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MetroWest

Center for Independent Living, Inc.

January

President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address was an inspiration with his commitments to equitable civil rights for everyone: "We, the people, still believe that every citizen deserves a basic measure of security and dignity... For we remember the lessons of our past, when twilight years were spent in poverty, and parents of a child with a disability had nowhere to turn. We do not believe that in this country, freedom is reserved for the lucky, or happiness for the few. We recognize that no matter how responsibly we live our lives, any one of us, at any time, may face a job loss, or a sudden illness, or a home swept away in a terrible storm. The commitments we make to each other - through Medicare, and Medicaid, and Social Security - these things do not sap our initiative; they strengthen us. They do not make us a nation of takers; they free us to take the risks that make this country great." We all are part of the team working for a better future.

The governor's budget for FY '14 (House 1) was released on January 23, and once again, IL has been level funded. Our Center costs have risen, and we will be actively pursuing an increase in funding.

Some of our responsibilities may change in FY '14 as the Dual Eligible program rolls out, and we share our knowledge and resources with the ICOs (Integrated Care Organizations).

Community accessibility continues to improve, with the recent clarifications to accessibility in school sports. We have a lot of work left before the ADA is completely implemented, but we were glad to see these new guidelines!

from Paul W. Spooner,
Executive Director of MWCIL

Governor's Budget

[GoLocal Worcester.com](#) provides an overview of the governor's revenues and expenditures in his FY '14 budget. He proposes increasing revenues, and spending much of the increase on transportation infrastructure and education which he predicts will grow jobs ([Lowell Sun](#)).

Groups such as ADDP (Association of Developmental Disability Providers) seem satisfied with this initial budget - a phenomenon not seen in awhile! While they point out some deficiencies, we are not hearing the loud outrage directed at initial proposals in previous



In This Issue

[Governors Budget](#)

[Accessible Prescriptions](#)

[School Sports](#)

[Temple Grandin](#)

[IL Education Day](#)

[IL State Plan](#)

[Internships](#)

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years. Independent Living was level funded *again*. We will be actively pursuing increases to offset our rising costs so that we can continue to offer sufficient services to our consumers.

We're guessing the loudest outrage will come shortly from the no-tax groups over the proposed increases in revenues.

Accessible Drug Prescriptions

While most of us don't think twice about our prescriptions, even though the words can only be seen by the under 30 crowd with 20/20 vision, being able to know how much of what to take when is crucial to everyone using medication. The [Perkins](#) (formerly the Perkins School for the Blind) reported on the status of the movement towards accessible prescriptions. "The Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act, recently signed by President Obama, requires the pharmaceutical sector to study and implement the best ways to make prescription labels accessible, including the use of braille." With a focus on a national standard, let's hope this important work is accomplished quickly!

School Sports

We've all seen the feel-good stories about high school teams where the boy with a disability gets to play basketball in the last game after sitting on the bench all year. We applaud these teams for bringing accessibility into the spotlight, and for demonstrating that inclusion can work. Unfortunately, there is a companion story for each of these where the high school denied access to sports for a student with a disability.

Happily, the U.S. Department of Education just announced that public schools that offer extra-curricular sports programs will need to start making an effort to accommodate students with disabilities. Patty Kleban at [Penn State](#) offers a thoughtful perspective. "I think the purpose of the new guidelines from the Department of Education is to try to expand that "once in a lifetime" experience to a more mainstreamed and appropriate inclusion in extra-curricular athletics." And as John Winske, of the Disability Policy Consortium said: "Who knows, twenty years from now maybe the MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association) will be holding state finals in wheelchair basketball. " Let's hope it comes sooner than 20 years!

Temple Grandin at Babson "Thinking in Pictures"

Temple Grandin will speak about "Thinking Differently - How Autism and a Visual Mind Have Shaped Temple Grandin's Life and Work".

Wikipedia offers biographical

available at our website)

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information: "Temple Grandin (born August 29, 1947) is an American doctor of animal science and professor at Colorado State University, bestselling author, autism activist, and consultant to the livestock industry on animal behavior. She also created the "hug box", a device to calm autistic children. The subject of an award-winning biographical film, Temple Grandin, in 2010, she was listed in the Time 100 list of the 100 most influential people in the world in the "Heroes" category."



When: Wednesday, February 6 at 5:00 pm
Where: Sorenson Center for the Arts at Babson
Cost: Free

Statewide Independent Living Education Day

The Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council invites you to join them and educate your legislators on our priorities. The agenda consists of lunch and speakers in the Great Hall. At noon, everyone visits their Representative and Senator to tell them what Independent Living means in their lives. If you can attend, call your legislator today and invite them for lunch, and schedule an afternoon time to visit with them.

When: Thursday, March 21, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Where: The Great Hall at the Statehouse in Boston
Contact: Email info@masilc.org for more information.



State Senator Karen Spilka at 2012 Education Day

State Plan for Independent Living

Open Hearings

The Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council will be holding two public hearings on the next State Plan for Independent Living. We are now in the final year of the current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), and have begun to develop the next three year State Plan. The MASILC will be soliciting feedback on some specific topics.

The date of the next hearing will follow the quarterly SILC meeting on Friday, March 15 at the Morse Library in Natick. The second meeting will take place at the Chicopee Public Library on March 26.

The details will be posted soon on the [MASILC website](#).

Intern Opportunities

Internships for Young Adults (18-30) on the Autism Spectrum

The Mass General Aspire program has 9 and 17 week internship programs for young people. The internships are at established companies in the Boston area.

Download the [brochure](#) for more information, including tuition rates.

United States International Council on Disabilities

With the support of the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, USICD is launching the Youth in Development internship program for college students, graduate students, and recent graduates with disabilities to work in Washington, DC this summer in the international affairs and development field.

Visit the [website](#) for more information and the online application. The application deadline is Monday, February 18.

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