

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

People with Disabilities Living in the Community

August 2015



25 Years of the ADA

We're almost a month into the second 25 years after the ADA! The Celebration on the Boston Commons was awesome, with everyone appreciating what has been accomplished. The advances in inclusion are truly remarkable. We all agreed that there still is much left to do; especially in employment, transportation, and attitudes but the advances made over the past 25 years give us hope that real equality in the United States for people with disabilities is attainable.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Spooner, Executive Director
MetroWest Center for Independent
Living

Boston's Celebration

With speakers, music, information, activities and thousands of people with disabilities and disability advocates, Boston Common was hopping!



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MWCIL



**MetroWest Center
for Independent
Living**

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Maura Healey impressed us all with her [announcement of a new Disability Rights Advisory](#)

Address: 280 Irving
Street
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[Committee](#). "The committee will be comprised of advocates and experts that will meet on a regular basis to consult with and advise AG Healey and her staff on matters pertaining to inclusion, access, and equality for individuals with disabilities."



Visit www.mwcil.org for more photos of the day. Click on Photos (right) and select 2015 ADA Celebration Boston.

More Work Needed

William Peace participated in our Boston celebration, but as you can read in his [blog: Bad Cripple](#), his glass is half empty. He was [interviewed by WBUR](#) at the Boston Common event. "I'm kinda cranky about the ADA," said William Peace, 55. "It's an appropriate thing to celebrate but it was just a start. It has succeeded legally, but socially it has a long way to go."

High on his list are unemployment, lack of accessible and affordable housing, accessibility at restaurants and colleges (to name a couple), and *attitudes* - "To get this idea across I often tell others what I have been told when I try to enter an establishment - I am often told "Sorry, wheelchairs are not allowed" or "Wheelchairs must be seated in the back corner". I suggest substitute "wheelchair" with "black person", or "woman" and people would be outraged. When it comes to disability based discrimination there is no outrage. Somehow disability remains different. Support for the civil rights of

people with a disability is passive. It is a choice.."

Many of the discriminatory incidents he posts cannot be legislated away - they already are illegal, but disregarded, or discarded as unimportant. The most frustrating theme in his blog is attitude, lack of understanding and lack of empathy towards people with disabilities.

New Mobility's Mark Boatman wrote an article about William Peace and the importance of his advocacy: [William Peace: Scholar, Advocate](#).

Whether you're a half empty or half full personality, there IS a lot of work left to do until we achieve full inclusion for people with disabilities. We will need *everyone's* voices, including the "cranky" ones!

NCIL Conference in Washington

Massachusetts IL staff participated in the 2015 NCIL conference "Generation ADA Rise Up!". The keynote address was by the head of the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Vanita Gupta. They also attended many workshops, the March to the Capitol, and Legislative visits. Attached is the [NCIL Legislative and Advocacy Priorities Guide](#).

Two other hot topics were WIOA and Transition Services (the 5th IL Core Service).

President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The implementation is still underway.

Transition services include assisting people to move from nursing homes and other institutions into the community, helping people avoid moving from the community to institutions, and supporting youth with disabilities as they move to adulthood. Recognizing Transition as a core service should help clarify funding and the mission.

The MA delegation was lucky to meet with Senator Elizabeth Warren and Congressman Jim McGovern. *We are fortunate in MA to have advocates for disabilities representing us in DC.*





VOTE!

If you've been following the presidential candidate antics, you know that the stakes are very high in the 2016 presidential election. Since the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling, money in elections is basically uncontrolled, and it can be very difficult to decipher what is true from the constant and slick advertising. Our state legislators have to be elected every two years (2016), and their

opponents can (and do!) get money from anywhere in the country. Our Congressmen and women will also be running in 2016. Again, the stakes in Washington are high - especially for disability issues. While we focus on issue targeted advocacy, everything is easier when the right (i.e. supportive of disability issues) people are in office!

In preparation for 2016 elections, the Disability Law Center and IL Centers are partnering to ensure that that all voters with disabilities have access to their vote, and to increase the number of voters with disabilities.

Bill Galvin, The Secretary of State, has enhanced the [Elections Division on the state website](#). With more information, on-line registration, insistence on accessible polling venues and absentee ballots, *Massachusetts residents have no excuse for not participating!* Here are some of my favorite links:

- [Find my Elected Officials](#)
- [Register to Vote ONLINE](#). Online registration requires a RMV ID. If you do not have an RMV ID, you can fill out the form, print it, and mail it in.
- [Voting for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Absentee Voting](#)
- and... last but not least, [How to Run for President](#)

The Presidential Primary will be on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. *You must be registered, and have your desired party enrollment by Wednesday, February 10 in order to vote in the primary.*

SAVE THE DATE

When:

Friday, November 13 at 5:30

Where:

Sheraton Tara
Framingham

Please join us for our 4th annual Gala Awards and Fundraiser! Among others, we will honor the late Senator Tom Kennedy. Visit our [webpage](#) for the details!



IL Conference 2015 ***Building a Blueprint for the Future of Independent Living***

When:

September 22, 8:30-8

Where:

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel and Trade
Center
181 Boston Post Road West
Marlboro

MASILC members and nominees, ILC staff and board members, state IL employees and other interested parties are invited. The conference runs for 2 days and includes workshops, dinner on September 22th and exhibits. The IL Conference is an important opportunity to rekindle and make new connections, to learn about the latest available IL services, and to strategize better ways to achieve our common goals.



Disability Policy Consortium

Reception and Awards

When:

Thursday, October 22 from 5:30 - 7:30

Where:

1199 SEIU

150 Mount Vernon Street

Dorchester

The DPC will honor five extraordinary individuals.

Robert Master and Mary Glover, of the Commonwealth Care Alliance, have spent the last thirty years developing medical practices which were built around the independent living philosophy. Now, One Care serves more than 13,000 people across the state. Today, thousands of people with disabilities are living longer, healthier and freer lives because of the work of these two incredible individuals.

Denise Karuth has been called the "mother of accessible transportation in Massachusetts". Denise began her work more than a decade before the ADA became a reality. Her partner, Fred Pelka, is one the leading disability historians in the United States. His works include, What We Have Done: an Oral History of the Disability Rights Movement and The ABC-CLIO Companion to The Disability Rights Movement.

Allegra Stout is a community organizer with the Boston Center for Independent Living. Allegra burst on to the local scene only two years ago. Already she has established herself as a rising young leader with a fresh perspective. Her work integrates our movement into the wider struggle for social justice and human dignity.

For more information please contact Liz Hardy at lhady@dpcma.org.

2015 Disability Summit: The ADA at 25

When:

Friday, September 18, 8:30 a.m.

Where:

Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

415 Summer Street

Boston

Contact:

Allan Motenko (617) 979-7308,
Allan.Motenko@MassMail.State.MA.US

This breakfast summit is hosted by the Massachusetts Office on Disability. The theme is *The ADA at 25* and will feature notable speakers from the Massachusetts disability community addressing their work in the past, present, and future as it relates to specific ADA topics. This event will be an opportunity to hear from and network with opinion leaders, agenda setters and advocates from the disability community.

Got News?

Send us your ideas!

This monthly section is for news and comments from our readers. You can suggest something for us to research, give your opinion on a topic (relevant to people with disabilities of course), or let us know of what is working and what needs improvement in the community. Please email Sue at srorke@mwciil.org. Thanks!

www.mwciil.org

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