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## Remembering Karen Dempsey

We were stunned and saddened to learn that Karen Dempsey passed away on Christmas Eve. Our hearts go out to her husband Mark and their two sons, Joseph and William, and to her large extended family.

Karen and Mark have been more than friends to MetroWest Center for Community Living. Over the past 20+ years, she worked at MWCIL, was on the Board of Directors, and served as Board President.

In the Framingham community, Karen has been a tireless fighter for disability rights as an active member of the Framingham Disability Commission, which she founded. In 2019, she was elected to the Framingham School Committee where she continued her advocacy for disability rights in the schools.

Rose Quinn, at MWCIL, remembers Karen:

"Karen was a good and loyal friend. I enjoyed working with her for many years, both here at MWCIL and as a fellow member of the Framingham Disability Commission. Although she was a person with a severe mobility impairment, Karen never stopped moving forward! Her voice will be deeply missed in the disability community! "

Karen was one of the strongest IL advocates I have known. She lived her life to the fullest and pushed for disability rights in everything she did. I have known her for over 30 years and seen her grow and lead the charge for disability rights in her local community. Framingham has lost a true champion and a voice of

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Sincerely,  
Paul Spooner, Executive Director

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### **Obituary from the Framingham Source**

[Karen Foran Dempsey, 54, Founder of Disability Commission & Framingham School Committee Member](#)

..."Dempsey was still fighting for disability rights in 2020.

"Disability is often left out when speaking about diversity in Framingham. If Framingham wants to be a truly welcoming and inclusive community for all, they will think of, and include, people with Disabilities," said Dempsey in an op-ed to the SOURCE in January. ....

"it is no longer okay or acceptable for our City Officials and Leaders to say, 'Oh, I didn't even think about it' or 'I didn't do it intentionally' or 'I didn't mean anything by it' These phrases are continually used as excuses and therefore possibly deny inclusion for people with Disabilities," wrote Dempsey in early 2020. "...

Please read the whole article, which lists many of Karen Dempsey's accomplishments in the Framingham community.

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### **Karen and the boys in 2011 at the MWCIL Holiday Party**

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**Karen and Elise Marcil, a former Disability Commissioner, at the MWCIL 2015 Gala**



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**Karen and the boys at the 2015 ADA Celebration in Boston**

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**Karen and Mark Dempsey at the 2019 IL Education Day at the State House**



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## Partner Websites and Organizations



[REV UP Massachusetts](http://www.revupma.org) - Increasing the Disability Vote!

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[MA Tales of Independence](#) - a collection of videos by people who are successfully living independently.



[Dignity Alliance of Massachusetts](#) is dedicated to secure fundamental changes in the provision of long-term services, support, and care.

### **About MetroWest Center for Independent Living**

We provide an array of independent living services that enable people with disabilities to live in the community. The center was created by people with disabilities seeking full integration into society. We empower people with disabilities by teaching the practical skills and confidence to take control over their lives and become active members of the communities in which they live. We promote access and change within society while advocating for programs and services needed by people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities. MWCIL is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency.

*We enable people with disabilities to gain freedom from nursing homes and other institutional settings.*

If you have a disability, live within our area (26 towns in Metrowest section of Massachusetts) and have needs, goals, or barriers related to your living

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MetroWest Center for Independent Living is a scent-free environment. Please keep this in mind when you plan a visit.

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## **MetroWest Center for Independent Living**

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