

## MetroWest Center For Independent Living

# People with Disabilities Living in the Community

September 8, 2014



Dear Paul,

We have several events coming up including the IL Conference and the MWCIL Fundraiser.

We encourage everyone to participate in the September 9 (*tomorrow!*) primary. We are lucky to have many choices at the primary level this year. Primaries typically have a low voter turnout, so your vote can really make a difference.

Sincerely,

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

## ADA Celebration in Gardner

The 2014 ADA Celebration was a success. We enjoyed good weather. The food, band and especially the company were excellent. Thanks

## IL Conference

When:

September 16 - 17

Where:

Best Western Royal  
Plaza Hotel and  
Trade Center  
Marlborough

Visit the [MASILC Event page](#) for the details.

## MWCIL Fundraiser Save the Date!

When:

Friday, October 24

Where:

Sheraton Tara  
Framingham

Visit our [Fundraiser Webpage](#), or download the [flyer](#) for more details.

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MWCIL

very much to Sadie at MASILC for organizing, and to MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) for enabling absolutely everyone to kayak. Visit the [mwcil website](http://www.mwcil.org) for more photos.




MetroWest Center  
for Independent  
Living

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## Vote in the September 9 Primary! ***TOMORROW***

The 2014 Primary election will determine the candidates for several races, the most important being the Governor's race. You can see a list of the candidates on the [state website](#). Unenrolled voters may choose to either pull a Democratic or a Republican ballot.

Primary elections are interesting - turnout is traditionally very very low. *This low turnout means that every vote carries more weight.* The candidates' understanding of, and ideas about disability issues varies widely. We suggest that you take this opportunity and vote for the best candidate!



John Winske (right) opens the forum

In June, the Perkins School hosted a Governors Candidates Forum on Disability Issues. All of the Republican and Democratic governor's candidates attended and spoke, as well as two candidates from other parties. You can watch the forum on

[Youtube](#). Each candidate was asked questions pertaining to disability issues.

Both Democratic candidates in the close race for Attorney General provided BCIL with their positions on disability issues. You can read them here:

[Maura Healey position on disability issues](#)

[Warren Tolman's position on disability issues.](#)

## MWCIL Annual Fundraiser

When:

Friday, October 24, 2014

Where:

Sheraton Tara  
Framingham

Please join us for a fun evening as we Roast Framingham's Dennis Giambetti and Award State Representative Tom Sannicandro and Christine Griffin, Executive Director of the Disability Law Center. Tickets are on sale now! Visit our [website](#) or download the [flyer](#) for more information.



State Senator Karen Spilka is roasted in 2013

## NCIL Conference in Washington, DC

The NCIL Conference in Washington in July was an amazing opportunity to learn about accomplishments and ongoing endeavors. Hundreds of people from independent living centers all over the country were there, participating in workshops and seminars, marching on Capitol Hill, and advocating to their state senators and legislators. Dave and Sue were lucky to

talk with Lisa Foster from Senator Markey's office, and Jeff Cruz from Elizabeth Warren's office. And we also got to meet Senator Elizabeth Warren.

One key accomplishment is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) which we will hear more about. This act includes the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act which authorizes funding for America's Independent Living Program.

The major effort during the week was to convince the Senate to pass the CRPD - the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Congress was heading out of town at the same time we were, so unfortunately it did not go to a vote. However, most senators, especially those on the fence, had visits from constituents and we hope they are convinced when they come back. This treaty will bring more accessibility and civil rights to countries around the world. While we aren't there yet, the U.S. has the best accessibility and civil rights, and we should be importing our knowledge world-wide.

You can read about the many current efforts in this [NCIL Priorities document](#).

Marchers







Senator Tom Harkin



Dave, Sue, Mike and Sadie with Senator Elizabeth Warren



## Got News?

Jini (Director of Services at MWCIL) has a guide dog, and has found another article that clarifies the issues around Service Dogs. ["The Hidden Complications of Fake Service Dogs"](#) is written by the staff at *Anything Pawsable*.



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## Send us your ideas!

This monthly section is for news and comments from our readers. You can suggest something for us to pursue, or 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](mailto:srorke@mwciil.org). Thanks!

We really enjoyed this editorial by John Winske from a recent DPC newsletter. This article does not reflect the views of MWCIL, but we found the article to be very thought provoking. And frankly, he makes some of the grey areas a little more black and white.

## Are Our Lives Less Valuable?

## by John Winske

*Normally, when I write an editorial I sit, or wheel around fleshing the issue out for several days, weeks or months. Today, I am going to try something different. I am going to write an editorial while I'm still mulling through the issues, so bear with me.*

*Is it time to distribute shirts to people with disabilities that say "Don't kill me" or "No kill cripp zone"? I wonder about this because it seems to me wherever I look these days we are devaluing the lives of people with disabilities. Three types of stories seem to be occurring too often these days:*

- 1. people with disabilities, who chose to end their lives,*
- 2. parents who murdered their child with a disability and then sometimes commit suicide*
- 3. or, person with a disability who is beaten or killed by law enforcement officers.*

*Firstly, people with disabilities who chose to end their own lives, recently exemplified by Robin Williams' suicide. Many of us long suspected that Mr. Williams had a history of living with a mental health issues and self-medicating. His recent stint in rehab would seem to bear this out. His close relationship with Jonathan Winters, was for me, the first clue many years ago. Most of us were very saddened or felt clueless, when we learned that Mr. Williams had ended his own life.*

*This week news emerged that Robin had Parkinson Disease. Then the news media and society seemed to say, "Of course that explains it, that makes sense." Despite the fact that many people live productive, active lives after being diagnosed with Parkinson and other disabilities, committing suicide is almost accepted as a logical conclusion.*

*The second situation is parents who kill their child with a disability. This is also often seen as somehow logical and understandable. Take this headline on Forbes.com "If A Parent Murders An Autistic Child, Who Is To Blame?" Excuse me? For a fairly exhaustive listing of children with disabilities murdered, please check out this [blog post on XO Jane](#), by S.E. Smith. I think you will be surprised.*



*The third issue is people with disabilities who are killed by law enforcement. Just this week a man with mental illness was shot to death in St. Louis. He was gunned down by officers, who had just arrived on the scene, because he had a small knife. One of my favorites was two off duty policemen who shot a naked woman near Tampa. They later received an award for bravery. I kid you not.*

*Just last year, a 95 year old man, who did not want to go into a facility, was threatening police with a cane and a knife. They shot him with a taser and beanbag, killing him. Locally, there is the case of Joshua Messier who was a patient at Bridgewater State Hospital. A coroner ruled his death a homicide. Still, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has refused to prosecute.*

*What is going on here? Are our lives less valuable? Are our deaths more acceptable? Are we supposed to feel lucky to be alive? Tell me what you think.*

*Sincerely,*

*John Winske  
jwinske@gmail.com*

[www.mwcil.org](http://www.mwcil.org)

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