

MASS NEWS

Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong

Spring 2010



THE STATE BUDGET

You need to call your state Representative, Senator and the Governor NOW!!!!

Day/Employment Services account requires \$7.4 Million for a total of \$123,638,888 (In 2009, this line item was almost \$130 Million). 450 individuals will lose these services while an

(The State Budget, continued on page 2)

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MEMBERSHIP

LOOK FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP FORM IN THIS NEWSLETTER AND SEND IT IN TODAY!

**STRENGTH IN NUMBERS HELPS
M.A.S.S. FIGHT FOR YOU!**



MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES STANDING STRONG
would like to congratulate

JOHN ANTON

who was awarded

SELF ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

by the

NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS

John received his award in February in Washington, D.C. As the former Chair of M.A.S.S., John has worked tirelessly for Self Advocacy. John, we can't wait to see what you do next!



THE STATE BUDGET *continued*

additional 150 will lose transportation services. Such an action means family members must leave jobs, individuals can't obtain or maintain their jobs and others will be stuck at home, isolated from their community. Employment is an important part of one's day and individuals with developmental disabilities can do well with the right assistance. Please address this request which incorporates the transportation cut (5920-2025).

Residential Programs also were consolidated into one line item (5920-2000) in the House 2 budget. This line item combines Community residential (private providers, most are non-profit) and state operated programs, all in the community. This consolidation on paper has \$9.5 Million more than the final 2010 budget. However it doesn't take into account maintaining funding for those who Turned 22 in 2010 and those who moved from nursing homes and institutions. Community residential (5920-2000) requires \$17.3 Million for \$867,928,240 while State Operated services require \$4,900,000 for a total of \$146,034,516. The House and Senate will be crafting the final budget and we need their support on this and the other line items!

Although there are other priorities, we have focused on these to help individuals and families have an easier time explaining the budget. There are many people served through the DDS budget so reducing other line items to address these needs would not be helpful. It would put others at risk.

Salary Reserve Needs \$28,000,000 for Direct Support Wage increase. Direct Support Professionals continue to earn far below a living wage (\$11.58 for one adult in Mass.) and are scheduled to have no salary increase for the third consecutive year.

(Thanks to ARCMASS for this providing this information. Please check their web site and Action Center at www.arcmass.org)

FEELING YOUR RIGHTS AREN'T RESPECTED?

"Making Rights Real" is Here to Help!

By: Tom Anzer, DDS Director for Human Rights

Last June, the Department held a series of forums about your human rights system, to see how it was working. One of the many things we learned was that many self-advocates and other persons supported by the Department, were feeling powerless to get their rights respected. Some felt their goals weren't to be found in their ISP. Others felt prevented from seeing or calling their friends, unfairly. Some felt they couldn't go out to eat where they want, even if they have no medical or weight problems. Some felt that when there are issues in their program that staff just go to guardians and have them order a set of restrictions in the resident's life, without sitting down with the person being restricted!

The Commissioner has asked the Office for Human Rights to reach out to you to let you know how to get your rights respected. We responded by putting together a Making Rights Real campaign to do just that. We have a training program to teach you where and how you can get help for exercising your rights. We have taken the program to the MASS Conference and the regional boards of MASS. We have then started to take it to MASS local groups and self-advocacy groups of provider organizations. Several hundred people have been trained and we continue to look to be invited to more and more groups.

If you are part of a self-advocacy group, or a residence group and think you and your friends could use our help, please feel free to contact me and I will connect you to the Human Rights Specialist responsible for supporting your region. I can be reached at 617-624-7738, or at Tom.C.Anzer@state.ma.us and I would love to hear from you, so we can help!

About Me

TRANSITIONING FROM A NURSING HOME TO MY OWN APARTMENT

BY MARY BLAUVELT

I have a great life story to tell you...

Some children live with their parents until they reach a certain age. I ended up in a nursing home because my mother got hurt and couldn't take care of me. Plus, my mother told me I always had trouble walking, even when I was a little girl. She had to teach me how to walk by putting foam cookies in my shoe. I have a condition called cerebellar ataxia which means I fall to one side. That is cerebellar ataxia. When my legs would shake – cerebellar ataxia. I use a walker because it helps with my balance problem.

When I was five years old my mother put me in kindergarten and, because I was so smart they put me in the first grade, but the teacher noticed I had a learning disability, and said to my mother she didn't have time to teach me math. My mother felt bad that she had to put me in a special class where I could be taught how to count and do math problems. I was slow, but some of the students in my class had intellectual disabilities, and because I was in that class my friends would tease me and they would call me names like, "hey, dummy", and "hey, retard" they didn't understand that I was in that class because I was slow in Math. I was in a nursing home for eight years. It was really bad.

My mother was sitting in her wheelchair talking to some people and she was watching TV with the other residents in the sitting room. Kim told me about community living. I moved to Concord.

Today, I feel great. I cleaned out the dishwasher and Susan said, "Great! Good girl, Mary, you're the best." I said, "Susan, you're the best, too."

I'm concerned about nothing. Everything is copacetic.

Today, Mary visits nursing homes, and tells other DDS consumers about community living.

M.A.S.S.

Schedule for Regional Meetings

REGION	DATE	TIME
West	First Tuesday	6:30 PM – 8:00 PM
Central	Second Tuesday	5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Southeast	Second Thursday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Northeast	Third Wednesday	7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Metro	Third Thursday	6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

A NEW CHAPTER FOR WATCH CITY SELF ADVOCATES

By: Jessica Crisafulli, *President*

It is fun meeting friends from the past and the future. It is fun to learn how to cook foods we have never cooked before. We have learned to treat each other with dignity and respect. We learned about stranger danger. It was nice listening to Officer Ann talk about stranger safety. We have special events like with Officer Ann and line dancing. We meet once a month at GWARC, Inc. at 31 Woodland Road, Waltham, MA.

Being the president of self-advocacy gives you a chance to join in things you have never joined before. I start the meeting every once a month and I end it with a bang. I started being president on January 5, 2010. Being the president is a lot of responsibility – doing the job and getting it done right.

We are donating stuff to the soldiers overseas. We are helping the soldiers feel better while they are away fighting for our country. We donate the stuff to Operation American Soldiers. We are sending thank you notes to the soldiers who will hopefully write back to us in due time.

If you have any further questions, email Anna Thorpe, the Advisor for Watch City Self Advocates. Her email address is athorpe@gwarc.org.

RAINBOW SUPPORT GROUP ANNOUNCED!!!!

The Rainbow Support Group (RSG) is a new project of Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong. The RSG is a place where Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) people who are self advocates, can be together and talk about their feelings. It is another way that self advocates can learn to feel proud of who they are and to stick up for themselves when other people try to put them down. The Project Consultant for the RSG is Pauline Bosma, MASS Board Member and member of the Blackstone Valley Self Advocacy Group.

Right now there are four RSGs in Massachusetts. They are:

Rainbow Support Group of Western Mass

The Consortium Office, 187 High Street, Suite 202, Holyoke.
Contact: Elaine Spier-Kalmar, Self Advocacy Coordinator,
413-536-2401, x 3017 • ekalmar@wmtcinfo.org

Rainbow Support Group of Central Mass

Seven Hills Foundation,
799 West Boylston Street, Worcester, MA
Contact: Karen Reynolds, Area Director;
508-856-7930, x 1104 • Kreynolds@sevenhills.org

Rainbow Support Group of Greater Boston

Cambridge Family and Children's Services,
60 Gore Street, Cambridge, MA
Contact: Peter Montalto, Family Support Coordinator;
(617) 876-4210 x122 • pmontalto@helpfamilies.org

Rainbow Support Group South of Boston

Riverside Community Care, 237 Highland Avenir, Needham, MA
Contact: Sandra Norlin, GLBT Coordinator,
781-762-8539 • Snorlin@riversidecc.org

Please contact any of these groups to learn about their schedule of meetings and activities. You can also reach Pauline Bosma by calling 508-529-6374 or email rainbows_58@yahoo.com.

TOM KELLEY HONORED AT HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM

At the Metro Human Rights Forum, held in June at Roxbury Community College, Tom Kelley was the proud recipient of the Annual DMR/DDS Human Rights Award.

Tom received the award *“in recognition of his extraordinary advocacy on both his own and the community’s behalf. As a self-advocacy leader, Tom rose to leadership and personally lobbied the Governor to change the name of the Department. Tom also lobbied effectively for his own needs in convincing the Department to open a new home that could better meet his personal needs. He is an example for all of blending the personal and the political that benefits all.”*

The award was presented by Commissioner Elin Howe and Tom Anzer, Director of the Office for Human Rights.

Tom has been a member of **MRS Speaks Out Self-Advocacy Group** for 3 years. In March 2008 Tom was elected sergeant-at-arms of the group; one year later he was elected secretary. Tom is very committed to the group; he is the typically first person to volunteer to help out on a project, join a committee, and/or attend a special meeting. The level of enthusiasm Tom brings to the group has helped to motivate others to take a more active role in the group. He is a member of the fundraising, education, and newsletter committees. Tom is one of two MRS Speaks Out representatives who attend the M.A.S.S. (Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong) Metro Regional meetings; he was recently elected secretary of the regional group.

Tom is proud of his contributions toward the “Change the Name” initiative; he attended a rally and a committee hearing about the bill at the State House. He helped write letters to Governor Patrick, state senators, and representatives seeking their support for the name change and later letters thanking them and Commissioner Howe for their support. Along with other members of MRS Speaks Out, Tom has made a number of visits to the State House; during one visit, the group had the unexpected opportunity to meet Governor Patrick outside his office; Tom took advantage of the situation and spoke directly to the Governor about the “Change the Name” initiative. At the March 30th Celebration Changing the Name Changing Expectations, held at the State House, Tom was one of 12 members of MRS Speaks Out to receive a certificate of recognition for “leadership in promoting public awareness, sensitivity, and understanding that people of all abilities should be treated with respect and dignity, and welcomed as a valued member of their community.”

Tom is one of five self-advocates who completed the required training to become a **Human Rights Officer**. Tom is eager to attend monthly HRO meetings; since becoming an officer, he has not missed a single meeting. At the meetings, he shares stories of personal experiences which help promote greater sensitivity of human rights matters as well as understanding of self-advocacy.

Tom is always on the lookout for interesting educational opportunities and ways to get more involved. He looks forward to attending the annual Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong and Human Rights Conferences / Forum. Tom has attended a number of training events including “Supporting Meaningful Lives”, “Preventing, Safeguarding Against, and Reporting Abuse & Mistreatment”, “Diversity”, voter education forums, and First Aid class. In the fall of 2008, Tom completed the Self-Advocacy Leadership Series, an eight week course sponsored by M.A.S.S. & Developmental Disabilities Council. He recently became a member of the Citizens Advisory Board at the Newton South Norfolk Area Office.

Tom’s level of enthusiasm, willingness to volunteer and involvement serves to inspire and motivate others to take a more active role. This award is well deserved.

Congratulations Tom!!!!

Submitted by Karen Carpenter



MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR BETTER TRANSPORTATION

By Debbie Pierce and Francis W. Seeley, Jr.



Everyone knows that transportation is a big issue. There is no communication between different transportation agencies, people can't get to work, can't get out to go shopping, can't look for work or engage in social activities. Everyone knows that there is not enough money for transportation and there won't be any for a long time.

Therefore, we decided to do something about transportation. We came together with people from Department of Developmental Services, the Center of Hope, the Worcester Regional Transit Authority, Central Mass Regional Planning Commission and the Worcester Disability Commission to represent Central Massachusetts as a team at the *Massachusetts Institute for Transportation Coordination Conference*. The conference was sponsored by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). We spent 3 days at the Hilton in Dedham, Massachusetts and worked to come together as a team to address transportation issues in Central Massachusetts. We had never worked together before and some of us hadn't met until the conference. Experts from around the country helped us develop a 1-year plan that we could take back to our community. We attended different workshops and reported to our own team what we learned, fresh ideas from other states such as ridesharing, zip cars, medical appointments, where to find funding and many other things. Many of the speakers provided materials, videos and shared their business cards so we could call them for more information when we were back in our community. Each team shared what their goals were with teams with similar goals so we could get new ideas from them.

There were also fun things to do. Each group did a skit that highlighted transportation problems in a fun way. Everyone laughed. Debbie was approached to join the WRTA advisory board. We showed them how much we know about their transportation system, what is good and what is bad and they realized we can help them do a better job. She has already attended one meeting.

Our team is called CCAT which stands for **Central Community Access Team**. The name of our project is T-LINKS, which stands for *Transportation – linking individuals, networks, knowledge and services*. Our vision for our community is to facilitate linkages among people, issues and resources that coordinate transportation in order to support the development of healthy communities. CTAA is providing technical assistance to our team for one year as we implement the plan we developed at the conference. CTAA has some grant money for teams and we will write a grant. We have had two meetings since we returned from the conference. You will be hearing a lot more from us.

If you want better transportation in your area get involved like we did!

News From MRS Speaks Out

We held our 3rd annual car wash and our 1st yard sale on June 6th. We had a nice time and lots of fun. Many people came to buy things and/or have their car washed. A lot of people helped out. Linda made cookies and sold them. It was hard work, but a lot of fun. It was a big success; we raised over \$500. After the carwash was over, we had a big cookout. We plan to have another car wash and yard sale next year.



The fundraising committee is planning another fundraiser. We are planning to sell candy bars for the holidays. If you want to buy candy, talk with a member of MRS Speaks Out.

In August we held a memorial service for Anita. We had lunch at the Ninety-Nine Restaurant, one of Anita's favorite places to go. Then we went to her graveside. We miss Anita very much.

Tom and John M. go to the monthly Regional M.A.S.S. (Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong) meetings. John was elected chairperson and Tom secretary. Many of us plan to go to the "Reach Out For A New Tomorrow", M.A.S.S. Conference.

The "Name Change" happened, the new name is Department of Developmental Services or DDS. More than 20 people from MRS went to the unveiling of the new sign at the Framingham Area Office; Tom and Scott helped to uncover the new sign. It was nice celebration; many people were there. Several members of MRS Speaks Out also went to Central Office to celebrate the name change.

In June many members of the group attended the Human Rights Forum, "Celebrating 25 years of safeguards supporting the Human Rights of individuals..." Commissioner Elin Howe, Gail Gillespie Regional Director, and Tom Anzer Director of Office for Human Rights spoke. The Metro Human Rights Specialist, a self-advocate, and a human rights coordinator were on a panel that talked about best practices as well as some of the challenges related to protecting, promoting, and affirming human rights.

In July we held a planning meeting. We talked about our successes for the past year and our goals for the year ahead. There are a lot of things we want to work on.

Submitted by Scott, Tom, and Karen

Please look for your next M.A.S.S. Quarterly Newsletters in:

June • September • December

SAVE THE DATE!



UPCOMING EVENTS:

WEST REGION SELF ADVOCACY CONFERENCE – Saturday, April 10, 2010

N.E.A.T. MEETING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE – May, 2010

S.A.B.E. ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI – September 23-26, 2010

M.A.S.S. ANNUAL CONFERENCE – Saturday, November 20, 2010

TASH CONFERENCE IN DENVER, CO - December 8-11, 2010

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong
P.O. Box 6025
North Plymouth, MA 02362
M.A.S.S. Office: 617-624-7549
Toll Free: 1-866-lamable (866-426-2253)
Fax: 617-624-7553
Email: MASS.office.info@gmail.com

