

# AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for  
Persons with Disabilities

## Giving People with Disabilities Opportunities to Connect with Nature

In August, the common room at one of Cambridge Health Alliance's Elder Service Plan programs becomes a summer ocean's edge with live lobsters, hermit crabs, kelp and salt water. In October, the library at the Massachusetts Hospital School (MHS) in Canton becomes a New England farm at harvest time. Among the squash, pumpkins and herbs, live turkeys gobble (yes, turkeys), chickens peck inquisitively, and a therapy dog awaits his chance to visit individually with each student.



Connecting with nature.  
photo by Sue Huszar

The Nature Connection (NC) is a non-profit that carries the outside inside, bringing nature programs to people of all ages who may have limited access to the natural world. Weaving therapeutic and educational practices together, it provides hands-on learning and exploration of animals, nature, and the human-animal bond. The

cornerstones of its work are safety, choice, and respect, which apply to both the animals and the participants. Founded over 27 years ago, NC connects individuals with nature's capacity to heal and to teach.

NC serves people with a variety of disabilities, including mental illness, physical disabilities, emotional trauma, age-related disabilities, and individuals with multiple disabilities throughout the greater Boston area. The organization also focuses on individuals whose life challenges may include poverty and violence. NC's client sites include afterschool programs, psychiatric treatment centers, special needs schools, senior services facilities and foster children programs.

**(More on Nature Connection, page 2)**

## DPW Expands Snow Clearance Efforts

In response to ongoing concerns expressed by the disability community and others, the Cambridge Department of Public Works (DPW) has broadened its approach to addressing seasonal problems of snow and ice accumulation on the City's sidewalks. DPW wishes to stress that, as always, primary responsibility for shoveling sidewalks, including curb ramps, remains with the adjacent property owner. However, in recognition of the need to do more to keep sidewalks and curbs clear for people with disabilities, two new initiatives are being announced.

First, starting this winter, residents have a new way of reporting sidewalks that are not properly shoveled. Android smartphone and Apple iPhone users now can download the Cambridge iReport app (available from Apple's App Store and Android Marketplace). Once downloaded, the iReport app allows residents to make reports while on-the-go (and even to attach a photo of the unshoveled sidewalk, if they like). If one does not have a smartphone, there are still two traditional ways to report unshoveled sidewalks:

- 1) Call the DPW Snow Hotline at (617) 349-4903
- 2) Use the DPW online reporting form on the DPW snow page at <[www.cambridge.gov/snow](http://www.cambridge.gov/snow)>.

Second, also new this winter, DPW will clear ramps at corners and bus stops on prioritized routes after significant snow accumulation (generally 6 inches or more) within 3-4 days from the end of a storm (if back-to-back storms occur, from the end of last storm).

**(More on DPW Snow, page 2)**



### Nature Connection (cont. from page 1)

At their weekly or monthly visit to various client sites, Nature Connection staff and volunteers transform indoor spaces into wildlife habitats. The rooms come alive with nature. Participants become nature students and, along with clinicians and caregivers, circle around a small New England habitat created by NC volunteers and staff.



Hands-on learning with the Nature Connection.  
photo by Bob Lotz

Josey Kirkland, NC's program coordinator, engages the group with a story about a walk through the snowy forest or the survival skills of tidal creatures adapting to the changing environment at the ocean's edge – from low tide to high tide, from hot summers to New England's winters. NC staff and volunteers then work slowly, sharing animals and natural materials, one by one, with each individual participant.

Participants are able to touch the soft fur of a chinchilla, watch the darting eyes of a chicken, smell and feel pine needles. Watching and learning about a disabled finch provides a metaphor for some participants. This multi-sensory exploration and discovery connects the people NC serves with nature's capacity to teach and to heal.

In the words of MHS principal Janice Feinberg: "These programs continue to encourage our students to be curious and sensitive to all living creatures, and to value and respect the natural world we live in. As one of our teachers aptly states: 'Sight, sound, touch and smell of the natural world come alive within the confines of our classroom when The Nature Connection is here. For many of the kids, it is a new experience, one that reaches beyond their backyards and front doors.'"

Emily Firor, Director of the MinuteMan Arc Day Habilitation program, spoke to the additional therapeutic progress made by participants. "Lack of motivation stands as a powerful obstacle

between developmentally disabled adults and their growth. A program like [The Nature Connection] is one that will motivate. A dog can come up... and the person can touch it, initiating a movement that may achieve an occupational therapy goal. Engaging them in functional movements may help them with basic activities of daily living such as reaching out for a cup, or putting their arm into a sleeve.... A program like [NC] brings joy and excitement, along with initiation and movement."

**To watch a video of NC's work, visit <[www.nature-connection.org](http://www.nature-connection.org)> or call 978-369-2585 for more information.**

### DPW Snow (cont. from page 1)

DPW gave weight to the following factors in determining priority routes:

- Bus routes (a general indicator of high pedestrian and vehicular activity)
- Proximity to facilities where pedestrian access is particularly important, including:
  - Public and private school property
  - Libraries
  - Youth Centers
  - Senior Centers and Elderly housing
  - Galleria and Twin City Mall
  - 100 ft. buffer of MBTA subway stops



During this past summer, DPW staff met with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities and members of the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee to receive feedback on the prioritization process.

Using this prioritization process, for the winter of 2011/2012, DPW plans to:

- Include all corner ramps along the following high-volume bus stop streets:

- Cambridge St - Lechmere Station to the Cambridge Common
- Massachusetts Ave - Memorial Drive to the Arlington Line
- Concord Ave - Cambridge Common to Fresh Pond Parkway
- Mount Auburn St - Belmont line to Massachusetts Ave
- Additional streets where DPW will clear bus stops and corner ramps will include:
  - Western Avenue
  - River Street
  - Huron Ave. - Concord Ave. to Fresh Pond Parkway
  - Rindge Avenue
  - Broadway
  - Prospect St. - Cambridge St. to Mass. Ave.
  - Pearl Street
  - Brookline Street
  - Green St. - Brookline St. to Western Ave.
  - Granite Street
  - Aberdeen Avenue

- Health insurers will no longer be permitted to cancel coverage for individuals who become sick or disabled
- The Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage gap, often called the “donut hole”, will be phased out over time
- Annual dollar caps and lifetime coverage limits on health insurance claims will be eliminated

Facing ever-rising healthcare costs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the State Legislature will also likely be debating potential major healthcare policy changes over the next six months in the State House. In recognition of this, the Boston-based nonprofit healthcare policy group Health Care for All (HCFA) is organizing a series of roundtable discussions to generate input from healthcare consumers.

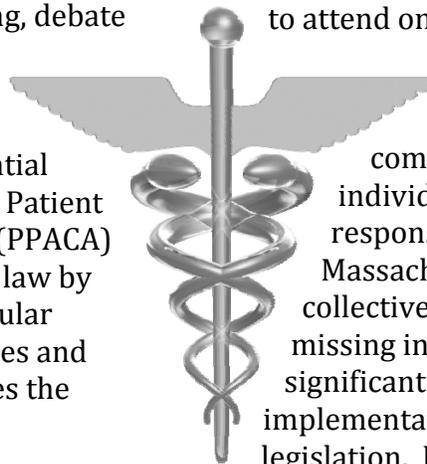
On Wednesday, February 22 and Tuesday, February 28, the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities will be hosting two such HCFA roundtable discussions, each from 6 PM to 7:30 PM, in the second-floor conference room at 51 Inman Street in Cambridge. In particular, people with disabilities and those with chronic health conditions and their families are all invited to attend one of these roundtable discussions.

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## Healthcare Issues Take Center Stage: Discussion Series Feb 22nd and 28th

With the election season in full swing, debate over healthcare reform and how to ensure healthcare coverage for America's most vulnerable citizens continues unabated. Some presidential candidates are vowing to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in 2010. Of particular importance to people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, the PPACA includes the following key elements:

- Every American will be required to have health insurance
- Individuals unable to afford coverage will receive a subsidy
- Health insurance companies will no longer be able to deny coverage to people with “pre-existing conditions”



These roundtable discussions will provide an opportunity for community members to communicate individual experiences and recommend responses for improving healthcare in Massachusetts. Individual responses and a collective commitment to communicate what is missing in the healthcare system will make a significant difference in the development and implementation of healthcare policies and legislation. Join with other consumers to share your personal healthcare experiences and demand that your voices are heard!

Space is limited at these roundtable discussions, so RSVPs are requested – please e-mail Harriotte Hurie at <hhurie@wesleyan.edu> or call her at (617) 306-1414.

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

- Feb. 2 **Premier of First Annual REELAbilitiesBoston Film Festival: *My Spectacular Theater*** – Initiated in New York in 2007, REELAbilities is the largest festival in the country dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories and artistic expressions of people with different disabilities. The festival presents award winning films by and about people with disabilities. Post-screening discussions bring together the community to explore, discuss, embrace, and celebrate the diversity of our shared human experience. 2012 brings ReelAbilities to the Greater Boston Area for the first time through a partnership with The Boston Jewish Film Festival (BJFF), beginning with a 6:30pm screening of *My Spectacular Theatre*, a Chinese film from Director Yu Lang, at the Perkins School for the Blind, 175 North Beacon St in Watertown. In this film, a young man finds refuge in a Beijing movie theatre where all of the patrons are blind in this movie about love, acceptance and heartbreak. The film is 120 minutes long, is in Mandarin with English subtitles, and audio described for individuals who are blind or partially sighted. For more information, visit <[www.bjff.org](http://www.bjff.org)>. Tickets are free to individuals with disabilities - contact Karen Schneiderman at BCIL: [kschneiderman@bostoncil.org](mailto:kschneiderman@bostoncil.org) or 617-338-6665 (voice) or 617-338-6662 (TTY).
- Feb. 3 & 4 ***Planning a Life: Making the Most out of High School, A Transition Conference*** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this two day conference is packed with transition planning information and resources for and about students in special education ages 14-22. Topics include the Vision development and self-advocacy issues; Transition Planning Form and how to develop individualized Transition goals; Housing, Postsecondary and Employment options and more. Transition planning needs to be on schedule to insure a systematic and purposeful educational experience. Find out "what you need to know, when you need to ask about it and who you need to go to for answers." This conference will be held from 8:30am-4:30pm on both days at FCSN, which has relocated to The Schrafft Center, 529 Main Street, Suite 1102 in Boston (near Sullivan Station on the MBTA Orange Line). The conference fee is \$100 per person or \$150 per family, and there are limited scholarships available. For more information or to register, visit <[www.fcsn.org/pti/workshops/transition.php](http://www.fcsn.org/pti/workshops/transition.php)>, or contact Terri McLaughlin, Transition Specialist, by phone at 617-236-7210 x 336 (voice) or by email at <[tmclaugh@fcsn.org](mailto:tmclaugh@fcsn.org)>.
- Feb. 4 **REELAbilitiesBoston Film Festival presents *War Eagle, Arkansas*** – In this film, which is based upon a true story, Enoch Cass (played by Luke Grimes, who stars on TV's "Brothers & Sisters"), a star pitcher with a debilitating stutter, has a chance for a college scholarship – his ticket out of his small-town home. But that may mean leaving behind his lifelong best friend, "Wheels," whose cerebral palsy gives him his nickname. With Brian Dennehy as Enoch's grandfather, Mare Winningham as Enoch's mother and Mary Kay Place as Wheels' mom. This 90 minute film is directed by Robert Milazzo. The screening, which will be closed captioned, will be held at 7pm at the Arlington Capitol Theatre, 204 Massachusetts Avenue in Arlington. (Please see Feb. 2 REELAbilities listing for more information).
- Feb. 5 **REELAbilitiesBoston Film Festival presents *Shooting Beauty*** – Local photographer Courtney Bent discovers a hidden world of beauty in people living with cerebral palsy at a community program in Watertown. When Bent begins inventing cameras her new friends can use, an unforgettable story unfolds about living with a disability - and without one - in this documentary directed by George Kachadorian. This 62 minute closed captioned screening will be hosted at noon by the Museum of Fine Arts (Alfond Auditorium), 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston (accessible by the Green line "E" train to the "Museum of Fine Arts" stop, or the Orange line train to the "Ruggles" stop). Please see Feb. 2 REELAbilities listing for more information.
- Feb. 5 **REELAbilitiesBoston Film Festival presents *Snow Cake*** – Alex (Alan Rickman of Harry Potter), an ex-con on a road trip, picks up Vivienne, an eccentric hitchhiker. After Vivienne dies in a car accident, Alex visits her mother (Sigourney Weaver), a woman with high-functioning autism, to tell her the news. Directed by Marc Evans, this film is 112 minutes in length and will be screened at 2:30pm at the Museum of Fine Arts (Alfond Auditorium), 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston (accessible by the Green line "E" train to the "Museum of Fine

Arts” stop, or the Orange line train to the “Ruggles” stop). Please see Feb. 2 REELAbilities listing for more information.

- Feb. 7 **Adaptive Ice Skating at Steriti Rink in Boston’s North End** – Offered by the Department of Recreation’s Universal Access Program and All Out Adventures (AOA), this adaptive skating program takes place during public skating, from 1:30pm-3:30pm. Ice sleds and skate walkers will be available! For more information, or to register, call AOA at 413-527-8980.
- Feb. 7 **REELAbilitiesBoston Film Festival presents *Warrior Champions*** – Four Iraq War veterans turn their nightmares into Olympic dreams in this documentary. After losing limbs and suffering paralysis fighting for their country, they set out to do what many thought impossible in the sports world. Directed by Brent Renaud and Craig Renaud, this film is 80 minutes in length and closed captioned. This screening will be held at 7pm at the West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington Street in West Newton. (Please see Feb. 2 REELAbilities listing for more information).
- Feb. 8 **REELAbilitiesBoston Film Festival presents *Anita*** – Anita Feldman (an extraordinary debut by Alejandra Manzo), who has Down Syndrome, helps run her mother’s (Oscar nominee Norma Aleandro) small store in their Buenos Aires Jewish neighborhood. All that changes when a bomb explodes outside the Jewish community center, killing and injuring hundreds. Anita wanders the city for days – trusting and deeply affecting everyone she meets. Directed by Marcos Carnevale, this film is 104 minutes long, and is in Spanish with English subtitles. This screening will be held at 7pm at the West Newton Cinema, 1296 Washington Street in West Newton. (Please see Feb. 2 REELAbilities listing for more information).
- Feb. 9 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30pm-7pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, unless a holiday, with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or e-mail <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Feb. 9 **Adaptive NIGHT SKATING at Steriti Rink in Boston’s North End** – Offered by the Department of Recreation’s Universal Access Program and All Out Adventures (AOA), ice sleds and skate walkers will be available for night skating from 7pm-9pm! For more information, or to register, call AOA at 413-527-8980.
- Feb. 14 **FREE Adaptive Skating: Games on Ice!** – Offered by the Department of Recreation (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP), this is an opportunity to lace up your conventional skates, or try out your manual or power wheelchair, or an ice sled to slide around the ice at The Cronin Skating Rink, 850 Revere Beach Parkway! Propel yourself with small hockey sticks or be pushed around the rink by a friend. The whole rink is ours to play on from 11:30am to 1:30pm! Activities on the ice include an obstacle course, a tower of blocks for building up and crashing down, races, tons of colorful balls and pucks to shoot around, power chair games and a gentle game of hockey! Admission and equipment is provided free of cost. Ice sleds, skate walkers, helmets and ice skates are available. For more info or to register, call 413-577-3840, or email <Heidi.Marie-Peterson@state.ma.us>.
- Feb. 22 **Health Care for All: Experiences, Responses & Recommendations for our Healthcare System** – This roundtable discussion will be held from 6-7:30pm in the 2nd floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge. RSVP required. See “Healthcare Issues Take Center Stage” on page 3 for more information.
- Feb. 27 **FREE Workshop in Somerville: Basic Rights in Special Education** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this workshop will provide families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law, and No Child Left Behind. Parents will learn how to be effective partners with their child’s school to determine eligibility for special education, and to plan, make decisions and monitor their child’s progress. The workshop will be held from 6:30pm-8:30pm in the Kennedy Elementary School Library, 5 Cherry Street in Somerville. Pre-registration is required and can be done online at <<http://fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php>> or by phone at 617-236-7210.

- Feb. 28 **Health Care for All: Experiences, Responses and Recommendations for our Healthcare System** – This roundtable discussion will be held from 6-7:30pm in the 2nd floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge. RSVP required. See “Healthcare Issues Take Center Stage” on page 3 for more information.
- Mar. 4 **Perspectives on College Life for Teens with Asperger Syndrome (AS) and Parents of Teens with AS** – Offered by the Asperger’s Association of New England (AANE), this workshop will feature a panel presentation by local college personnel, college students with AS, and parents of current students or recent grads. It will help answer questions for teens with AS who are planning to attend college and/or their parents, such as: What are the best and hardest parts of college for a student with AS? Should I talk about AS in my college essay, or not? Should I pick a community college and live at home, or live on campus at a four-year college? Should I ask for a single room? How can I make friends at college? In addition, each family attending will receive an information packet on transition resources, colleges, and other post-secondary programs. The workshop will be held at AANE, 51 Water Street, Suite 206 in Watertown and costs \$40 for AANE members and \$55 for non-members. For more information, or to pre-register (required), see <www.aane.org/upcoming\_events> or contact Lisa Graffeo at <lisa.graffeo@aane.org> or 617-393-3824 x10.
- Mar. 8 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30pm-7pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, unless a holiday, with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or e-mail <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Mar. 10 **Visions of Community, a Conference on Special Education Topics presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) with Keynote Speaker Dan Habib** – Sponsored by FCSN, the 2012 *Visions of Community* conference will feature keynote speaker Dan Habib, director/producer of the Emmy-nominated documentary *Including Samuel*, as well as 35 workshops in multiple languages, on a range of topics including the IEP process, advocacy, transition, & recreation, and will showcase more than 75 exhibitors. This is also a great time to network with other families and pick up free resources. The conference will be held at the Seaport/World Trade Center in Boston, from 7:30am to 5:00pm. Pre-registration is required and costs \$75; however, there are a limited number of partial scholarships. For scholarship information, email <voc2012@fcsn.org> or leave a message at 617-236-7210, x198. For more information or to register, see <www.fcsn.org/conferences/voc2012/> or call 1-800-331-0688.
- Mar. 20 **FREE Adaptive Skating: Games on Ice!** – Offered by the Department of Recreation (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP), this is an opportunity to lace up your conventional skates, or try out your manual or power wheelchair, an ice sled to slide around the ice at The Cronin Skating Rink, 850 Revere Beach Parkway from 11:30am to 1:30pm! See Feb. 14 listing for more details, including registration and contact information.

## Weekly & Recurring Events

### Ongoing

**Injured Worker Support Meetings** – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm, but other times can be arranged. Meetings/appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room (close to the Kenmore Square MBTA station, a few doors to the right of Barnes & Noble). RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view their 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. For more information or to set up a meeting, call 617-247-6827, or go to <www.rsiaction.org>.

### Mondays

**NAMI Connection** – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, meets every Monday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Center, 153 South St, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor 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>.

**NAMI Support Group for Caregivers** – Sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, this is a free support group for family members, friends and other caregivers of persons with mental illness that provides understanding, comfort, hope and help. This group meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:30pm at the Cambridge Hospital Learning Center A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 1493 Cambridge Street. For more information, see <[www.namimass.org/programs](http://www.namimass.org/programs)>, e-mail <[helpline@namimass.org](mailto:helpline@namimass.org)>, or call Elizabeth at 781-646-0397.

### **Tuesdays**

**Boston Voice Users** – this group for people who use or are interested in using speech recognition or dictation software meets from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm.135. Members explore the developments, available tools and products, and best use of personal computer-based speech-recognition, and invite both commercial and noncommercial entities to present at meetings. To find out more about meetings and discussions go to <[www.bostonvoiceusers.org](http://www.bostonvoiceusers.org)>.

### **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 on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY or e-mail <[aact@ctps.org](mailto:aact@ctps.org)> for more information or to request interpreters. Security measures require proper ID for access to meetings.

**Access to Art: Explorations** – Offered by the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, this is an interactive, multidisciplinary evening workshop that meets at 6pm in the Huntington Avenue Entrance Lobby on the first Wednesday of the month for adults with disabilities, with a focus on cognitive disabilities and disabilities that may affect verbal communication. This program is always multi-sensory and does not require one to be verbal. This program was developed with the intention of having it be as inclusive as possible, thus friends and family members are welcome and encouraged to come and take part. This program is led by a facilitator with experience in both art and theatre and one or more musicians. This program is NOT for groups, and advance notice is appreciated. For more information, see <[www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)> or contact Valarie Burrows at 617-369-3302 or Hannah Goodwin at 617-369-3189, or e-mail <[access@mfa.org](mailto:access@mfa.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. Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month from 1-2pm in Conference Room 8A on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of Spaulding Rehab Hospital, 125 Nashua Street in Boston (adjacent to the TD Bank Garden; near MBTA North Station). For more information, see <[www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents](http://www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents)> or contact Sally Johnson, LICSW at 617-573-2539 (voice), 1-800-439-2370 (TTY), or by e-mail at <[sejohnson@partners.org](mailto: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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.eastersealsma.org)>, call 617-226-2634, or email <[ATRC@eastersealsma.org](mailto:ATRC@eastersealsma.org)> for more information.

**Central Square Resume Writing & Job Hunting, FREE Drop-in Assistance** – Free help for adults needing assistance with making resumes or job hunting, offered on a first come, first served basis. Offered every Wednesday from 1-3pm at the Central Square Branch of the Cambridge Public Library (45 Pearl Street), this opportunity for assistance is open to all. For more information, contact Maria Balestrieri at <[mbalestrieri@cambridgema.gov](mailto:mbalestrieri@cambridgema.gov)> or 617-349-4013.

**DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7-9pm at McLean Hospital in Belmont (de Marneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Call 617-855-2795 or see <[www.dbsaboston.org](http://www.dbsaboston.org)> for more information.

**Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors** – The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of introductory one-on-one guided tours to the Museum and its collections for blind and low vision individuals 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. These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am and the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Individuals can attend one or more sessions, whichever interests them. Guided tours can also be scheduled at other times. Pre-registration is not required unless a visitor needs a sighted guide or other access accommodation. Contact Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 or <vburrows@mfa.org> to register. Call 617-369-3189 or e-mail <access@mfa.org> or go to <www.mfa.org> for more information. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston, and is accessible by the Green line “E” train to the “Museum of Fine Arts” stop, or the Orange line train to the “Ruggles” stop.

**Free introductory tour of MFA in sign language & with assistive listening devices** – A new monthly offering at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. These tours will be given at 6:30 pm 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 Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 voice, 617-267-9703 TTY or e-mail <access@mfa.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. Hosted by Jamie Freed; a \$5 donation is suggested. RSVP to 617-393-3824, x310 or <Jamie.Freed@aane.org>.

**Rainbow Support Group for Adults with Developmental Disabilities** – Funded by Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong and the Department of Developmental Services, and hosted by Cambridge Family & Children’s Service (CFCS), this group provides an opportunity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals with developmental challenges to find their voice, be heard and supported in a safe, friendly environment. Participants must be at least 22 years old. Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, 4:30 to 6:00pm at CFCS, 60 Gore Street, Cambridge, which is accessible by taking the MBTA Green Line to the Lechmere station. For more information, contact Peter Montalto at <pmontalto@helpfamilies.org> or 617-876-4210, x158.

**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 SantaMaria at 781-942-4888, x4022 or <familysupport@themark.org>.

**Spaulding Stroke Support Group** – This community-based support group offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH) provides socialization and education for stroke survivors and meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 3-4pm in Conference Room 8A on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of SRH, 125 Nashua Street in Boston (adjacent to the TD Bank Garden; near MBTA North Station). For more information, see <www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents> or contact Karen Halfon at 617-573-7143 (voice), 1-800-439-2370 (TTY), or by e-mail at <khalfon@partners.org>.

### **Thursdays**

**Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets on the 2nd Thursday, unless a holiday, at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 (voice), 617-492-0235 (TTY) or e-mail <kthurman@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>.

**Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Support Group** – Offered by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital (SRH), this weekly support group, which 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 run by Dr. Chris Carter and is held in GBC Office at SRH on the 9th Floor at SRH (take elevator to 9th Floor, make a left off the elevator; second to last door on the right), 125 Nashua Street in Boston (adjacent to the TD Bank Garden; near MBTA North Station). For more information, see: <[www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents](http://www.spauldingrehab.org/events/supportgroupevents)> or 617-573-2081 (voice), 1-800-439-2370 (TTY), or by e-mail at <[sciboston@aol.com](mailto:sciboston@aol.com)>.

### **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 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month (see Dec. 3 listing for that month's theme), from 10am-12pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, conference rooms 8A & AB, 125 Nashua Street, Boston. 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](mailto:babisgroup@hotmail.com)>, or see <[www.babis.info](http://www.babis.info)>.

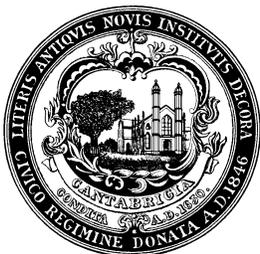
### **Sundays**

**Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors** – These tours are given on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month at 10:30 am. Pre-registration is not required for the Sunday tours unless a sighted guide or other access accommodation is needed. See Wednesday listing for details.

**Access Notice:** The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This **AccessLetter** 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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Henrietta Davis  
Marjorie C. Decker  
Craig A. Kelley  
David P. Maher  
Kenneth E. Reeves  
E. Denise Simmons  
Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.  
Minka vanBeuzekom



### **City Administration**

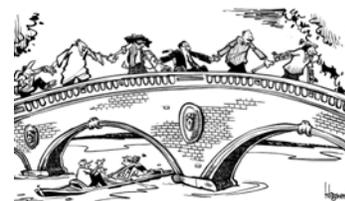
Robert W. Healy, *City Manager*  
Richard C. Rossi, *Deputy City Manager*  
Ellen Semonoff, *Assistant City Manager, Human Service Programs*

### **Commission for Persons with Disabilities**

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Kate Thurman, *Disability Project Coordinator*  
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**AccessLetter** is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,  
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We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

**Read past issues on our website: [www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm](http://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm)**

If you would rather receive your copy of **AccessLetter** electronically, please provide us with your name and e-mail address. To request that your name be removed from our mailing list,

contact us at 617-349-4692 Voice, 617-492-0235 TTY, 617-349-4766 Fax, or

<kthurman@cambridgema.gov>.

**Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities**

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