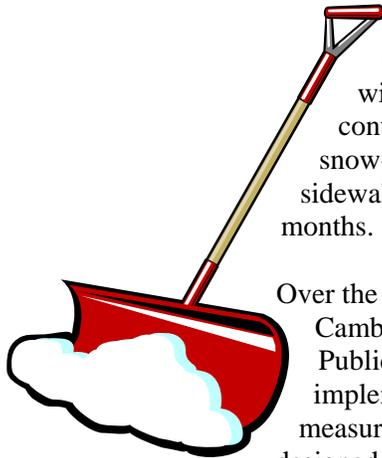


AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

We Can Do Something about These Snow/Ice Problems



The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) continues to advocate for snow-free and ice-free sidewalks throughout the winter months.

Over the past few years, the Cambridge Department of Public Works (DPW) has implemented several new measures, with CCPD input, designed to increase compliance with the City's snow/ice ordinance. This ordinance requires all property owners to keep their sidewalks clear of snow and ice, and sets timeframes for compliance following a storm. DPW's efforts include an enhanced snow/ice hotline: 617-349-4903, and an updated interactive website, <www.cambridgema.gov/snow>, which summarizes the ordinance and provides an easy online reporting system to notify DPW about unshoveled sidewalks and intersections.

Last winter, 1928 complaints were received through DPW's website and snow/ice hotline. Following investigations by DPW and Traffic Department enforcement personnel, a total of 1056 citations were issued to property owners for failing to keep their sidewalks cleared of snow or ice. So far this winter, 425 complaints have been received and 226 citations have been issued. All residents are encouraged to use DPW's snow website and hotline to report unshoveled sidewalks and intersections.

In late October, CCPD hosted a meeting with representatives of various Cambridge Neighborhood Associations to discuss ways to improve snow and ice removal from our City sidewalks and curb ramps.

(More on Snow/Ice Problems, page 2)

U.S. Census Participation Isn't Just Important-- It's Mandatory!

United States™
**Census
2010**

Sometime in March, the U.S. Census will begin mailing census forms to every household in the United States. As established in the U.S. Constitution, every 10

years the U.S. Census Bureau attempts to count every resident in the United States. Historically, because of a variety of social and economic barriers, people with disabilities have been undercounted in this decennial census. CCPD has been actively involved in the Cambridge Complete Count Committee, which has been meeting since last fall to promote awareness of, and full participation in, the upcoming 2010 census.

A complete and accurate count is crucial because approximately \$400 billion in federal funding flows into local communities for programs like affordable housing, job training, emergency preparedness, public transportation and social services. U.S. Census data is used to apportion these federal funds by population. In addition, Massachusetts could potentially lose one congressional seat in Washington unless 2010 Census data demonstrate that the Commonwealth's population has kept pace with the nation.

According to Somerville Cambridge Elder Services, Cambridge and Somerville rank among the cities which had the lowest mail-in response rate to the 2000 U.S. Census. Right now, as a result of the number of people who did not respond to the 2000 Census, our cities provide infrastructure and services to populations which are more than 20% larger than they appear in official statistics. That means we receive less than 80% of what we need to address critical needs.

(More on 2010 Census, page 3)

Snow/Ice Problems (cont'd)

The meeting was quite productive as it represented many perspectives from the different neighborhood association representatives who attended. A real sense of camaraderie was in evidence, as CCPD members brainstormed with neighborhood groups, and many interesting ideas were generated.

Of particular significance was an idea brought forth by Barbara Broussard of the East Cambridge Neighborhood Association. Barbara invited members of the CCPD to come to her neighborhood association meeting on December 9 when she would be discussing her idea: "Adopt a Sidewalk". This concept involves individual members of the neighborhood association each adopting a stretch of a particular sidewalk, and pledging to make sure that it is shoveled and cleared of snow and ice.

This would, of course, involve neighbors joining in to make all the walkways and sidewalks accessible for everyone, in particular seniors and people with disabilities. Following Barbara's description of this idea, her neighborhood association enthusiastically accepted and endorsed it. Everyone at the meeting expressed a willingness to do what he or she could to "Adopt a Sidewalk".

The CCPD then reached out to all the remaining Cambridge neighborhood associations to see if they would be willing to promote the "Adopt a Sidewalk" concept. CCPD received a very favorable response to this initiative. Recognizing that some sidewalks are much longer and wider than others, it was suggested that residents might consider sharing costs for snow-blowers or snow removal services. The goal is that neighbors work together so that all sidewalks remain accessible at all times.

Although this initiative is still evolving and in its very early stages, CCPD has been encouraged by many of the representatives of these neighborhood associations who have been quickly spreading the word to members. Because the initiative is so new, we are inviting all ideas and suggestions to make our sidewalks totally accessible.

Another idea which CCPD is trying to promote is the need to maintain wintertime access to on-street disability parking spaces. Oftentimes, a mound of snow accumulates on the curb line, rendering these spaces difficult or impossible to use. CCPD reminds local businesses to shovel their sidewalks all the way to the curb so that

people with disabilities can enter and exit their vehicles in these spaces.

A few years ago several CCPD members, in collaboration with Cambridge Community Television, produced a snow/ice removal video that is now available on YouTube: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3EBUKS_RxI>. The purpose of the video is to raise awareness among the public, and among property owners in particular, of the need to keep sidewalks in curb ramps clear of snow and ice to ensure wintertime accessibility for people with disabilities. CCPD encourages all residents to watch this video and share it with their neighbors and friends.

The current snow removal policy in Cambridge is: <<http://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/services/snow.html>>. In particular there is assistance for low income, elderly and disabled residents. The following is an excerpt from the DPW web page:

"If you are a homeowner on a low income (\$23,475 or less for a one-person household in 2008) and you are elderly or have a disability, you may qualify for the City's Snow Exemption Program (in which case the City will shovel your sidewalk). To apply, call the Cambridge Council on Aging, 617-349-6220 (voice) or 617-349-6050 (TTY).

If you do not qualify, the Council on Aging can provide you with a limited list of professional snow removal companies and a list of students who want to earn money by shoveling – you contact the student yourself and negotiate a price".

In the event that a sidewalk is not clear of ice and snow, residents can call the Snow Hotline at 617-349-4903. The direct link to report any icy or unclear sidewalk is at: <<http://www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/services/snow/complaint.aspx>>.

Our hope is that this initiative will make our sidewalks fully accessible throughout the winter months.

--JoAnn Haas

Welcome Kate Thurman

We are pleased to announce that Kate Thurman has joined the Commission as the new Disability Project Coordinator. Kate brings broad experience and passion for disability advocacy to her work in Cambridge. She spent the last four years as an Intake

Paralegal at the Disability Law Center in Boston, where she helped people with disabilities from across Massachusetts who were in need of legal services.

At DLC, Kate provided information and referral services on a wide array of disability-related issues. Kate was also a member of the Young Adult Advisory Council for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Partners for Youth with Disabilities. The Council produced the DVD "We Are Able: Perspectives of Transitioning Young Adults with Disabilities". We are excited to have Kate and her Hearing Dog, Cheyenne, as part of our team.

Census 2010 (cont'd)

The U.S. Census Bureau stresses that information obtained through the decennial census is confidential -- all census employees are required to take an oath to keep this information private, and they face five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for violations of this oath. Please, when your 2010 Census form arrives in the mail, do your part by filling out the form accurately and completely, and returning it promptly to the Census Bureau.

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

- Feb. 1 **Open Door Gallery Reception and Community Conversation with NY PORTRAITS Photographer, Gordon Saski** – NY PORTRAITS, a photographic exhibition of artists with disabilities in New York City, by Gordon Saski, who has a disability himself, will be on display at the VSA Arts of Massachusetts' (VSAM) *Open Door Gallery*, 89 South Street, Boston, from January 15-April 30, 2010, with the Reception and Community Conversation taking place on Feb. 1 from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m. For more information, contact Charles Washburn at 617-350-7713 (voice) or 617-350-6535 (TTY), or see <<http://vsamass.org/gallery.php>>.
- Feb. 6 **Accessible Winter Open House** – Offered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP), this is a free event celebrating the winter and adaptive outdoor recreation available for individuals, families and friends of people with disabilities. Activities will include cross-country skiing, sit skiing, snowshoeing, kicksledding, ice skating, letterboxing and a campfire/interpretive program. Limited space, pre-registration is required. This event is being held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mt. Tom Reservation in Holyoke, located off Rt. 5 at 125 Reservation Rd. Contact the DCR UAP at 617-626-1294 for more information or to register.
- Feb. 9 **Basic Rights workshop in Waltham presented in English and Spanish** – Offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, this workshop will help parents learn how to be effective partners with the school, to decide the child's eligibility for special education, to plan, make decisions and monitor the educational progress of their child. There will be two presentation rooms, one for each language. Workshop materials are also available in Portuguese and Russian. These workshops will be at Waltham High School, 617 Lexington Street, Waltham, 7-9 pm. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>.
- Feb. 10 **DBSA Presentation: "Effects of Early Life Stress on Vulnerability to Psychiatric Disease in Adolescence"** – free presentation by Heather Brenhouse, Ph.D. from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., followed by a discussion until 9 p.m. at the Depression Bipolar Support Alliance meeting at McLean Hospital. See DBSA listing under Wednesday recurring events for details.
- Feb. 10 **Free Orientation on Using Accessible Sit Sleds** – Orientation and training offered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP) at the Cronin Rink in Revere from 10:30 – 12:30 p.m. All Out Adventures will train staff and family members on how to reserve and use the equipment. Space is limited, pre-registration is required and offered on a first-come, first-serve basis by contacting All Out Adventures at 413-527-8980 or by email at <info@alloutadventures.org>. The sleds are also available for independent use during public skating hours at state rinks, including the Simoni Rink in Cambridge. Contact the

UAP at 413-545-5353 (v) or 413-577-2200 (TTY) or see <www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access> for more information.

- Feb. 11 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting**—meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information.
- Feb. 20 **The Soloist, another FREE movie presented by Disability Reframed: a Community Film Series** – Come see this film that is based on a true story about the powerful bond that forms between a Los Angeles journalist and a brilliant street musician who is homeless. Screening and discussion following the film is from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. in Central Square, Cambridge. This is a free public event; bring your friends. The site is wheelchair accessible. No need to RSVP. For questions, contact the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) at 617-349-4692 (Voice), 617-492-0235 (TTY) or <kthurman@cambridgema.gov>.
- Feb. 24 **DBSA Movie Night: Crazy for Life** – Second Annual Movie Night at DBSA-Boston, showing *Crazy for Life*, a one-woman show about her experience with bi-polar disorder. This FREE event will be held at McLean Hospital from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. For more information on the film, go to <<http://www.victoriamaxwell.com/shows-crazy-for-life.asp>>. See DBSA listing under Wednesday recurring events for details.
- Feb.28 **Summer Camp and Recreation Expo for Children with Special Needs** – Sponsored by the Framingham Special Education Parents Advisory Council (F-SEPAC). Learn about summer camps and recreational organizations in Massachusetts and the surrounding area by speaking directly with the representatives. The expo is being held at the Framingham High School, 115 A Street, from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. For more information, email <campexpo@f-sepac.org>, call Sue Hewlett at 508-877-1511 or Marcy Rosch at 508-879-7404, or see <www.f-sepac.org>.
- Mar. 11 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting**—meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information.
- Mar. 13 **Visions of the Community Conference in Boston** – Sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, the conference will have dozens of break-out sessions, covering information on Early Childhood, Special Education, No Child Left Behind, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Health Care for Children with Special Needs, Transition, Social/Recreation Opportunities, and more. Cantonese, Portuguese and Spanish translation available for many of the workshops. There will also be an exhibit hall featuring more than 60 vendors. Event will be held at the World Trade Center-Seaport Hotel in Boston from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with registration beginning at 7:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required, cost is \$75 if you register by Feb. 12, \$90 thereafter. A limited number of partial scholarships are available. See <www.fcsn.org>, call 617-236-7210, x198 or email <voc2010@fcsn.org> for more information or to register.
- Mar. 16 **Turning Three workshop in Waltham** – Sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, this free workshop provides information for parents about the process of transitioning a child from Early Intervention to publicly funded preschool. Discussion includes the required Early Intervention transition planning steps, eligibility for special education, the Team process and the parent's role in planning, making decisions and monitoring progress for their child. The workshop will be held at the Thom Charles River E.I. Program, 411 Waverly Oaks Road, Waltham, 7-9 p.m. Pre-registration is required; call 617-236-7210 or register online at <<http://fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php#schedule>>.
- Mar. 25 **An IEP for My Child workshop in Arlington** – Every child with a disability who receives special education services must have an Individual Education Program (IEP). This workshop takes parents step-by-step through the development of the IEP including how to articulate a Vision for their child, use the results of evaluations to write measurable goals and how to assess their child's progress. Workshop materials are available in Spanish. Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), the workshop will be offered at

the Brackett Elementary School, music room, 66 Eastern Ave, 7 - 9 p.m. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>.

Weekly & Recurring Events

Mondays

NAMI Connection – a support group for adults with mental illness, meets every Monday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Community, 153 South St, 2nd 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>.

Tuesdays

Boston Voice Users – a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. They meet 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm.135. To find out more about meetings and discussions go to <www.bostonvoiceusers.org>.

Wednesdays

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA meets 1 – 3 p.m. at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY or email <aact@ctps.org> for more information or to request interpreters. Security measures require proper ID for access to meetings.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group, (formerly known as MDDA, Manic Depression & Depressive Association) meets every Wednesday evening, 7 - 9 p.m. 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> 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 for the Wednesday tours 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 email <access@mfa.org> or go to <www.mfa.org> for more information. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston, 02115 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 email <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 Autism 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>.

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@themarc.org>.

Thursdays

Autism Support Group – meets 3rd Thursday of each month, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Central Square Branch of Cambridge Public Library, 45 Pearl Street in Cambridge. For more information contact Lorraine Iacopucci at <liacopucci@nsarc.org> or 978-624-2304.

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting – meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group, (formerly known as MDDA, Manic Depression & Depressive Association) at Mass. General Hospital meets 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 email <mghgroup@dbsaboston.org>.

“Piecing the Puzzle,” a Parent to Parent Autism Support Group – meets in Jefferson Park Community Room #1, at Jackson Place in Cambridge every Thursday from 10 am to 12 noon. Purpose is to provide support and understanding to families with children on the autism spectrum and to increase autism awareness in the community. Sponsored by Cambridge Family & Children’s Services in collaboration with the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS). For more information or to become a member contact Malek Lahlali at 617-876-4210, x158, <mlallali@helpfamilies.org> or Yevett Fraticelli at x105.

Sundays

Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors – These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am. Pre-registration is required for the Sunday tours. See Wednesday listing for details.

Ongoing by Appointment

Free Tax Preparation – The Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee will provide free tax preparation by appointment. They can arrange to meet with you at your home if you are unable to come to their office in Central Square. They also help with signing up for MassHealth and food stamps, offer free financial education, literacy courses, and assistance in paying owed rent and utilities. For more information or to make an appointment, call 617-868-2900 or see <<http://ceoccambridge.org/>>.

Injured Worker Support Meetings – (*previously listed as RSI – repetitive strain injury*) Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1st Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm. Meetings/appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4th Floor Conference Room. Volunteers provide resources and support. For more information or to set up a meeting, call 617-247-6827, or go to <www.rsiaction.org>.

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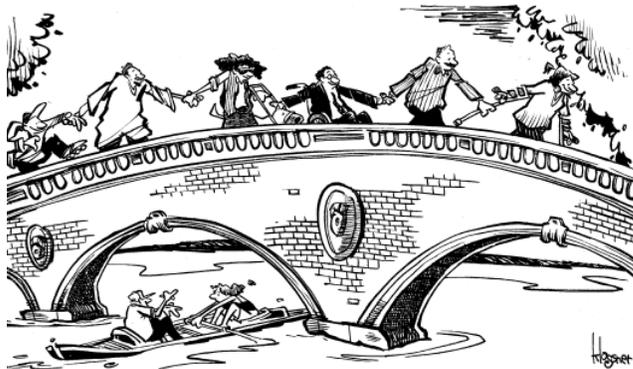
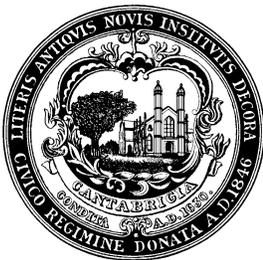
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We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: 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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