

AccessLetter

**Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities**

Disability Advocates Swarm Beacon Hill

In a "March for Freedom," hundreds of disability activists marched up Beacon Hill from the Boston Common on May 14th to demand that Governor Romney and the state legislature stop cutting essential disability services. Chanting "No More Cuts!" the marchers, many of who used wheelchairs or crutches, rallied in front of the State House to voice their demands. Topping the list was their demand that Romney and the legislature restore cuts to MassHealth and CommonHealth, the state-sponsored medical assistance programs. "We want to draw the public attention to three years of cuts," said Bill Henning, director of Boston Center for Independent Living.

"Our March for Freedom comes because of what appears, intended or not, an attack on people with disabilities," said Rob Park of the Boston Center for Independent Living. "The legislature and the governor have tough choices to make, but programs that help us have been the 'tough choice' in way too many instances. I use personal care attendants to help me get out of bed and work, and that program faces cuts, while co-pays for medications are rising."

MassHealth Basic, which served people with chronic illnesses and disabilities, was eliminated on April 1. Dental coverage for people on Medicaid was cut last year. Coverage for prosthetics and orthotics was cut on January 1. Prescription Advantage, which serves

5,000 younger people with disabilities as well as 75,000 seniors, many themselves disabled, faces severe restriction or elimination. In addition, a housing program for people with disabilities has been cut over 25% at a time when there is an acute shortage of affordable and accessible housing. State agencies such as the Mass Rehab Commission have also endured budget trimming during the past year.



**Cambridge Advocates Lisa
Maisels (left) and Mike
Warshawsky at State House Rally**

"As a single mother with a disability who's working fulltime, I depend on state help to supplement my private insurance, to help with my medical supplies, personal care attendants, and medications, and these things are threatened," said Pam Burkley, director of the Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled in Hyannis. "I am scared for my and my daughter's future." Burkley is on the CommonHealth insurance program for working disabled adults, a program in which premiums are rising and enrollments are being frozen.

"For many children and adults with disabilities in the Commonwealth, MassHealth is the cornerstone of their health care and in turn their independence," said Kirk Joslin, President of Easter Seals

Massachusetts. "Another round of deep cuts to MassHealth services and eligibility puts people with disabilities at risk for declining health, financial ruin and potential institutional placement."

Advocates expressed guarded optimism that some of the disability program cuts contained in the House version of the budget would be restored in the Senate version.

Employer Awards at “Breakfast of Champions”

Two Cambridge employers, the Department of Human Service Programs’ Childcare and Family Support Division and the Porter Square CVS/Pharmacy, were among the honorees at the annual Greater Boston Employer Advisory Board (GBEAB) employer awards breakfast in May. Dubbed “Breakfast of Champions” by its organizers with the Mass Rehab Commission, the morning awards presentation honored several distinguished employers for going above and beyond expectations in the promotion of diversity and inclusive hiring practices for qualified persons with disabilities.

“I’m honored to be acknowledged for the work we’ve done over the past few years to build childcare staff teams that include people with disabilities,” said Crystal Nicolosi, head teacher for school-age childcare at the Fletcher-Maynard Academy.

“We’ve been working with Mass Rehab Commission for awhile now, so it was nice to be recognized for that,” said Kitty Kramer, school-age childcare manager for the Childcare and Family Support Division. Kramer explained that, working with Mass Rehab and Lesley University’s Threshold Program, her division has been able to hire at least seven individuals with disabilities over the past several years. Kramer acknowledged the leadership of division head Jacqueline Neel in this effort, “We couldn’t have done it without Jackie’s help.”

In a time of economic stagnation, GBEAB representatives continue to strive toward their vision of workplace diversity through employment of people with disabilities. Since its inception in 1998, the GBEAB has utilized resources from Mass Rehab and local businesses in search of job placement for their clients. Comprised of over forty business and human resource professionals from numerous companies, the GBEAB is able to present its clients with a variety of vocational options. The Board also offers career services such as informational interviews, resume building workshops, and diversity training for prospective employers.

Karen Beth Mael, Event Coordinator and GBEAB founding member stated, “GBEAB is a wonderful



Kitty Kramer (left) and Crystal Nicolosi display their GBEAB employer awards

group of people from the business community who know there is an untapped talent pool of qualified applicants with disabilities. Members are dedicated to diversifying the workforce. They know what talents are needed to fill positions and enjoy imparting that information to Mass Rehab consumers.” To learn more about the GBEAB contact Karen Beth Mael at 617-739-9080 or by email at karen.mael@mrc.state.ma.us. To learn more about MRC and its services visit its website at www.mass.gov/mrc.

Cambridge Disabilities Commission “Uncovered”

Catch a lively discussion of “Access and Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities” on CCTV’s *Cambridge Uncovered* series during June. Members of the Commission’s board and staff cover a variety of topics from the design of accessible outdoor urban spaces like the Northeast Sector around Fresh Pond to the disability awareness presentations for third grade classes and initiatives to improve training curriculum on mental health issues for law enforcement officers.

Learn about the Principles of Universal Design, how the Commission works with business owners, and how it is helping faith communities improve access for their congregations by tuning in to *Cambridge Uncovered* on Channel 10 during June 2003. The show will air on Sundays at 9:00 p.m., Wednesdays at 2:30 pm, and Thursdays at 9:00 pm. The *Cambridge Uncovered* project seeks to create community media that informs, educates and shares diverse views and opinions. For

each episode community leaders are chosen as conveners and guests to present concerns relevant to people who live and work in Cambridge.

Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) is a public forum for all Cambridge residents, businesses and organizations and also provides training and access to telecommunications technology. It has three cable television channels: #9 carries BeLive shows and single programs submitted by Cambridge residents, #10 carries series programs produced either locally or elsewhere, and #22 presents non-English programming from Cambridge and around the world.

For questions about programming or the program schedule, call 617-661-6900, x122 or email eli@cctvcambridge.org.

ADA Business Connections Meeting

Go beyond charity or even “doing the right thing” by both hiring people with disabilities and marketing your goods and services to customers with disabilities, and your business will be rewarded. That was the message delivered by speakers at an ADA Business Connections Meeting held in Cambridge May 9th. Convening over lunch at the Inn at Harvard, business leaders and government officials shared case examples and best practices to create a more inclusive business climate for employees and customers with disabilities.

Ralph Boyd, Assistant Attorney General for the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office welcomed the audience and pointed out that Americans with disabilities have a combined discretionary spending of about \$220 Billion, three times the spending power of American teenagers. “There is an expanding consumer market of 54 million people with disabilities,” said Boyd “including baby-boomers with an interest in universally designed products.” Boyd described how people with disabilities are now demanding products that are well-made and user-friendly and they are willing to pay for such quality.

Glenn Mangurian, who is a partner in a consulting firm and uses a wheelchair, spoke of the market opportunities for companies that practice good corporate citizenship. He described two examples of companies marketing products to people with

disabilities that were able to expand their customer base by including often-overlooked populations, such as aging baby-boomers and the elderly. “There are ample business opportunities for those who clearly define a target market based on the differing life experiences of those with disabilities,” said Mangurian.

Marie Trottier, Harvard University’s Disability Coordinator talked about her experience having worked in the international corporate community as an international budget analyst and how she had to deal with the obstacles and prejudices she faced as a woman and a person of short stature. “Living with a disability is a unique life experience for each of us,” said Trottier, “and the impact of technology and the internet has enhanced our options and choices.” She spoke of her strong belief in the concept of universal design, and the need for buildings, services and products to be designed inclusively from the start. Businesses need to bundle their goods and products, and market creatively to all consumers, according to Trottier.



Glenn Mangurian speaks at ADA Business Connections Meeting

The ADA Business Connections Meeting is one of a series of forums that will be held around the country, according to event organizers.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

- June 1-29 **CCTV's *Cambridge Uncovered* highlights disability and access issues**; program will air in June on Sundays and Thursdays 9-10 pm and Wednesdays 2:30-3:30 pm on Cambridge channel 10.
- June 4 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, a peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2 to 3:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or <woman@braintrust.org> for more information.
- June 4 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in group** (information & support) on first Wednesday of each month, 6 to 8 p.m. at Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 5th floor conference room, Kenmore Square in Boston. Call 617-247-6827 for information.
- June 7 **Introduction to Kayaking for teens age 13 to 18 in Marblehead Harbor**. Learn the basics about kayaks, equipment, and paddling strokes in the security of tandem boats. Practice doing a "wet exit" and navigate the harbor while learning about tides, weather and the wind. Cost is \$50. For more information call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY, email <info@outdoorex.org> or check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org> This event will be offered again on July 12 and September 20.
- June 8 **"Anything on Wheels" fund raiser for Partners for Youth with Disabilities** at Artesani Park along the Charles River bike path in Brighton. Get donations or pledges from sponsors then travel the course on bicycles, rollerblades, wheelchairs, wagons, baby carriages, or even feet. Registration is at 11 a.m. on Sunday, the day of the event. For more information contact Partners for Youth with Disabilities at 617-727-7440, x309 voice, 800-322-2020 voice & TTY or <www.pyd.org>.
- June 10 **Group Evening Paddle for adults on the Charles River in Boston**. For more information call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY, email <info@outdoorex.org> or check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- June 10 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meeting time is 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. See May 13 listing above for details.
- June 11-15 **Society for Disability Studies (SDS) annual meeting and conference** in Bethesda, MD. The SDS is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization committed to developing theoretical and practical knowledge about disability and to promoting the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in society. Members include social scientists, scholars in the humanities and disability rights advocates. This year's program, *Disability and Dissent: Public Cultures, Public Spaces*, focus on scholarship that addresses the changing nature of disability in the wake of globalization, heightened militarism, and the increasing politicization of local communities. Registration varies from \$88.20 to \$273.20 depending on membership and income level. For more information check the U. of Illinois in Chicago web site at <www.uic.edu/orgs/sds/index.html> or contact Dr. Carol Gill at 312-996-4664 (voice/TTY) or <cg16@uic.edu>.

- June 12 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2d floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- June 12 **Employment Network Opportunity Conference** – Doubletree Hotel, Portland, Maine, free conference, choose identical morning or afternoon session for employers, business councils, disability-rehab providers, and other key stakeholders to understand the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program. Register online at <www.yourtickettowork.com/calendar> or email <andreastapleton@maximus.com>.
- June 14 **Sailing at Piers Park in Boston** with Outdoor Explorations (OE) for people with and without disabilities. Under the instruction of a skilled sailor and as part of a team, learn about rigging, knots, tacking and jibing. You will use state-of-the-art keelboats that combine stability with speed. Registration for this full day adventure is \$50. This program is offered again on August 10 and Sept. 14. For more information call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY, email <info@outdoorexpl.org> or check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- June 14 **“REFLECT” - Cambridge Arts Council’s 25th annual River Festival**, noon to 6 p.m. along Memorial Drive between Western Avenue and John F. Kennedy Street.
- June 17 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston. For more information contact Robert Snierson, Chair, <rsnierson@aol.com> or Mary Lou Maloney at 617-216-5181.
- June 17 **Accessible Interpretive Program on Pond Ecology and Hiking** at Borderland State Park in Sharon, MA. To register and for more information and time contact Gigi Ranno at 617-626-1294 voice, 617-626-1448 fax or <gigi.ranno@state.ma.us> or Marcy Marchello at 413-545-5758 at the Universal Access Program of the Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM).
- June 17 **Group Evening Paddle for adults on the Charles River in Boston.** See June 10 listing for details.
- June 17 **Cambridge Group for Parents with Children on the Autism Spectrum** meets the third Tuesday of each month, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Family and Children’s Services, 60 Gore Street (new address). For more information contact Christi Papazian at the Autism Support Center, 978-777-9135 or <asc@naarc.org> or check the website at <www2.shore.net/~nsarc>.
- June 18 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, (see June 4 listing for details.)
- June 19 **LD/ADHD Consumer Group** for persons with Learning Disabilities/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC Somerville Area Office at 5 Middlesex Ave., Suite 302 in Somerville. Business meeting 10 am to 12 noon; Support Group 12 to 1 pm. For more information contact Jim Fratolillo at 617-204-3854 (voice), 617-204-3847 (fax) or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 (voice).
- June 21 **Introduction to Kayaking for teens 13-18 at Marblehead.** (See June 7 listing for details.)

- June 23 **The Olmstead Challenge: Altering Accepted Practices – Medicaid’s Community Living Options** at the Tremont House Hotel in Boston. Come help develop a strategy to implement real systems change in how Medicaid funds support services for people with disabilities. Two current conditions contribute to this opportunity. 1.) The Olmstead decision requires Massachusetts to develop a plan for providing services in the *least restrictive setting*, and 2.) the proposed reorganization of the Commonwealth’s human service agencies may open the door for more innovative programs that offer flexible family supports and community choices. **There is no fee for this conference but space is limited; registration DEADLINE is June 13.** Contact the Disability Law Center (DLC) at 11 Beacon St., Boston MA 02108, call 800-872-9992 voice, 800-381-0577 TTY, 617-723-9125 fax or email <dpc_ma@yahoo.com>. Time is 9:15 am – 3:30 pm; address is 275 Tremont Street. Sponsored by DLC, Disability Policy Consortium (DPC), Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) and Mass. Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).
- June 25 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- June 26-29 **Women’s Sea Kayaking Adventure in Friendship, ME** Spend four days exploring by kayak and camping on islands off the coast of Maine; swim and sleep to the sound of waves on the shore. *Prerequisite is Introduction to Kayaking or previous kayaking experience.* Registration fee is \$300. For more information check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>, call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY or email <info@outdoorex.org>.
- June 28-29 **Girls Ropes and Rocks** will challenge teens and develop skills as they master the climbing tower and work as a team to navigate the high ropes course. Takes place on the North Shore. Fee is \$150. For more information check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>, call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY or email <info@outdoorex.org>.
- July 10 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- July 12 **Introduction to Kayaking for teens 13-18 at Marblehead.** (See June 7 listing for details.)
- July 12-13 **Whitewater Rafting at Deerfield River’s Zoar Gap in Charlemont, MA** for teens 13 to 18 years old. Outdoor Explorations (OE) works to challenge perceptions and change lives of people with and without disabilities through shared activities in the outdoors. The organization specifically designs its programs for people of all ages, with and without cognitive, sensory, physical, mental and multiple disabilities. Experience adventure, learn rafting basics and enjoy a journey down one of New England’s premier whitewater rivers. Registration is \$150. For more information check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>, call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY or email <info@outdoorex.org>.
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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. Examples of our ongoing work include:

- Work with various City departments to ensure **compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** (ADA) and related state and federal disability rights laws;
- Provide free **disability awareness training** upon request for any Cambridge business or nonprofit entity;
- Issue **temporary disability parking permits** to Cambridge residents;
- Cosponsor the **taxi discount coupon program** with the Cambridge Council on Aging; and
- Facilitate additional **accessible parking spaces** through the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department.

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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