too long people with disabilities have been under-educated by our schools, under-employed in the workforce, and underappreciated in our communities.”

As the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights during President Clinton’s administration, Patrick stated he “confronted the discrimination people with disabilities face in their lives and communities... I understand from my work and my life that the Americans with Disabilities Act is a promise of equal access and equal dignity.” As Massachusetts’ new Governor, Patrick pledged to “work every day to ensure that all government services, programs and employment opportunities are open and accessible to all.” Specifically, Patrick stated he will work to:

(Patrick’s Disability Platform cont’d on p. 2)

MIT Students Design Adaptive Products

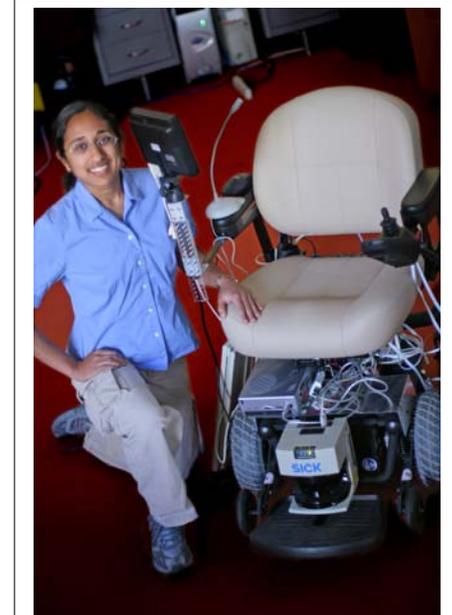
Over the past semester, various groups of MIT students have designed a variety of prototype products geared to help people with disabilities live more independently.

MIT graduate student, Finale Doshi, is leading a team of computer science students that is designing a robotic wheelchair with a voice-activated command system that she hopes will give the same freedom of movement to people with severe disabilities as people with full mobility. Doshi,

a campus leader with an extensive record of service to the MIT, was recently awarded a Marshall Scholarship for study at the University of Cambridge in England for 2007.

Doshi’s passion for using technology to improve lives was sparked early in her MIT career when she was diagnosed with severe tendonitis, which made typing virtually impossible. Doshi worked with MIT’s Edgerton Center to develop a prototype ergonomic keyboard that would help herself and other people with physical impairments.

(MIT Students continued on page 3)



Finale Doshi, MIT student, with her prototype robotic wheelchair

Patrick's Disability Platform (cont'd)

- **Assure Community-Based Long Term Care.** In Massachusetts today, people in need of long-term care often receive that care in institutional settings, when they would rather remain at home or in community settings. I will reverse that trend and provide more long-term care at home, fully and promptly enforcing the Equal Choice Law and the 1999 Supreme Court's Olmstead decision.
- **Expand Access to Personal Care Attendants.** We will protect consumer-direction of personal care attendant services for people with disabilities and work aggressively to expand eligibility to people with moderate incomes, so that families need not spend themselves into poverty to qualify.
- **Eliminate the Achievement Gap.** Disconcerting gaps in achievement defined by disability and other factors have emerged in public schools. We will eliminate them by providing appropriate inclusive educational settings, and state of the art special education tools and support. We will also enhance the special education circuit breaker for cities and towns so that the "sped" directors are no longer in a vise between the needs and rights of students and the limits of a local education budget.
- **Ensure Access to Job Opportunities.** We will ensure that the One-Stop Centers at the Department of Employment and Training are prepared to meet the training needs of people with disabilities.
- **Expand Eligibility to Health Insurance.** We will broaden eligibility to the CommonHealth insurance program, which provides coverage for those who lose government benefits when taking a job, with a unique impact on people with disabilities. While the Romney/Healy administration has raised the premiums on working disabled adults, my administration will make the premiums affordable again.
- **Develop Affordable Housing Option.** We will dramatically expand the range of housing options for people with disabilities, from home ownership, rental, congregate living and assisted living environments. We will also double the size of the Home Modifications Program and the Community

Based Housing program to enable more people with disabilities, including children and seniors, to live in their own homes.

- **Enforce the ADA.** Building on my experience as head of Civil Rights in the Clinton Administration, I will make compliance in state government with the Americans with Disabilities Act one of my highest priorities. We will have accessible public facilities and services, well-trained and prepared staff, and active outreach to and partnership with the disability community. I will also seek the service of persons with disabilities in my administration. As Governor I will not tolerate discrimination.

More information on Deval Patrick's disability issues platform can be found at:

http://www.devalpatrick.com/issues_disability.cfm

MIT Students (continued)

"I hope that my work with the robotic wheelchair will eventually help those with limited motor control to be more independent and productive," said Doshi.

"However, my research can be applied to a variety of applications that could help people without disabilities as well. Thus, I don't see my work as necessarily just giving a helping hand to people with disabilities, but creating technologies that everyone -- regardless of whether or not they have a disability -- can equally use to be more productive."

This creative spirit, embracing a philosophy of universal design, is also typical of a group of MIT mechanical engineering students who developed an impressive list of prototype products this past semester, including the following:

- U-Shower, an adaptive shower seat with multiple water heads for easy reach of the entire body
- Share Chair, a manual wheelchair adapted with a clutch that allows the pusher to walk next to the wheelchair user, for improved communication between user and pusher
- StabiliTrack, an exercise treadmill with adaptations for blind users, including an adjustable feedback harness and Braille controls

- Slope Support, a mechanism to allow manual wheelchair users safer and easier travel up inclines
- Revolution, an adaptive two-wheel bicycle that allows a physical therapist or other trainer to provide steering assistance to a trainee with a disability
- SureStep, a wheeled walker with an innovative braking system for enhanced safety and usability
- Micro-Golf, a 3-D tabletop golf game that can be played equally well from a seated or standing position

For more information and photographs of these innovative prototypes and the creative teamwork behind them, visit MIT's Product Engineering Processes website:
<<http://web.mit.edu/2.009/www/index.html>>.

Portions of this article courtesy of MIT News Office.
Finale Doshi photo credit: Jason Dorfman.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

January 3 **RSI (repetitive strain injury) Monthly Drop-in Support & Information Meeting** (no registration is necessary) on first Wednesday of each month, 5:30 to 7 pm at 650 Beacon Street in Boston, 4th floor Conference Room, steps from the Kenmore Square MBTA station, and a few doors to the right of the Barnes and Noble Bookstore. RSI Action volunteers will answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our provider evaluation book. For more information, call 617-247-6827, check NEW website at <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rsiaction>> or email <rsiaction@yahoogroups.com>.

January 3 **Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 to 9 pm at **McLean Hospital in Belmont** (Demarneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture; 7 to 8 pm, on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Call 617-855-3665 for more information.

January 4 **MDDA (Manic Depression & Depressive Association) Support Group at Mass. General Hospital** meets every Tuesday and Thursday, 7-9 pm 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.

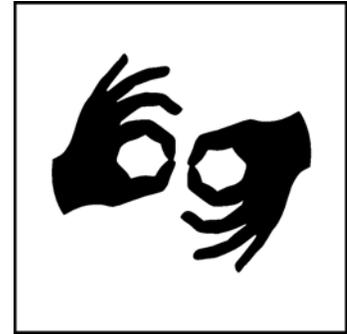
January 9 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. They meet 7:30 to 9:30 pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm.142. To find out more about meetings and discussions go to <www.bostonvoiceusers.org>.

January 10 **Weekly support group for adults with LD/ADHD** (learning disabilities & attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) meets in Cambridge near Harvard Square, 6 to 7:30 pm every Wednesday. Currently there are a few openings in this group, so if you are interested, contact Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117.

January 11 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) monthly meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment.

January 14 **Accessible Ice Skating in Medford** at the Flynn Memorial Rink on Woodland Road, 12 to 1:50 pm and again on February 18 and March 10, same time. This is a DCR Universal Access Program. There are minimal fees for admission and conventional skates. One end of the rink will be coned off for sled skating. Call All Out Adventures at 413-527-8980 for more information and to register.

January 15 **Open House at the MFA with FREE admission for all** – On Martin Luther King Day the Museum of Fine Arts welcomes all, but especially people from the Deaf community. Deaf artist Ayisha Knight-Shaw will do a guided tour of the Fashion Photography exhibit in American Sign Language (ASL). Explore the fashion photography exhibit with an experienced photographer and discuss not just the beauty of the work, but the deeper meaning and implications of the pictures. This tour will not be voiced and is for adults only. There will also be an interactive tour for all ages that plays with ideas of identity that will have both ASL and voice interpretation. For more information and a schedule, visit <www.mfa.org> or e-mail <access@mfa.org>. The MFA is at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston and can be reached via the MBTA - Green Line #39, or E Line to Museum of Fine Arts stop, or the Orange Line to Ruggles Station and walk to Museum Road. Parking is available for a fee.

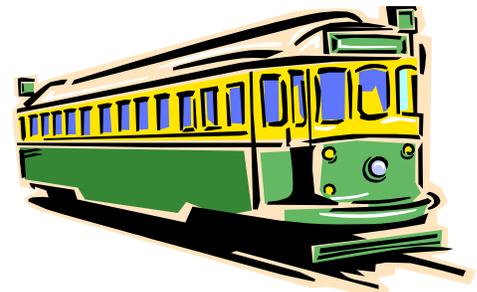


January 16 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston.

January 18 **LD/ADHD Task Force for adults with Learning Disabilities / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC State headquarters, 27-48 Wormwood Street in Boston (south of Fort Point Channel) in the 6th floor large conference room. Business meeting from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information contact Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 voice, 617-497-5257 fax.

January 20 **Learn to Snowshoe and discover a whole new world** – Outdoor Explorations will provide equipment and instruction customized to your needs as well as snacks and transportation to the outdoor site. The cost is \$35 / person with some scholarships available. Outdoor Explorations makes the outdoors a welcoming place to people with disabilities; they break down the barriers that prevent people from living life to the fullest. Their adventure programs enable people of all abilities to discover and value their own and others' unique strengths. Call the OE office to make your reservation at 781-395-4999 voice or 781-395-4184 TTY. Other snowshoe dates are January 28, February 11 and February 24.

January 24 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA**, meets 1 - 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room #4. Call 617-973-7507 voice, or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information, to request Interpreters, or confirm date and time of meeting. Due to security measures, please bring proper identification to gain entrance to all meetings.



- January 28 **Cross-country skiing, kicksledding, and snowshoeing in Weston** at the Leo J. Martin Golf Course, 11 am – 3 pm every Sunday from Jan. 28 – March 4. *Venture Into Well-Being* teams with the DCR Universal Access Program to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for people of all ages and abilities on this 2-kilometer multi-use trail. Equipment is available for rent. Call 418-259-0009 to register.
- January 28 **Accessible Ice Skating in Quincy** at Shea Memorial Rink, 351 Willard Street, 2-4 pm and again on March 4, same time. This is a DCR Universal Access Program. There are minimal fees for admission and conventional skates. One end of the rink will be coned off for sled skating. Call All Out Adventures at 413-527-8980 for more information and to register.
- February 2 **DEADLINE for artists with disabilities to submit entries to VSA Arts Renaissance 07 competition.** Selected works will be presented in Washington, D.C. in late spring of 2007. For more information go to <www.vsarts.org/renaissance>, or call 202-628-2800, ext. 3885 or TTY 202-737-0645, or email <jenniferc@vsarts.org>.
- February 4 **Accessible Ice Skating in Milton** at Ulin Memorial Rink, 11 Unquity Road, 2 – 3:50 pm and again on March 11, same time. This program is offered by DCR Universal Access Program. There are minimal fees for admission and conventional skates. One end of the rink will be coned off for sled skating. Call All Out Adventures at 413-527-8980 for more information and to register.
- February 7 **Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 to 9 pm at McLean Hospital in Belmont (See Jan. 10 listing for details.)
- February 7 **RSI Monthly Drop-in Group** – first Wednesday of the month, see Jan. 3 listing for details.
- February 8 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) monthly meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment.
- February 11 **Snowshoeing with Outdoor Explorations** – see January 20 listing for details.
- February 13 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. second Tuesday of the month (See January 9 listing for details.)
- February 20 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) monthly meeting** on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1 to 3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston
- February 24 - **Snowshoeing with Outdoor Explorations** – see January 20 listing for details.
- February 28 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA**, meets 1 to 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room #4. Call 617-973-7507 voice, or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information, to request Interpreters, or confirm date and time of meeting. Due to security measures, please bring proper identification to gain entrance to all meetings.
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February 28 **Do You Think You See With Your Eyes?** This Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Celebrity Lecture at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) will focus on the portraits of Alex Katz. Join this renowned artist as he discusses how he works and how we see. The 6:30 pm lecture is in the Remis Auditorium and will be ASL interpreted. Tickets are \$28/members, seniors & students; \$35/general admission, and can be ordered by calling 617-369-3306 voice or 617-369-3393 TTY. See listing about Open House on Jan. 15 for directions.

March 2 **Application DEADLINE for US/Costa Rica: Youth Leadership and Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Disability Rights Exchange Program.** This summer, June 20 – July 5, 2007, Mobility International USA (MIUSA) will be taking twelve young people (ages 18-24) with disabilities to Costa Rica where they will live with a host family, take part in a service learning project and practice Spanish through immersion! If you have a disability, are from a culturally diverse background and are an inexperienced international traveler you are encouraged to apply. MIUSA exchange programs are inclusive of people with all types of disabilities, including people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, or have cognitive, visual, physical, psychiatric, systemic, non-apparent, or other types of disabilities. Scholarships are available and MIUSA will provide appropriate accommodations to each qualified participant with a disability. Application materials can be found at <www.miusa.org/exchange>, or requested by phone 541-343-1284 (voice/TTY), 541-343-6812 Fax or e-mail <exchange@miusa.org> from Jena Price, Program Specialist, Mobility International USA, 132 E. Broadway, Suite 343, Eugene, OR 97401. Application DEADLINE is March 2, 2007.



- March 7 **RSI Monthly Drop-in Group** – first Wednesday of the month; see January 3 listing for details.
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Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

The Commission was established in 1979 to act as a clearinghouse on disability and access issues throughout the City of Cambridge. We strive to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory. The Commission provides information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to individuals and their families, employers, public agencies, businesses and private non-profit organizations.

The goal of our 11-member citizen advisory board, comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities, is to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life. Our regularly scheduled Commission meetings, which always include an opportunity for public comment, are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

Access Notice: The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in e-mail, 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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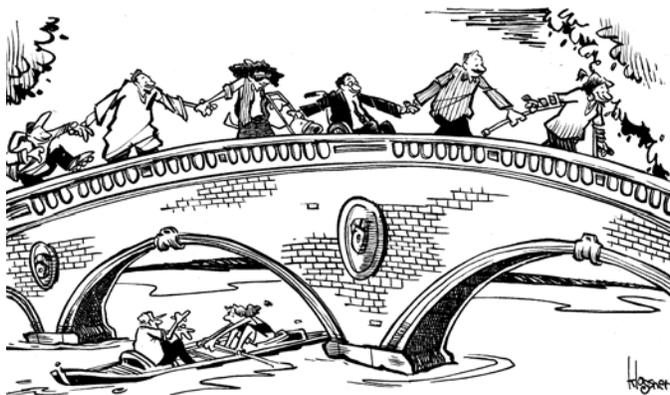
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ACCESSLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
part of the Department of Human Service Programs,
51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm

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51 Inman Street, second floor
Cambridge, MA 02139