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News Flash 2012 Legislator's Forum

February 24,
2012

MetroWest Center for Independent Living, Inc.

Greetings!

On February 17, MWCIL and Easter Seals of Massachusetts held our annual Legislator's forum at the Center. The focus was on educating the legislators on the important work that MWCIL and Easter Seals do for people with disabilities.

For more photos of the forum, visit our website at www.mwcil.org and select PHOTOS from the right side menu.

from Paul Spooner, Executive Director



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Legislators

Senators Karen Spilka and James Eldridge attended, along with State Representatives Chris Walsh, Tom Sannicandro and Daniel Winslow. All spoke about their support for Independent Living and Assistive Technology.



Senator Spilka and Rep Winslow



Sam, Rep. Walsh and Senator Spilka

Consumers

MWCIL and Easter Seals greatly appreciated the support of consumers who attended and spoke about their struggles with staying independent, and the various services that both organizations have provided.

Using his DynaVox communication device, Sam spoke for Easter Seals. He is an honor roll student at Framingham High School, and has received awards and been selected to participate in conferences. He's currently waiting to get internet on the DynaVox, which should be soon. We can't wait to hear what college he picks out!



Sam shows Rep Sannicandro his communication device

Mary, Richard and Ron all spoke about how MWCIL worked with them to find housing and other needed services. Today, all three are living in their own homes. All credited MWCIL with helping them reach their goals.

MWCIL

Paul Spooner, Executive Director of MetroWest Center for Independent Living, spoke about the state of Independent Living. He focused on getting people out of nursing homes, and estimated that each person living in the community uses about \$20,000 less annually. Statewide, IL centers got over 200 individuals out of nursing homes last year. IL centers would like to get \$1.1 million more dollars next fiscal year, or about \$100,000 per center to continue this important work.

Paul also spoke about some of the difficulties that people with disabilities have. There is not enough affordable and accessible housing. The transportation options on the table are not acceptable. And MassHealth and their inefficient processes have made seemingly simple things like getting wheelchairs fixed extremely difficult.

The legislators listened carefully, and hopefully can start to find solutions to some of these problems.



Senator Eldridge

Easter Seals of Massachusetts

Joe Bellil, Vice President at Easter Seals, and Board of Directors President at MWCIL, spoke about the importance of assistive technology. Easter Seals is asking that Assistive Technology be level funded for FY 2013. Sam spoke to everyone about the importance of Independent Living as a civil right, via his DynaVox. Considering that he is only a junior in high school, Sam's articulate and confident presentation was an incredible testimony to the importance of assistive technology.

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