



May 2014

Issue: 40

# MetroWest Center for Independent Living, Inc.



## May

We are still waiting to hear the Senate's final version on the budget. There are a couple of days left to ask your senators to sign onto our three amendments (listed in our last email alert). We expect a final Senate version at the end of the week.

After the Senate version is released, the Conference Committee (3 members of the House and 3 members of the Senate) will agree on yet another version. (The whole process is outlined on the [state webpage](#).)

From Paul W. Spooner,  
Executive Director of MWCIL

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## 2014 Statewide Emergency Management Conference

The Massachusetts Emergency Management  
Agency

When:

May 28-29, 2014, 8:30 am -4:30 pm

Where:

DCU Center  
50 Foster Street  
Worcester, MA

Register Online:

[Conference Registration Link](#)

The 2014 Massachusetts Statewide Emergency Management Two-Day Conference provides an opportunity for emergency management professionals and partners to train and network with local, state, federal, private sector and non-profit practitioners from a variety of fields including: emergency management, public safety, public health, behavioral health, communications, volunteer organizations, and business and industry.

In addition, this year's conference offers a dedicated track specifically designed for Citizen Corps Program leaders. Through interactive presentations, plenary, panel and break-out sessions,

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experts in these fields will showcase and share model practices, tools, technologies and lessons learned.

Mass Office on Disability Director Myra Berloff and MOD staff Alan Motenko will present "Promoting Personal Emergency Preparedness to Persons with Disabilities" at 10:15 on May 28. Alan will present "ADA Enforcement and Emergency Shelter Support Services" at 1:15 on the same day.

The conference is free to all. This will be a good opportunity for those of us still concerned about emergency preparedness or the lack thereof to rekindle the spark of hope for surviving an emergency.

*Thanks to John Winske and the Disability Policy Consortium for the information.*

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## Get Outdoors

We've heard from two groups providing opportunities for accessible outdoor activities this summer.

First the DCR ([Department of Conservation and Recreation](#)) has an updated summer and fall newsletter, with sailing, kayaking, biking and other events. The website also has a downloadable brochure. And each state park has specific information on it's accessible features.

*(And we love the DCR because they provide the popular kayaking at our annual ADA Celebration in Gardner!).*

Second, the [Spaulding Adaptive Sports Center](#) has released their Spring/Summer brochure with lots of fun, outdoor, accessible events and programs. The programs take place in Boston and Cape Cod.



2013 ADA Celebration

## Catch 22

A government contractor is suing after they were denied a contract because they had not hired enough people with disabilities. The contractor is claiming that there are few people with disabilities who have the top secret clearance needed to do the work. However, when you read the article ([Washington Times](#)), it appears that the facility itself is not ADA compliant.

"The base operations contract held by Akima provides services at a dozen agency annexes in a highly classified facility in St. Louis, parts of which date back to the Civil War and don't meet standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the company said."

*Thanks to the AAPD for the story link.*

## Substance Use in the Community

"Coming together again to talk about substance use in our community" is sponsored by the MetroWest Emotional Health and Substance Use Task Force. New and returning participants are welcome.

When:

Wednesday, June 4, 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Where:

MacPherson Hall Medical Arts Building  
MetroWest Medical Center  
85 Lincoln Street  
Framingham

RSVP:

(508) 628-6672  
LWilder@advocatesinc.org

## Gas Stations

The National Spinal Cord Injury Association joined the Disability Gas Coalition, a national and state level disability rights organization, to release a video of Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth (D-IL 8th District) that highlights her ongoing struggle to get gas at service stations as a double amputee, veteran and wheelchair user.



Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth Can't Get Gas

Paul Spooner, ED here at MWCIL, says that he has one gas station that he goes to, and one brand that he looks for when on the road because they have at least one full service pump. At an all self-serve station, the "solution" in Massachusetts is to have a button on the pumps that a person with a disability can push to get service. (I'm not sure those buttons are reachable from the car.). After one pushes the button, someone is supposed to come out and pump the gas. The problem is that many stations are manned by only one person who can not leave the store/station to come out and pump the gas. So, while the buttons may be operative, the concept is not. *Paul says that these buttons are a "non-disabled person's solution".* New Jersey is the only state where all gas stations have to be full service.

Have you had accessibility issues at gas stations? Let us know your experiences.

## Language

Most of us are not intentionally hurtful in our use of language, and many of us try to understand the latest changes to recommended (or insisted upon) words and usages. And some insist on calling the recommendations "political correctness" as though the changes were just the latest frivolous fad, instead of a refinement of language so that we are more respectful and understanding of each other.

The AAPD provided a [New York Times link](#) to an article by a father with a son with autism, and his struggles with language. "I can love Finn for his Finn-ness, but I cannot avoid words like "impaired," "delayed" and "nonverbal," or the phrase that particularly irks so many autism advocates, "low functioning." Yet language like that angers a vocal subset of autism spectrum disorder adults, and it has opened a schism in a community already starved for resources. To the quirky Intel programmer who recently was given a diagnosis of Asperger's, treating autism as a disease to be cured must seem like a personal affront, but for people struggling to raise a child incapable of communication, using the toilet or controlling a physically violent temper, seeing autism as pathology isn't much of a reach. It's ironic, and a little tragic, to see an increasingly angry war of words erupt within a

community in such desperate need of unity."

In the article above, the parental perspective, as well as the huge range of the autism spectrum, bring more complexity to this issue.

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