



# Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative Bulletin

“Enhancing the effectiveness of disability activism by organizing and empowering individuals, families, groups, and organizations!”

**Empowerment! Opportunity! Justice!**

**February-March, 2008**

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## News from the Collaborative

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

**The Disability Advocacy Collaborative is sponsoring the 2<sup>nd</sup> Disability Convention and Expo at the Connecticut Expo Center on Saturday, September 27, 2008. While the November election will be a focus of the event, there will also be over a hundred “vendors” – businesses, agencies, and organizations – on hand as well. Whether you want to sponsor a booth or just attend, you won’t want to miss the 2008 Disability Convention and Expo.**

### **Special Transportation Section**

Improved access to transportation has been identified as the focus of legislative advocacy by the Collaborative in the session of the state General Assembly that began February 6. Providing wheelchair accessible taxis are chief among the Collaborative’s issues, which also include expanded bus service and expanded Dial-A-Ride services. This special section of the February-March *Bulletin* is devoted to the issue of transportation.

### **CT Department of Transportation Planning**

ConnDOT’s Fiscal 2009 budget includes \$5 million in funding for expansion of bus services. The goals of the funding are to increase coordinated marketing of bus transit, including web-based trip planning, improved technology delivery for users, and one-stop website access to transit district and CT Transit information; increasing the frequency of bus service, expanding weekend and weekday hours of service, improving commuter shuttle services, and providing for any complementary paratransit service pursuant to federal requirements. The available funding is operating funding. There is no capital funding (i.e., for vehicles) provided at this time.

Transit for Connecticut (TFC) conducted five listening sessions around the state in October and November. These sessions were intended to collect thoughts from the public about how we could improve public transportation and how we could develop a larger base of support for bus services. Similarly, the Department held listening sessions for the update of the Long-Range Plan. Service ideas have been generated through those sessions.

The timetable for this planning effort targets the approval of the service plan in April, and implementation beginning in July.

### **CPTC Releases 2007 Report**

In January the Connecticut Public Transportation Commission released its 2007 report. Among its recommendations: “the commission repeats its 2006 recommendation that the Department (Connecticut Department of Transportation) as a part of its taxicab licensing procedure, require all companies, current and future, operating three or more vehicles in taxicab service, to operate at least one dual use vehicle capable of serving ambulatory customers as well as customers with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs. For larger companies operating fleets of five or more vehicles one out of every five vehicles.... must be dual equipped.”

The Commission also recommended addressing this issue via any necessary statutory or regulatory change as soon as possible.

### **New – the Standard Taxi**

Based in Troy, Michigan, The Vehicle Production Group LLC is a manufacturer of a new vehicle called the Standard Taxi, which has been designed and engineered for dual purpose use in taxicab and paratransit fleets. Media coverage of the Standard Taxi has noted the vehicle “With a focus on accessibility for all, the Standard Taxi provides seating positions for four passengers in the rear compartment, and additional space for a common wheelchair or scooter .....Passengers can easily enter the taxi by either stepping inside the vehicle or by using a standard recessed access ramp”.

To see a video demonstration of the Standard Taxi go to:  
[http://www.standardtaxi.com/Standard\\_Taxi\\_On\\_The\\_Road.html](http://www.standardtaxi.com/Standard_Taxi_On_The_Road.html).

### **More on Accessible Taxis**

While few cities in the east offer accessible taxis – in New York less than 1% of the taxi fleet is accessible – two cities on the west coast do. In a Seattle demonstration project, eight low-floor minivans with ramps were leased to twenty independent drivers. The accessible taxis charge the same fare as other taxis and are available 24/7. They can be used by both people with and without disabilities. Portland, Oregon has taken a more aggressive approach, requiring 10% of a company’s total fleet be wheelchair accessible. Portland tried mandating 20% of each fleet be accessible but found the demand insufficient.

Houston also has taxi service for people who use wheelchairs. Their Yellow Cab’s wheelchair accessible taxis accommodate wheelchairs and scooters up to 31" wide through a rear entry

ramp. The regular taxi fare is charged and up to three additional passengers ride at no extra charge.

Arlington, Virginia also has Blue Top Cabs that have accessible taxis available for use. These customized vans enable wheelchair users to utilize cab transportation without transferring out of their wheelchairs. A side-loading ramp is used to wheel passengers in and out of the van.

### **Transportation Forum Set For March 13**

The Northeast Regional Disability Advocacy Collaborative and the Department of Developmental Services are sponsoring a Transportation Forum on Thursday, March 13 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Eastern Connecticut State University in the BTR Room. Guest Speakers include Lisa Rivers from the Connecticut Department of Transportation and Rose Kurcinik from the Windham Regional Transportation District. Light refreshments will be served. Please R.S.V.P. by February 27th to Lisa Sornberger, (860) 456-6351 ([lisa.sornberger@ct.gov](mailto:lisa.sornberger@ct.gov)) or Varian Salters at (860) 456-6345 ([varian.salters@ct.gov](mailto:varian.salters@ct.gov)).

### **Save the Date: May 15, 2008**

The Connect-Ability program will host a Transportation Forum on May 15 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford. The event will take place during National Transportation Week and will include a round table discussion highlighting transportation challenges that confront people with disabilities and the opportunities available to them. More details to follow. Glendine Henry ([glendine.henry@ct.gov](mailto:glendine.henry@ct.gov)) is coordinating the planning effort.

### **Disability Advocacy Collaborative Regional Contacts**

To get involved with one of the Collaborative's Regional Advocacy Networks, contact the following:

Northwest -- contact: Bill Knight ([lackerman01@snet.net](mailto:lackerman01@snet.net)) – meetings are held at the Litchfield Arc

Southwest –contact: Carol Kana ([pkana@snet.net](mailto:pkana@snet.net)) – meetings are held at the Norwalk Police Department – next meeting – February 27 – 1 pm

Danbury Area – contact Dale Brown ([dbrown@wecahr.org](mailto:dbrown@wecahr.org)) – meetings are held at Ability Beyond Disability in Bethel

North Central — contact: Candace Low ([clow@independenceunlimited.org](mailto:clow@independenceunlimited.org)) – meetings are held at 151 New Park Avenue in Hartford - next meeting: February 25 at 10 am

Waterbury Area –contact: Mike Valuckas ([mike.valuckas@independencenorthwest.org](mailto:mike.valuckas@independencenorthwest.org)) – contact Mike for information about next meeting

Northeast Area – contact: Carolyn Newcombe ([cnewcombe@charter.net](mailto:cnewcombe@charter.net)) – meetings are held at the Mansfield Senior Center – next meeting: February 26 at 6 pm

Bridgeport Area – contact: Tony LaCava ([tlacava@drcfc.org](mailto:tlacava@drcfc.org)) – meetings are on the third Thursday of the month at various sites

## **Legislative News**

To see the Governor's 2008-2009 budget adjustment proposal, announced February 6, go to: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa/WhatsNewER.asp> . The bill number the proposed budget is HB 5021. Questions about the public hearings for the budget can be directed to the legislature's Appropriations Committee at 860-240-0390.

Beth Leslie, Legislative Liaison at OP&A, sends out a weekly legislative update. She has forwarded the following message: "Copies of bills, public acts and special acts are available on the legislative website at: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/> . The top right corner of the first page of the legislative website allows you to enter the bill number. You are then brought to a screen that shows the bill number and title as well as the status of the bill and links to various documents including the Public Act. The Public Act is the official wording of the law.

Now more than ever, it is vital for people to be informed about legislative issues. I send out legislative e-mail updates weekly during the legislative session and any other time there is news to report. If you would like to be included in my e-mail distribution list to receive these updates, please contact me at [Beth.Leslie@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Beth.Leslie@po.state.ct.us)".

## **AFCAMP Parent Leadership Training Series**

The African/Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities organization (AFCAMP) is offering a series of workshops designed to develop parent leaders. The series includes:

DCF/Child Welfare – February 26  
Mental Health – March 4  
Special Education – March 8 & 15

All workshops will be offered at the Office of Protection and Advocacy – 60-B Weston Street – Hartford from 9:30 am – 1:00 pm. Call the AFCAMP office to make reservations at 860-297-4358 or 860-548-9959. Transportation and refreshments will be provided, but not child care.

Supporting organizations include the Office of Protection and Advocacy, the Department of Children and Families, Hartford Public Schools, CT Parent Trust, the CT Health Foundation, and the Tow Foundation.

## **Citizen Advocacy**

The Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities is presenting a workshop on "Citizen Advocacy" on Wednesday, March 5, 2008 from 2:00-4:00 at the Farmington the Public Library, 6 Monteith Drive Farmington, Connecticut 06032

Tom Kohler from Savannah, GA will be the Keynote Speaker. He is a storyteller and coordinator of Chatham-Savannah Citizen Advocacy. Citizen advocates are unpaid and independent of human services. They create relationships with people who are at risk of social exclusion and whose lives are being diminished because of prejudice toward disability. Tom will encourage participants to understand, respond to and represent the interests of vulnerable people, look for ways to bring the gifts and concerns of vulnerable people into community life, and build a constituency of allies to broaden and sustain action on the behalf of vulnerable people.

On April 11, the Council is sponsoring a workshop entitled "A Lesson from History: The German Euthanasia Program and its Echoes in Our Own Day". This event will be held at the Institute of Technology and Business Development at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain.

Sign language interpreters are provided upon request for both workshops. To register or to request accommodations call 1-860-418-6157 or toll free 1-800-653-1134.

Including the events noted above, the Council is sponsoring a series of fifteen (15) workshops on "Life Threatening Public Policy" during 2008. The series is directed at members of ethics committees and patient advocates in Connecticut's forty-one (41) hospitals.

The public is invited to participate in many of the workshops. Several workshops are co-sponsored by Connecticut Developmental Disabilities Network partners. Look for more details about future DD Council events in future editions of both the Bulletin and the Calendar of Events.

### **People First to Meet**

A People First of Connecticut statewide meeting will be held Thursday, February 28th from 7:00 - 9:00 pm at the CCARC offices in New Britain. Several area legislators are expected to be in attendance to listen to members' concerns. This is also a great opportunity to thank the legislators for adopting the new name for DMR.

Kathryn duPree, Deputy Commissioner of DDS, will report on progress the Department has made in employment and other issues, and President Carol Grabbe and Treasurer Bill Berry will report on our first-ever contract with DDS.

The Legislative Committee will meet at 6:00 pm before the meeting.

Questions? Contact Jean Bowen at 203-788-3156.

### **Public Hearing Announcement**

A public hearing on amendments to the state Building Code and Fire Safety Code will be held on Tuesday, February 26, 2008 at 10 am in Room 245 of the Department of Public Safety Headquarters at 1111 Country Club Road in Middletown. All interested parties are invited to

attend and provide written or verbal comment on the proposed amendments. Persons attending the hearing should arrive approximately 15 to 20 minutes early due to the security check-in procedure at the building's front entrance.

Written comment received between now and the close of the public hearing will be considered as introduced at the hearing. Written comment should be submitted on the form available on the OSBI website ([www.ct.gov/dps](http://www.ct.gov/dps) - follow links to State Building Inspector and to the proposed code change form). State Building Code proposals should be sent to the Office of the State Building Inspector, Attn. Christopher Laux. State Fire Safety Code proposals should be sent to the Office of the State Fire Marshal, attn. Terry Brouwer. The mailing address for both offices is 1111 Country Club Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

NOTE: Additional information can be found at OSBI's website: [www.ct.gov/dps](http://www.ct.gov/dps).

### **My Child Has A Learning Disability - What Should I Do?**

The Connecticut Association of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities will sponsor three sessions for parents during March. All sessions will run from 10:30 a.m. - 12 noon, and each session is limited to 10 participants. The sessions are scheduled for:

- Tuesday, March 4 – Know Your Child: What do the tests say about your child?
- Tuesday, March 11 – Know the Law: What do Federal and State laws mandate?
- Thursday, March 18 – Know the School: How can I be sure the school is meeting my child's needs?

The facilitator for the sessions, to be held at the CACLD offices (25 Van Zant Street, Suite 15-5, East Norwalk) will be Rena Schine, Ph.D, School Psychologist/Advocate.

The program is free, but registration is required. Call 203-838-5010 to indicate your interest.

### **Supportive Housing Lobby Day Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

On March 4, 2008 a Supportive Housing Lobby Day will be held at the State Capitol in Hartford. Join housing advocates from across the state to advocate for funding for 650 new units of supportive housing in the upcoming legislative session! Supportive Housing Lobby Day is co-sponsored by the [Reaching Home Campaign](#), [CT Coalition to End Homelessness \(CCEH\)](#), [Corporation for Supportive Housing \(CSH\)](#), [NAMI-CT](#), [Keep the Promise Coalition](#), and [Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition \(CARC\)](#).

Questions? Contact Kate Kelly, Reaching Home Campaign Manager, by e-mail at [kate@ctpartnershiphousing.com](mailto:kate@ctpartnershiphousing.com) or 860-244-0066. Reaching Home is a campaign to create 10,000 new units of supportive housing across Connecticut over the next 10 years.

## **Legislative Meet and Greet**

The Connecticut Family Support Council and the Family Support Network have announced they are hosting an Executive & Legislative Meet & Greet on Wednesday, March 5th from 9:00 - 10:30 am in the 2nd Floor Atrium of the Legislative Office Building in Hartford.

Families raising children with disabilities - from districts across Connecticut - will be in attendance. You will have the opportunity to hear directly from them regarding what services and supports are most helpful and what changes they would like to see during this legislative session.

## **BIAC Legislative Awareness Day**

The Brain Injury Association of Connecticut will host a Legislative Awareness Day on Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. The Brain Injury Association of Connecticut, and the Hoffman Auto Group, invites all interested parties to attend a press conference at 10 am that day to raise awareness of brain injury.

For more information call BIAC 1-800-278-8242 (toll free) or 860-721-8111.

## **Disability and Medical Decision Making**

The Developmental Disabilities Network (the UConn Center on Disabilities, the Office of Protection and Advocacy, and the Council on Developmental Disabilities) will sponsor a unique workshop on March 19 entitled "Disability and Medical Decision Making: Ethical Issues in Policy and Practice". Keynote presentations will be made by Judith Heumann, veteran disability rights advocate, and Adrienne Asch, PhD, Director of the Center for Ethics at Yeshiva University in New York City. A panel including a physician, clergy, individuals with disabilities, parents, and an attorney will share their thoughts following the presentation. The workshop will be of particular interest to medical professionals, including hospital ethics committees and patient advocates, individuals with disabilities, and families. There is no fee to attend.

In recent years a number of controversial issues have surfaced that have challenged our thinking about the value of children and adults with disabilities. These issues include the Ashley X case, physician assisted suicide, selective abortion, organ harvesting, vegetative state, and quality of life. It behooves all of us to carefully think through the implications of these issues.

Individuals interested in attending should phone in their reservation to 679-1500 or toll free 1-866-623-1315. The event will be held from 9:30 am – 1 pm at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Meriden.

## **Save the Date: Autism Awareness Day**

April is Autism Awareness month and the Autism Spectrum Resource Center (ASRC) is looking for families and interested others to help bring awareness to their cause. There will be a morning breakfast and press conference on Wednesday, April 2 with the Speaker of the House, James Amann, and other friends of the autism community.

To learn more contact: [admin@ct-asrc.org](mailto:admin@ct-asrc.org) .

### **Assistive Technology Tools for Computer Access**

“Assistive Technology Tools for Computer Access” will be presented by Amy Norton, M.Ed/ATP on Friday, April 4, 2008 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at the NEAT Marketplace in Hartford. The computer is a great tool for accomplishing a number of tasks. However, the traditional method of accessing the computer through the standard keyboard and mouse presents a barrier to many people with disabilities. There are hardware and software alternatives that make it possible for both children and adults with disabilities to effectively utilize a computer. Participants in this workshop will learn about a variety of alternative access methods and be provided with hands-on time to explore the options available. The fee is \$50 members/\$65 non-members. Registration may be done on-line.

For more information, on-line registration or directions, please visit: [www.neatmarketplace.org](http://www.neatmarketplace.org) 860-243-2869, 120 Holcomb Street, Hartford, CT 06112. The web site includes a wide range of workshops that NEAT will be offering over the next six months.

### **Kathy Snow Coming to Connecticut**

Kathie Snow is coming to Connecticut April 7, 8 and 9 in a program co-sponsored by STAR, Lighting the Way..., [www.starinc-lightingtheway.org](http://www.starinc-lightingtheway.org) and SPED\*NET New Canaan. Her visit is supported by the State Down Syndrome Congress and the New Canaan public schools.

On April 7 from 7 – 9 pm Ms. Snow will present “Disability is Natural and Other Revolutionary Common Sense” at Saxe Middle School, 468 South Avenue, New Canaan.

On April 8 & 9 there will be a two day workshop at Chatham Manor, 493 Connecticut Avenue, Norwalk 06854, (203) 838-8598, [www.chatham-manor.com](http://www.chatham-manor.com). This workshop is for general education and special education teachers, administrators, therapists, related services, families, and direct service providers that work with individuals with developmental disabilities. Anyone who cares about someone with a disability will benefit from this conference. Please register ahead of time. Registration and breakfast: 8 to 9 am. Presentation: 9 am to 3 pm.

For more info check [www.spednet.org/conferences.htm](http://www.spednet.org/conferences.htm) or [www.starinc-lightingtheway.org](http://www.starinc-lightingtheway.org).

### **The Connecticut Foundation for Dental Outreach**

The Connecticut Foundation for Dental Outreach is introducing the Connecticut Mission of Mercy (CTMOM). CTMOM will be a large scale, multi-chair dental clinic that travels around the state annually to underserved areas. The concept is simple: to create a multi-day dental clinic in a large facility and then open the clinic door to the community. Dental services will be provided to anyone (children, adults, and the elderly) who is without dental insurance and in a low income situation and they are available for free. Patients will be screened and treated based on their most urgent dental needs. CTMOM will be staffed by volunteer dentists, UCONN dental students, dental hygienists and dental assistants. They will provide cleanings, fillings and extractions at no cost.

This year's event will be held at the former Tolland High School, 1 Eagle Hill Drive, Tolland on Saturday, April 12 from 5 am to 5 pm and Sunday, April 13 from 5 am to Noon.

For more information, go to [www.csda.com/ctmom/ctmom1.html](http://www.csda.com/ctmom/ctmom1.html) or call Kerry Fair, 860-336-9377 or Patti Sue Brown 860-303-9954, SPAN Facilitators.

### **Hide and Seek Robot**

The Council on Developmental Disabilities will be sponsoring a "Robot Hide and Seek" competition on Saturday, April 12 and Sunday, April 13 at Trinity College, Hartford. The competition, called "Robot Hide and Seek" will be held on Sunday, April 13 in the Oosting Gymnasium. Please visit <http://www.trincoll.edu/AboutTrinity/VisitingTrinity/> for directions and a campus map. The "Robot Hide and Seek" competition is in collaboration with the Trinity College Fire Fighting Home Robot Contest. For further information about how to enter and the guidelines for the robotics contest, please see <http://www.trincoll.edu/events/robot>.

The "Robot Hide and Seek" event presents a scenario where a child with autism or an intellectual disability is in a fire, panics and then runs and hides in the burning house instead of trying to exit. The robot's job is to find the child and to indicate to the firefighters where he or she is hiding. In addition to the competition, Dr. Francois Michaud of the University of Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada will be speaking on the "Interactive Robotics for Health Care and Technologies" during an afternoon symposium to be held on Saturday, April 12 in the Washington Room of the Mather Campus Center on Trinity campus. Professor Michaud's presentation will start at 1:45 p.m. He is known for his innovative work in robotics technologies for children on the autism spectrum.

For more information, please call Mary Ann Langton at 860-418-6160 or you may reach her at [Mary.Ann.Langton@ct.gov](mailto:Mary.Ann.Langton@ct.gov).

### **2008 Dybwad Seminar**

The Manchester Community College Institute on Disability & Community Inclusion and Communitas invites the public to the Gunnar and Rosemary Dybwad 2008 Seminar to be held Wednesday, April 23, 2008 from 3:30-6:30 p.m. at the Library/Fireside Commons Room at

Manchester Community College. The focus for the 2008 Seminar is the present and future of children and adults with disabilities from the perspective of Stan Kosloski, Director of the Connecticut Disability Advocacy Collaborative, and Heather Northrop, advocate for youth with disabilities and adult advisor to Kids as Self Advocates (CT-KASA).

The event will also feature the announcement of the 2008 Gunnar and Rosemary Dybwad Award Recipient, and will provide the opportunity to meet and network with MCC students, faculty and community members interested in issues of full participation in community life by all people.

There is no fee for this event. Please pre-register to facilitate seminar arrangements. Call 860-512-2789 or e mail [bevjackson02@att.net](mailto:bevjackson02@att.net) by April 14, 2008 if you will be attending.

### **DOJ Business Leadership Forum**

On June 26th the New Haven Department of Services for People with Disabilities will be co-sponsoring with the U.S. Department of Justice and Yale New Haven Hospital a Business Leadership Forum to discuss providing accessibility to healthcare services and facilities for individuals with disabilities. If you are interested in attending please send Director Michelle Duprey your mailing address so she can put you on her mailing list:

Michelle M. Duprey, Esq., Director,  
Department of Services for Persons with Disabilities  
City of New Haven, 165 Church Street, New Haven, CT 06510,  
(203) 946-7651 Fax: (203) 946-8587 TTY: (203) 946-8582

### **Ready to Start Your Spring Cleaning?**

You can support CT-KASA (CT Kids As Self Advocates) and clean the clutter from your house, all at the same time! CT-KASA is having a series of tag sales and lemonade stands on Friday and Saturday July 11 & 12, 2008 at various locations around the state. If you would like to donate your "treasures" for this worthy cause, or you'd like to sponsor a sale at your location, please contact Heather Northrop at [heathernorthrop@sbcglobal.net](mailto:heathernorthrop@sbcglobal.net) or 860-679-1561.

The proceeds of these efforts will promote youth advocacy, community inclusion and opportunity for all. For more information, go to [www.ckasa.org](http://www.ckasa.org)

### **Able Lives Incorporated**

Last year, CPTV's Able Lives won an Emmy Award for its honest and positive portrayal of people with disabilities in a series which was sponsored by the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities. Topics included history, family life, culture, access, work, education, and social involvement. This season, the series returns as Able Lives Incorporated, and is sponsored by Connect-Ability. With a focus on employment, this groundbreaking program visits the corporate world, the academic scene, town government, the video store, and many other venues to capture the breadth and depth of positions occupied by people with disabilities. The interviews give a sense of people's personalities that led them to choose different

professions, and the perspectives of supervisors and coworkers. If you missed the first couple of episodes, you can catch up by watching them online at [www.ablelives.org](http://www.ablelives.org). Episodes 4 and 5 will air in March and April. Stay tuned for dates and times.

### **Safety Net Services in Connecticut**

Do you have low or no income? Need housing or help with rent, food and utilities? Need help finding and keeping a job? Need help finding child care? Need transportation?

If you have at least one child under 18 living with you, or are under 19 and still a full-time student, and no longer receive cash assistance from the state, Safety Net Services may be able to help you. Call 1-800-505-9000. The services are free. The Safety Net Services program is funded by the Connecticut Department of Social Services and provided by the Connecticut Council of Family Services Agencies and the Connecticut Association for Community Action.

### **National Self Advocacy Conference September 4-7, 2008**

Information about the Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) National Self Advocacy Conference is now on the SABE website [www.sabe2008.org](http://www.sabe2008.org) - take a look! The conference will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana from September 4 - 7, 2008. If you and your friends are interested in attending and need more information please contact Chad Sinanian at [chadwicksinanian@hotmail.com](mailto:chadwicksinanian@hotmail.com) or Jean Bowen at 203-788-3156.

### **Fifth Year of Long Walk**

The Collaborative would like to acknowledge the three years of incredible support it has received from Communitas, Inc. and asks readers to consider donating to this year's "Long Walk". 2008 marks the fifth year of Communitas' commitment to walk two half-marathons a year. These walks have become a source of funds (about \$2,500 a year) for the work of Communitas and a living metaphor for the long walks they are on with many folks in the Greater Manchester area.

This year they are going further than they have ever gone before. A Board member, Anne O'Bryan from Bath, England, will welcome them as they participate in the "Bath Half" on Sunday, March 16. For the second half marathon they will be returning to the Black Hills of South Dakota on June 8.

The request from Communitas: "Once again we dedicate our marathons to all with whom we have walked and those with whom we continue to walk. We are convinced more than ever of *the importance of circles of support to share difficult journeys. You are all members of our circle. Your support is most appreciated!*"

One dollar (or more, if you can) a mile will go a long way. Please make checks payable to Communitas, Inc. and mail to P.O. Box 358 -Manchester, CT 06045.

## **April 15 is Looming – It’s Tax Time**

The IRS has free publications to answer just about any tax question you have. Publications on a variety of tax-related topics, including issues relating to people with disabilities, are available by phone or the Internet at <http://www.irs.gov/>. To find what you’re looking for, access the IRS Web site. Click on the Forms and Publications resource page to find what you need. There’s a search feature you can use if you know the topic but not the number of the form or publication. You’ll also find information about accessing tax materials, filing options, tax publications and tax education and assistance programs.

If you know the name or number of the form or publication you need, you may call the toll-free Forms and Publications telephone line at 800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676) to place your order. If you still can’t find the information you need, call the IRS toll-free customer service line at 800-829-1040. Remember that for the genuine IRS Web site be sure to use .gov. Don't be confused by internet sites that end in .com, net.,org or other designations instead of .gov.

Tax information is also available in Spanish at <http://www.irs.gov/espanol/index.html>.

### **AARP in Connecticut**

You might want to check out “[AARP Volunteers Offer Free Tax Counseling at 119 Connecticut Sites](#).” Five hundred AARP volunteers are available to offer free tax preparation and tax counseling at 119 sites in Connecticut. In addition, AARP's community service programs offer a variety of volunteer opportunities related to program management, administration and operations. Learn more about programs and volunteer opportunities near you.

### **ADA Restoration Act Update**

On February 14th, the National Council on Disability (NCD) responded to recent arguments made in opposition to the ADA Restoration Act, currently under consideration in Congress. The NCD recommended, and remains in strong support of, the restoration of the definition of disability in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Congressional intent of this landmark civil rights legislation was to prevent discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all aspects of society, including employment. Instead, because of a number of Supreme Court decisions, many people with disabilities have experienced discrimination and have been denied ADA protections. Much of society has lost sight of the ADA's overall purpose to establish a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability.

Advocates should take time to [review NCD’s ADA Restoration Fact Sheet](#) so that they can be familiar with opponents’ arguments and counteract their negative propaganda.

### **More ADA News**

The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) offers information on how to file an ADA discrimination complaint, transportation grants and funding, and the eligibility requirements for paratransit services. A toll-free assistance line (1-888-446-4511) is available to get answers to questions about accessibility requirements for public transportation. You can view updated information at: <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/> . Click on “Transportation” at the top of the web page.

For more information about the Americans with Disabilities Act contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coalition of Connecticut (ADACC), 60-B Weston Street, Hartford, CT 06120, 860-297-4383, TTY 860-297-4380, Fax 860-566-8714 or email [adacoalition@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adacoalition@sbcglobal.net) .

## **Celebrate ADAPT's 25th Anniversary in Washington, DC**

April 27th  
Fun Run for Disability Rights

April 28th - April 30th  
Grassroots Actions

May 1st  
25th Anniversary Dinner, Exhibition and Show

For information: 512-442-0252, 303-733-9324

Food, Music, Exhibits, History, Multi-media, Faces from ADAPT's past

Contact [info@adapt25.org](mailto:info@adapt25.org) or go to [www.adapt.org/](http://www.adapt.org/) for more information.

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