

Disability Issues

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a publication of the *Information Center*

Patient Family Resource Center at the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital

by Daniel McOsker

This summer, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital will open their new **Patient/Family Resource Center**. The center is located on the second floor of the hospital just across the hall from the elevators and is wheelchair accessible. Special funding grants from The Boston Foundation, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and the National Library of Medicine have helped to provide this new initiative at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. This new Resource Center will provide a wide range of services to patients, families, and the community advancing its mission to provide cutting edge disability and chronic-illness related information that effects positive changes in people's lives.

The **library collection** at Spaulding's Patient/Family Resource Center consists of a variety of books, pamphlets, and periodicals. Topics of interest will include current and reliable disability related resources that address the every day aspects of living with a disability or chronic illness. Video and other forms of multimedia information are also available. Topics include relaxation and stress reduction, exercises programs and general informational subjects. There is TV-VCR access right in the Resource Center.

The Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Patient/Family Resource

Center also sponsors the **Bridges to Community Lecture Series**, a series of free seminars for health care professionals, individuals with disabilities and their families, and the general public. After an injury or illness, an individual may be left with an impairment and disability. Returning to the community – home, school, or work – may create serious challenges for the individual and his or her family. These challenges can more often be met and overcome when everyone is better prepared with knowledge of available resources, assistive technology, and disability rights. Learning and perfecting advocacy skills are a major part of the recovery and healing process. This series of lectures will help promote the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Access to the Massachusetts General Hospital's **Treadwell Library** will be possible in the Patient/Family Resource Center. The Treadwell Library is one of the largest medical libraries in the United States. Patients and families can use the Resource Center intranet link to the Treadwell Library to access detailed information on medical or clinical aspects of their disability or chronic illness. There is a Resource Assistant available during our regularly scheduled hours to assist with information searches.

The Center also offers **access to computers** for those persons needing assistive technology. There are two

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CommonHealth Employment Connection (CHEC) Energized and Open for Business

by Mary Ann Robbins

The CommonHealth Employment Connection (CHEC) helps persons with disabilities obtain access to health insurance and health services that can make obtaining or retaining a job easier, particularly with a focus on MassHealth/CommonHealth an insurance program for persons with disabilities administered by the Massachusetts Division of Medical Assistance.

CHEC is now fully staffed, has established toll-free telephone numbers and is officially open for business, taking calls from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The staff is also scheduling appointments to provide education and outreach information throughout the state.

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From the Center

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www.disability.net

Summer 2002

On May 7, 2002 the Information Center celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding with a party at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington, Massachusetts. Its theme was Reflection - Information - Celebration.

Among those who attended to mark a quarter century of advancement in the provision of disability information were former staff and trustees; Betsy Anderson; Andrea Bader; Joyce Cohen; Richard Dresser; Susan Gagnon; Raymond Glazier; Ruth and Paul Kahn; Sallyann Kakas; Michael Martinetti; J. Archer O'Reilly; Cynthia Provost; James Ross; Nancy, David, and Shirley Schock; Stephen Shestakofsky; Julie Triessl; and Larry and Linda Warnock.

A highlight of the evening were moving videotaped opening remarks by Frederick Fay and the Center's founding inspiration, Tom Schock. In addition to Nancy, Raymond, Ruth, Jim, Steve, Joyce, Archer and Andrea, the speakers included: Elmer Bartels, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; John Cupples, President of Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital; and Jay Himmelstein, MD, Director, UMass Center for Health Policy & Research.

A cross-section of Center volunteers and disability activists from all the years of the Center came together with wonderful and caring people who are just beginning their efforts to provide those information services which help people living with disability empower their lives.

The purpose of the evening was to mark and summarize all that has been learned in the past twenty-five years about gathering, maintaining, and disseminating information for individuals with disabilities, their family, friends, employers, and service providers. Several speakers, including the writer, emphasized the importance of a human interface for those seeking information. The advance of technology has not, in any way, reduced the need for people to help people. A computer will never take the place of a knowledgeable, experienced, empathetic human being when it comes to understanding what people are asking and seeing that they get information in a way that they can use it effectively.

The Information Center, after twenty-five years, stands ready to assist those who will arise to fill the vital informational needs of people living with disability in the future. Assuring that effective information services are available for all is the last remaining mission of the Center.

Thank you for all your years of support and participation.

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President: Nancy C. Schock

Editor: J. Archer O'Reilly III

On June 22, 2002 our giant passed away. The 'giant' was Justin Dart. The 'our' is all of us. Although he, as much as anyone, created the political reality of a 'disability community' - he was not only the team leader, he was the team builder, visionary, cheerleader and morale booster. Whenever there was credit to be taken, he gave it. He constantly told us we were the leaders. His signature closing in most of his messages to activists was, 'Lead on!'

Sitting under his trademark western hat, Justin was the most recognizable member of our community on the podium when President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. A lifelong Republican and appointee of Reagan and Bush, he spared no effort to effect the re-election of Bill Clinton because he found it to be in the best interests of the community.

The son of a wealthy family and an accomplished entrepreneur in his own right, Justin looked back on the polio that left his mobility dependent upon a wheelchair as the turning point of his life. He states that his caregivers then 'not only saved my life, they made it worth saving.' Justin got his college degree in 1954 with the intention of being a teacher, but he was refused a teaching certificate because he used a chair. He started a successful business which eventually lead him to Japan where he met his wife and partner, Yoshiko. In 1966 he left the business world and dedicated himself to the advancement of people with disabilities.

The list of Mr. Dart's offices, accomplishments, initiatives, associations, and - most importantly - friends is much too long for this space. The only fitting tribute to Justin Dart is for each of us to try everyday to be as much like him as we can manage.

Responding to Vision Loss

Part 3: Reading with 'Read'

by Richard Landau

Vision is surely our most valuable sense, and its loss is a grave misfortune. But by taking advantage of modern technology and community services, the legally blind person can continue to do many, even most, of what is possible for the sighted person. We have to use different strategies, and some of the methods we are obliged to use take more time than direct vision, but with determination much of the world remains accessible to us.

First and most important, if the blind person has not yet been in touch with the state commission for the blind (in my case the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind), I encourage him or her to do so. There is simply no virtue in being passive in the face of vision loss: far better than sitting and cursing the darkness is moving ahead into independence. That's what your state commission is there for. (In Massachusetts, call 1-800-392-6450 and request a copy of the Commission's Brochure of Services. You can also ask to be contacted by a staff person who will discuss services available to you.)

This article will focus on new technologies of use to the blind. One of the truly remarkable advances of interest to the blind is the evolution of speech synthesizer systems. This is the technology that converts printed words on paper or on computer screens into audible and understandable speech. I will focus below on a few of these applications.

For those who want to keep up with the news, there is Newline, now a national service with a number accessible from anywhere in the nation. The service uses a voice synthesizer to read articles published in some 50 newspapers,

including the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Washington Post*. To access your favorite papers, you will need an ID and password, which open the door to international, national, local, business, and sports news. To find out if you are eligible to use the service, call 1-888-882-1629 and follow the prompts.

A company named Freedom Scientific has developed a highly sophisticated computer software called 'JAWS,' which makes it possible for even the most seriously impaired to use the computer with a facility that rivals that of a sighted user. The software works especially well with Microsoft Word and Excel on a PC equipped with Windows. The blind person has no need for the mouse or the screen, and employs instead a range of keystrokes that permit him to compose and edit text, cut and paste, format, proofread, spell check, design and read tables, etc. He can set the reading voice (the default is named 'Read'), can adjust the reading speed, and decide how much detail he wants to hear.

And that's not all. With JAWS, you can enjoy excellent access to the internet, and can write and 'read' your e-mail. However if your internet service provider is AOL, you may have to switch to another ISP. AOL is not very JAWS friendly.

Now, using JAWS usually requires intensive training because there are dozens, even hundreds of keystrokes to memorize. But that's an effort many of us are eager to make for the privilege of staying connected to the rest of the world and to maintain our livelihoods. (Without JAWS, there is no way that I could have written this article.)

In the past the Massachusetts Com-

mission for the Blind has made the software and training available to those who need it for their work, but in these days of severe budget constraints that might be changing. The Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton, MA, offers an excellent training program (call 617-969-6200 and ask for the CABLE program). For information about JAWS, contact either your state commission for the blind, or Freedom Scientific, 11800 31st Court North, St. Petersburg, FL 33716-1805, or <http://www.FreedomScientific.com>.

Finally, through the use of increasingly sophisticated scanners, the blind person can now convert almost any printed text into audible speech. These devices scan the text, page by page, into a computer where software converts it to speech. The Kurzweil reader was specifically designed for the blind, but today there are several less costly scanners that might prove useful for the visually impaired.

Some friends have asked about the usefulness of audio-input software for the blind person: software that converts the spoken sound into text. At the moment this software is problematical because of its high error rate. Keyboard input remains the best system at the moment.

For the person who has had no or limited experience with computer equipment, much of the above might seem rather daunting. But consider: what have you to lose? Regardless of your age and experience, you can learn to make use of e-mail, and with audible software to help, you can stay in touch with family and friends. Yes, it will take some time and effort. Chances are you have the time. And the effort will do you a world of good.

This is the third in a series of articles that tell how one Lexington resident is dealing with vision loss. Next: Enlargement and tactile systems

Assistive Technology Center Available at Spaulding Rehab

by Jennifer C. Buxton, OTR/L

*“For most people, technology makes things easier.
For people with disabilities, technology makes things possible.”*
—Mary Pat Rabideau, OTR

The **Assistive Technology Center** (ATEC) at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital is an interdisciplinary team of clinicians who provide services that use technology to enhance function and quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

The ATEC team provides evaluations, equipment recommendations, and training to children, adolescents, and adults with disabilities. Evaluations and services are conducted in the clinic and in the individual's natural environment, i.e., home, school or work.

The goal of ATEC is to enhance the life of an individual with disabilities by matching him or her with the appropriate technological assistance.

Assistive technology can improve an individual's ability to communicate, to use computers, to move about the home and community, and to engage in life.

The ATEC team works with each individual to determine the best fit of technological options and solutions. The ATEC team has access to a sophisticated collection of state-of-the-art technologies, which are available in the clinic for individuals to trial.

The **ATEC team** includes professionals from:

- ❖ **Physiatry**
 - Lisa Krivickas, MD, Medical Director
- ❖ **Occupational Therapy**
 - Peggy Dellea, MS, OTR/L & Jennifer C. Buxton, OTR/L
- ❖ **Physical Therapy**
 - Michelle Kerr, PT

- ❖ **Speech-Language Pathology**
 - Kathryn Zainea, MS, CCC/SLP
- ❖ **Neuropsychology**
 - Murdo Dowds, Ph.D.

Services offered

- **Adapted computer use** – for individuals who are not able to use conventional keyboard and mouse options.
- **Computer Based Treatment** – for individuals with speech, language or cognitive impairments.
- **Augmentative/alternative communication** – for individuals who have severe speech and language disorders and have aphasia, dysarthria, and aphonia.
- **Manual and powered mobility** – for individuals who have a change in their ability to ambulate or use their current mobility device a specialized Equipment Clinic is offered.
- **Environmental controls/electronic aids to daily living** – for individuals who have difficulty controlling appliances in their environment such as door openers, radios, TV/VCRs, lights, heat, fan, windows, and bed controls.
- **Custom seating and positioning** – for individuals who require specialized positioning such as, cushions, backs, laptrays, wheelchair components, standers, etc. to be more independent in their daily routine.
- **Ergonomic adaptations/assessments** – for individuals who have pain and discomfort with work related tasks.
- **Activities of Daily Living/personal care devices** – for individuals who are having difficulty with

tasks such as self-feeding, bathing, dressing, parenting with a disability, housework, gardening, hand-writing and other life tasks.

- **Modifications for visual impairments** – for individuals who have acute or gradual vision changes with activities of daily living, community mobility, communication, and work/leisure interests.

- **Assisted Cognition** – for individuals who have difficulty with memory, organization, attention and other higher level cognitive skills in their daily routine.

- **Pre-Driving Evaluations** – for individuals who may have difficulty continuing to drive after illness, injury or aging.

- **Letters of Justification** – the ATEC team writes letters of justification and necessity to an appropriate funding source (insurance, school system, employer, worker's compensation, grants, etc.) once a device is selected.

- **Funding assistance** – the ATEC team works with insurance companies to procure funding and helps individuals identify public and private sources of funding (grants, charities, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), fundraisers) when health insurance plans do not provide coverage.

- **Training and follow-up** – skilled training with a recommended technological device or adapted method of conducting a task provided by specialized ATEC team clinicians for the individual and/or family, caregivers, employers, teachers, etc. who will assist individual in using technology.

Referrals

ATEC services are billed as therapy services and therefore require a prescription from a doctor and approval from the funding source (insurance, worker's compensation, school systems, MRC).

An initial evaluation (90 minutes) is

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Travel & Leisure

AccessibleEurope Web Site

A pool of European travel agents with experience in accessible travel have founded a website to accommodate travel for people with various degrees of special needs. People with disability, slow walkers, the elderly, and all tourists needing special care. They provide and promote tours, transportation, and accommodations for this audience.

The principals behind this website, Massimo Micotti and Stefania Marson are both members of SATH, a travel organization we have recommended frequently.

If you are planning to travel to Europe, you may want to check out accessibleurope.com.

AAA Guidebooks for Travelers with Disabilities

Most American families are familiar with the reliable and comprehensive guidebooks published by the American Automobile Association (AAA). Now they have begun to build a series especially for travelers with disabilities called *Barrier-Free Travel*. These guides list the accessibility features for rated hotels, motels and restaurants as well as those of major points of interest.

Since 1998 AAA has been developing a proprietary system of evaluating accessibility for travelers. They have worked with the travel industry and a number of disability advocates to not only rate, but to promote accessibility. Types of accessibility rated include: deaf and hard of hearing; blind or visually impaired; dexterity; and three levels of mobility deficit. The guide lists the criteria used to make the assessment allowing users

to formulate reasonable expectations before travel. They also list healthcare providers, transportation options, medical suppliers and equipment availability.

Guides are only available for about six large states at the present time, however, they appear very useful. AAA is actively expanding the number of guides and the greater the demand, the faster new books will be published.

Barrier-Free Travel is available at AAA offices, bookstores, and online at www.aaa.com. The books cost \$12.95 each.

Summer Camp Directory

It is a little late for this summer, however, this resource is too good to pass up. The Federation for Children with Special Needs in Massachusetts publishes a directory of day and residential summer camp programs for children with various disabilities.

Camp information has always been difficult to find. The Federation's listings are not perfect but the Center has never found such a thing even when we did them ourselves. This directory is as good as we have seen.

You may access it on-line at the Federation's website, www.fcsn.org or purchase a hard copy for \$7.00 from FCSN, 1135 Tremont Street, Suite 420, Boston, MA 02120.

Massachusetts State Forests and Parks

Open the Outdoors

Massachusetts boasts over 100 state forests and parks. As the 6th smallest state in the United States, it has the 9th largest state park system, operated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Opportunities abound to explore and enjoy ocean beaches, urban heritage parks, bicycle paths, rivers, historical sites, waterfalls, mountaintops, and

more. Park interpreters provide educational tours about the natural and cultural history of the state where the pilgrims first landed, often in accessible areas and with the use of assisted listening devices for those who need enhanced hearing.

Universal Access Program

Accessible features like this are one of many ways that DEM's Universal Access Program has become one of the most progressive state park systems for initiating program and recreation accessibility.

The DEM's Universal Access Program is dedicated to making sure that accessibility for people with disabilities is a priority in the Massachusetts state park system. Nearly every recreation activity that people come to state parks to do can be enjoyed by everyone - all abilities welcome!

Summer

For summer water-based activities, join us at the beach or pool or on the water! Visit Horseneck Beach State Reservation in Westport near Cape Cod, Salisbury Beach State Reservation north of Boston, or any one of 20 other beaches around the state where we provide beach wheelchairs. All of DEM's 20 state pools feature pool lifts which can be independently operated.

On the Water

Gliding on the water by boat is an exceptional way to access the natural landscape. Our adaptive rowing program provides exercise and the opportunity to get on two of New England's well known rivers, the Merrimac and the Connecticut. DEM's adaptive paddling program enables beginning or experienced paddlers to enjoy various ponds, lakes, and rivers by flatwater kayak or canoe at no charge. Kayak programs are based at Hopkinton State Park outside of Boston, and DAR State Forest in Goshen. Canoeing is based at Wells State Park in

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More Than Just Fuel Assistance

It is the middle of summer and the heat you think about today has nothing to do with fuel. However, now is the time to consider some help that may be available to prepare for next winter. These programs are not funded at a level that allows all the eligible families to be accommodated each year. Therefore, if you need help being warm and safe this coming winter, you should take time to investigate these programs this summer.

The **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program** (LIHEAP) (Fuel Assistance) in Massachusetts provides eligible households with help paying winter heating bills. Homeowners and renters with incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty level are eligible. One of 28 local administering agencies across the state will determine eligibility based on annual income and the number of persons in the household. To learn where to apply call the number at the end of this article.

But fuel assistance is not all you can get if you are eligible. Related programs which come along with qualifying for fuel assistance can help you winterize your home, save on water and sewer bills, and even replace your heating system.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) is designed to assist low-income households reduce their heating bills by providing home energy efficiency services. The program is operational year round. After a household is determined to be eligible, the local agency schedules an energy inspection of the home. An Energy Auditor completes an inspection of the energy and health and safety concerns of the home and completes a

Work Order/Job Write-up. Local certified and insured weatherization contractors are hired to complete the work at no cost to the occupants. Typical work includes air sealing, attic and/or sidewall insulation, weatherstripping, and minor repairs associated with weatherization work. Eligibility is based on household eligibility for the LIHEAP Program. Those households with a member receiving TAFDC or SSI are categorically eligible. Priority points are awarded to households with members who are elderly, handicapped, children under 7, and Native Americans. Typical jobs range from \$200 to a maximum of \$3,500 with the average grant approximately \$1,300.

Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP) is designed to provide heating system repair and replacement services to the same households. During the winter months, the program serves primarily as an emergency intervention service for persons having problems with the operation of their primary heating system. Heating companies, under contract with the local agency, provide services necessary to keep the system operating efficiently and safely. Eligibility is based on household eligibility for the current years LIHEAP Program.

The **Low Income Sewer and Water Assistance Program** (LISAWAP) provides eligible households that receive both sewer and water bills a benefit up to 24% of their annual bills, up to a maximum amount. Once qualified by a fuel assistance agency, the household's sewer and water bills are requested and benefits are paid directly to the billing agents. Applicants do not have to accept LIHEAP benefits to qualify for the Sewer and Water Assistance Program.

For further information on any of the above programs, or assistance determining if you might be eligible, call the Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development at 617-727-7004 or 1-800-632-8175.

211 Links People to Community Services

You know 911 and 411, now there is a national movement towards making 211 the telephone access code for health and human service information and referral. Hawaii expects to have this system available state wide in July. Unfortunately, over 130 million Americans today do not yet benefit from these services. A website, **www.211.com**, bridges this service delivery gap by enabling assistance providers to manage program content and client enrollment either directly or in a collaborative bilingual network with call centers. 211.com's solution provides 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, self-directed and bilingual access to assistance program information and enrollment through the Internet.

Locating Resources

211.com enables you to find assistance programs and organizations using two methods: drill-down and advanced search. The advanced search allows you to specify keyword, program name, category, country, zip code and radius. The radius filter enables you to search for services within a specified distance around the zip code.

Once you have located the desired program or organization, you can view a description, contact information, eligibility, fees, hours of operation, application process and estimated waiting period. At this point, you have the ability to print out the information, e-mail program representatives or apply directly to the program through the online application process. By applying online, you can apply to multiple assistance programs using one single enrollment form. The online application, as well as the searching functions, is bilingual; you can search and apply in both English and Spanish.

CHEC

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CHEC also helps employers, medical providers, agency workers and consumers with:

- MassHealth/CommonHealth insurance information;
- Education and outreach;
- Information and referral services, and;
- Web-based resources and information (www.masschec.org).

Insurance Information

The CHEC staff includes a Director and two Health and Employability Coordinators who provide information and referral services. Each of them has expertise in the area of health insurance for people with disabilities as it relates to employment. Presently, the CHEC office is focusing its outreach efforts on people with disabilities ages 18 to 65 who are currently enrolled in MassHealth/CommonHealth. Other groups that CHEC serves are adults with disabilities aged 65 and over who work at least 40 hours per month and youth with disabilities beginning to transition into the workforce. CHEC can also assist persons with disabilities enrolled in other MassHealth plans who are interested in their work options.

Education and Outreach

CHEC staff also stands ready to help educate agency workers throughout Massachusetts about the MassHealth/CommonHealth insurance plan. Independent living centers, vocational service providers, health-care professionals, educators, benefit planning assistance outreach professionals (BPAO's) and others in the private sector are among those encouraged to contact CHEC to arrange free training.

The goals of the CHEC outreach program are to

- Support the individual employment goals of persons with disabilities

- Provide education about the MassHealth/CommonHealth insurance program
- Provide convenient access to the resources of the Massachusetts Medicaid Infrastructure Grant
- Enhance other agencies' programs through collaborative efforts.

CHEC Health and Employability Coordinators can help people understand the disability determination process and answer questions about the MassHealth/CommonHealth application process and how to enroll.

Benefits

For those who are eligible, the benefits of the MassHealth/CommonHealth insurance program include:

- Personal care assistance (PCA/PAS) services
- Hospital and physician medical expenses
- Physical, occupational, and speech therapies
- Pharmacy expenses
- Durable medical equipment purchase and repairs
- Transportation to medical appointments

Information and Referral

Because each person's situation is unique, it is best to consult with a CHEC Health and Employability Coordinator in order to fully understand the benefits for which you may be eligible. CHEC coordinators can also answer questions about the low monthly premium costs associated with MassHealth/CommonHealth. For example, at certain income levels, there is no cost at all to the program, while at other levels, there may be a small monthly premium based upon family size, income, and certain other considerations.

The CHEC office is prepared to answer questions you may have about MassHealth/CommonHealth. For example, did you know that:

- More than 50% of adult MassHealth/CommonHealth recipients are employed

- MassHealth/CommonHealth has no income or asset limitations
- Persons with disabilities can pursue employment without fear of losing their MassHealth/CommonHealth (Medicaid) health insurance coverage
- MassHealth/CommonHealth can either provide full coverage or supplement an employer-sponsored insurance plan, with lower premiums for supplemental coverage

If you know of an organization that would like a CHEC representative to speak about MassHealth/CommonHealth or to learn more about health services and health insurance and their impact on employment of persons with disabilities, call toll-free 1-866-698-6901 (voice) or 1-866-698-6900 (TTY); or visit the CHEC web site at www.masschec.org.

You may also call the MassHealth Customer Service Center at 1-800-841-2900.

Assistive Technology Center

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conducted with the ATEC clinician and then a treatment plan is created based on the needs and goals of the individual.

Individual assessment and training sessions are then initiated for the treatment plan

To make a referral or for more information please call 617-773-2928 and speak with the ATEC Patient Service Representative.

Jennifer Buxton is a member of the ATEC team at Spaulding-Boston Outpatient Center, 125 Nashua Street Boston, MA 02114.

State Parks

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Sturbridge. The paddling program also travels during the summer months to appear in various parks around the Commonwealth for day programs in diverse settings.

Programs are run by experienced outdoor leaders trained in making adaptations for people with disabilities and assisted by lifeguards and volunteer staff.

On the Land

If you're looking for a beautiful place to spend the day outdoors on land, you may choose from several parks where most if not all activities are now universally accessible. In the Berkshires, drive to the top of Mt. Greylock, Massachusetts's highest peak at over 3,000 feet, or enjoy a stroll through the forest at Pittsfield State Forest's Tranquility Trail. The DAR State Forest offers accessible camping, swimming, fishing, trails, adaptive kayaking, nature programs, and an accessible wetland viewing blind. Dunn Park, in centrally located Gardner, is a favorite day use site offering picnicking, swimming, a woodland trail, fishing pier, and a hand cranked paddleboat. Rent handcycles and ride the Norwottuck

Rail Trail near Northampton. You can also handcycle on the Cape Cod Rail Trail in one of America's favorite vacation spots. Closer to Boston, stroll the waterfront in Lynn and learn about the city's shoemaking industry or enjoy 3 miles of carriage trails at Borderland State Park in Sharon.

Special Events

The DEM's Universal Access Program also hosts accessible recreation events. These are typically a free-of-charge open-house style occasion, in which individuals, families, and groups spend a day at a selected park enjoying a variety of activities. Summer events include kayaking, canoeing, rowing, nature walks, and handcycling.

More interested in Massachusetts State Parks now? Please contact them! Call or write for a Universal Access brochure, newsletter/calendar, and other state park information to aid in your planning. They welcome questions and feedback about any park or facility as well.

Visit their website at www.state.ma.us/dem/access. Information is available in Braille, large print, and on audio cassette. Contact DEM's Universal Access Program at PO Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004, or call 413-545-5353. Individual and group inquiries welcome!

Family Resource Center

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adjustable computer stations available as well as ATEC team members to provide evaluations, equipment recommendations, and training to children, adolescents, and adults with disabilities.

The Community Information Network for Individuals with Disabilities (**CINID**) is another innovative and exciting link to the World Wide Web. Through CINID computer terminals people can link up to the information available on the web. As part of this grant-funded project housed at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, the CINID mission is to serve as a link between people with disabilities and the community at large. Organized links are offered to disability-related information resources that have been evaluated by medical librarians for authority, currency, and overall usefulness, presented in an accessible and usable format.

Daniel McOsker is a Resource Assistant at the Patient and Family Resource Center, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital.

Information Center

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