

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

People with Disabilities

Living in the Community

March 2016



Our annual Legislator's Breakfast, on February 5, with Easter Seals of MA, was a success in spite of the snow storm. After last year's event with the ceiling leaking on our heads, we appreciated being warm and dry.

The Governor has released his budget, and the IL Centers have compiled their priorities, which will be the focus of the 2016 IL Education Day at the State House.

Sincerely,

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



In This Issue

- [Legislators Forum](#)
- [IL Education Day](#)
- [Framingham SS Office](#)
- [Disability Placards](#)
- [Article Heading](#)
- [CommonHealth](#)
- [Article Heading](#)
- [Ice Skating at Frog Pond](#)
- [Article Heading](#)
- [Vote](#)

Legislator's Forum with the Easter Seals

In spite of the snow, we had a full house. Senators Karen Spilka and Richard Ross joined us, along with Paul Madeiros, the new president of Easter Seals of MA and Ed Carr, Administrator of MetroWest Regional Transit Authority.

The senators predicted another lean budget year, but listened attentively to the issues raised by MWCIL, Easter Seals, and several consumers.

Calendar

IL Education Day at
the State House:
Thursday, March 10
11 - 2:30

MWCIL

Visit www.mwcil.org for more photos.



MetroWest Center
for Independent
Living

Website: www.mwcil.org

Email: info@mwcil.org

Phone: (508)875-7853

Address: 280 Irving
Street
Framingham, MA 01702



Facebook:

Join Our Mailing List!

2016 IL Education Day at
the State House

When:

Thursday, March 10, 11 a.m.

Where:

Great Hall
State House
Boston

Speakers will begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by a 12:30 lunch. At 1:00 p.m., attendees will visit their legislators, and share their IL priorities, issues and stories.

For more information on our state wide 2016 priorities, visit the [MASILC event webpage](#), or download the [2016 flyer](#)

. We are looking for increased funding, as well as bringing state laws up to date and in compliance with federal ADA laws.

Priorities:

- Improve architectural access by aligning Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regulations with the Americans with Disabilities Act (bill SD 1323)
- Create more job opportunities for people with disabilities (bill SD S.86, HD.110)
- Expand Mass Rehab Commission's assistive technology programs in the state budget
- Increase affordable housing for low-income people with disabilities by adding \$2.5 million to the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (line item 7004-9030)
- Protect the Independent Living Center line item (4120-4000) in the state budget and increase it by \$500,000



Framingham Social Security Office Has Moved

The Framingham Social Security office is moving to 1 Clarks Hill, 3rd floor effective at the end of February.

Abuse of disability parking placards found in Boston

Travis Anderson, for the [Boston Globe](#), reported on this investigation on February 25: "State officials should toughen penalties for misusing disability parking placards and take additional steps to curb the costly practice, according to a report from the state inspector general. "The improper use of placards in Boston may cost the city millions of dollars each year" in lost parking meter revenue, the report by Inspector General Glenn A. Cunha's office said.

...

Christine Griffin, executive director of the Disability Law Center Inc. in Boston, said she was pleased that Cunha's office was "shining a light on the situation."

"It really is too bad that there's still widespread abuse of this, when there's lots of people who need disabled parking," Griffin said."

We're guessing MetroWest has similar issues!

2016 Youth Leadership Forum

When:

July 12-16

Where:

Bridgewater State University

Who:

People with disabilities, aged 16-25

Application deadline:

May 6

More information including application link:

[Partners for Youth with Disabilities](#)

The Youth Leadership Forum is an overnight conference for youth and young adults with disabilities held annually in Massachusetts and other states across the country. The goal of the program is for YLF participants to build leadership skills and leave better prepared for future employment, higher education, and independent living.

YLF is a large event and would not be possible without close collaboration among numerous organizations across the state. The event is also kept free of charge for participants thanks to funding from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.

We want every eligible youth with a disability in Massachusetts to know about YLF and have a chance to apply, and we need your help to get the word out. Whether you forward this email to friends, share the news on social media, or mention it to people you know, please help us spread the word about YLF!

CommonHealth

Former Commissioner of the Mass Rehabilitation Commission, Charlie Carr, is continuing to advocate for people with disabilities with a new blog at www.charliecarr.com/new-blog.

His latest article is entitled The Perils of CommonHealth: A Personal Story. He details the beginnings of CommonHealth as a state-run version of Medicaid 599. In most respects, the program has been good, and has been "a pathway to employment for people with significant disabilities that needed PCA and DME as well as prescription drugs."



Charlie Carr

Unfortunately, CommonHealth includes a federal provision called Estate Recovery. After a subscriber turns 55, any money spent by CommonHealth on long term services counts against the subscriber's estate, and MassHealth will be the first in line to get their money back

when a subscriber passes away.

Another problem with CommonHealth is that it does not allow a retirement path. So once a person either retires or cannot work, he or she must spend down all of their assets before continuing to receive PCA and DME, and become impoverished.

People with disabilities deserve the right to work for a higher standard of living. "We won't tolerate any more disincentives to lifting ourselves out of poverty and into the mainstream. We won't be silent." It's time to take action on this issue!

Affordable Home Ownership

Most towns in MetroWest have not met their 10% affordable housing goals, and are continuing to offer new homes to qualified buyers. These affordable units are available through lotteries. They remain permanently deed restricted (affordable), so when an owner sells, the unit will be sold at the current affordable price which is not based on property values. An owner can build up equity from paying off the mortgage and interest tax credits (as opposed to paying rent to a landlord).

The qualifications for a buyer, while more complicated than will be described here, start with allowed income: For a one person household, the buyer's income must be \$48,800 or less, for a two person household - \$55,800 or less, and for three - \$62,750... up to an eight person household and a maximum annual income of \$92,050.

A qualified buyer also needs to have some assets in order to qualify for a mortgage. These allowed assets vary, depending upon age and other factors.

There are also restrictions on previous ownership. The general rule is that a buyer can not have owned a home for the last three years, however, there are several exceptions for single parents, displaced homemakers and households with one member 55 or older.

These units are available to a fairly small pool of people because of the need for a mortgage along with a low income. However, these restrictions

are more lenient for over 55 buyers.

To become qualified to buy an affordable unit, CHAPA (Citizens' Housing and Planning Association) has [Homebuyers Workshops](#) [MyMassMortgage](#) also has some helpful information regarding mortgages. [MA Affordable Housing Alliance](#) (MAHA) also has classes.

In addition to individual town listings, new homes may be listed at [CHAPA](#) and [MassAccess Housing Registry](#) .

Most towns list available units.

For example, a new over 55 development in Medway (Millstone Village) is currently offering 3 (of an eventual 8) two-bedroom affordable town homes at \$174,700. To find out more, visit the [Medway town website](#) , and click on Medway Affordable Housing Advisory under News & Notices. These units are not being built as accessible, however, if a qualified buyer is selected via lottery before a unit is built, he/she will be able to get some accommodations built in. The builder has agreed to use 32 inch doorways on a not-yet constructed unit, and to split the cost of creating a ramp into the house using one of the two garage bays. With a master bedroom and bath on the first floor, these accommodations may be enough for some buyers with disabilities.

Adaptive Ice Skating at Frog Pond

You're invited to join us on the ice to spin, slide, and socialize for a night of adaptive ice skating. Use your wheelchair, ice sled, or conventional skates.

Wednesday, March 9, 2016
5:00pm - 8:00pm

A variety of adaptive equipment will be available to try, provided by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Universal Access Program. Come on out and join us for an evening of fun.

For more information or to register, contact All Out Adventures at [413-584-2052](tel:413-584-2052) or e-mail info@alloutadventures.org.

Download the [flyer](#) for more information.

Federal Proposal Calls For Disability Hiring Quota

[Disability Scoop reports](#) on an important proposal by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to increase the number of people hired by federal government. The proposal includes specific provisions such as personal assistance to employees with disabilities who need help with eating, using the restroom and other basic human functions while at work. These new provisions are generous in proposed hiring numbers (12 %) and accommodations when compared to current employer expectations.

The proposed rules are outlined at the [Federal Register](#). As a model employer, successful implementation of these rules would be huge, and would prove to other employers that hiring people with disabilities benefits everyone.

VOTER Resources

The state website has tons of information: [Elections Division on the state website](#). With more information, on-line registration, insistence on accessible polling venues, early voting (new for November 2016) and absentee ballots, *Massachusetts residents have no excuse for not participating!* Here are some useful links:

- [Find my Elected Officials](#)
- [Register to Vote ONLINE](#). Online registration requires a RMV ID. If you do not have an RMV ID, you can fill out the form, print it, and mail it in.
- [Voting for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Absentee Voting](#)
- and... last but not least, [How to Run for President](#)

Please contact us at MWCIL if you have questions or need help registering or voting.

280 Irving Street
Framingham, Massachusetts 01702
(508) 875-7853

Copyright © 2014. All Rights Reserved.

[Forward this email](#)

 SafeUnsubscribe®

This email was sent to srorke@mwcil.org by srorke@mwcil.org |
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [About our service provider.](#)



MetroWest Center for Independent Living | 280 Irving Street | Framingham | MA | 01702