

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY



**Accessibility Awareness Month. Photo credit by
Commission on Disability**

2015 marked the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While our nation has admirably made significant progress on improving accessibility, we have a long way to go to fully transform our society to embrace inclusion for all disabled people.

In the spirit of the anniversary, and dedication to Lancaster, the commission undertook projects, provided advice to town organizations, and carried out myriad tasks, all designed to support the ultimate goals of identifying problems and providing solutions, for Lancaster residents with disabilities. The commission continues to strive to make the community more accessible to those who are mobility impaired and/ or have other disabilities.

Highlights of the year included The October Lancaster Accessibility Awareness Month program. The Accessibility Awareness program was developed by the COD in 2014 to create more exposure to all town citizens on the subject, with the ultimate goal in mind of helping disabled residents in Lancaster live more full and productive lives with dignity.

Activities for Accessibility Awareness Month, which the town has officially declared, included a COD exhibit booth with information at the Horse Shed Fair on October 3rd. On hand in the booth was APAW (American Poodles At Work) , who provided enjoyable, unique demonstrations on how certain poodles function wonderfully as service dogs for disabled people. Also during the month, an educational event, sharing knowledge to enable disabled people to function and live more comfortably in their homes, was presented by the Nurse Carpenter of Solace RNovation at the Lancaster Public Library on October 20th. Also, on Oct 27th at the Library, a fascinating presentation by Jamie Laird and Perkins School for the Blind was given on living deaf, blind and unable to speak. The COD also exhibited at the Wellness Fair held at The Lancaster Community Center on Oct 14th. The events were covered by local and regional media, which in turn generated exposure and awareness on accessibility, and educate our community on the needs of people with disabilities. The COD also participated in a “Complete Streets” survey done in October with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission to determine what improvements Lancaster needs for sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, roadways, parking and public gathering places. The COD put in a strong effort to make Lancaster’s second annual

Accessibility Awareness Month a success.

In 2015 the COD has identified and contacted certain public establishments and businesses that needed to meet compliance per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Massachusetts Office on Disability requirements. In addition, the COD continues to expand outreach efforts to identify more extensively, businesses and public facilities in need of improvement and /or updates to meet the aforementioned compliance.

In 2015 the COD has monitored, worked with and advised town organizations on projects such as accessibility for the Prescott Building Renovation. Other interface involved Thayer Field Recreation Campus, Bartlett Pond, and efforts to make the Town Beach accessible, just to name a few. The COD also participated in the Lancaster Trail and Bikeway Coalition efforts, to observe and advise as needed, on trail accessibility per ADA and USDA park guidelines and/ or requirements, where and when applicable.

The Lancaster COD, as evidenced by the aforementioned initiatives and work, is a vibrant commission that ultimately enhances the lives of residents and visitors, especially those with disabilities, at almost no cost due to the collective efforts of dedicated volunteers who staff the commission. In a state where over half of the communities do not even have an organized disability commission, Lancaster is playing a progressive role in this area that the town can be proud of.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael S. McCue
Chairman, Lancaster COD

OFFICE OF VETERAN'S SERVICES

Honorable Board of Selectmen:

I herewith submit my Annual Report as the Veterans' Service Officer for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016.

This Department is governed by the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, section 108. The VSO is responsible for providing services and benefits to eligible veterans and their dependents. The VSO also represents and assists eligible veterans with the Federal Veterans' Administration and the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services.

The office is available to all veterans and their dependents on a full time basis at the Clinton Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Brendan Bailey
Veterans' Service Officer

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