



Amazing good news is worth repeating! Project Lifesaver Update



Andover has been buzzing with news about **Project Lifesaver**. If you did not see it on a special feature of Channel 5, if you did not read about it in the Eagle-Tribune or Townsman, if you did not hear a presentation at local group meetings, we want to tell you again in our newsletter. Project Lifesaver is here in Andover, the first north shore, Essex County community to offer this amazing search and rescue method.

Webster's dictionary defines "wander" as "to ramble here and there without any certain course". That may have served artists and writers well but it is a highly stressful and unsafe condition that is part of several diagnoses, including Autism, Alzheimer's, Down's Syndrome, and various neurological disorders which cause individuals to have a tendency to wander and get lost. Parents and caregivers have struggled with this problem for hundreds of years but technology has now produced a rescue tool utilizing wristband transmitters to locate missing people. Participants in the program, which is conducted by trained officers of the Andover Police Department, wear a personalized wristband which, 24-hours a day, emits a silent radio frequency unique to that individual. When caregivers notify the police department that the person is missing, a Search and rescue team responds to the wanderer's area and starts searching with a mobile locater tracking

system. The signal is tracked on the ground or in the air for up to two miles. The average time it takes to find the missing person is 22 minutes.

Since the program began in 1999, more than 200 law enforcement agencies in 39 states (and Canada) have logged a 100% success rate in more than 1,265 searches. All were found alive and returned home. Search times have been reduced from hours and days to minutes. Prompt rescue in New England temperatures is a key factor and Project Lifesaver has become internationally recognized as a proven program that saves lives. It is not a registry system and is extremely discrete. Police officers complete a thoughtful intake or profile of the individual and are prepared to offer this safety net to local citizens. They are complimented by the State Police with the local air patrol based at Lawrence Airport. Though it is a 24 hour safety program offering a huge strategic advantage to locating people in a manner that is seamless in delivery of service, it is nevertheless extremely simple and discrete in private family life.

The Commission is proud to have introduced the network to the Police Department and is excited about the response the police have readily offered with special training and quick implementation. We are pleased to have sponsored equipment for the initial thrust and continue to be a sponsor of needed supplies for this non-profit program. If you know someone who might benefit from this exciting program or would like to obtain additional information, please contact:

Sergeant John Pathiakis
Andover Police Department
(978) 475-0411 X1015

or

Bernadette Lionetta
Parent of a participant
(978) 470-2588

Andover's Commission on Disability website can be reached at:

<http://andoverma.gov/boards/disability>

Access Committee Project



Since the Commission's inception in 1995, we have advocated for compliance with the Federal Law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the State Law, the Architectural Access Board (AAB) to promote more access for people with disabilities. By working closely with the Town Manager and Town Departments, our municipal buildings including the schools have had major improvements in making them accessible for people in wheelchairs.

We continue to work with the Department of Public Works to improve our sidewalks and curb cuts. Major improvements are anticipated with the sidewalks in the downtown area with the implementation

of the Main Street Project. Our members have worked closely with that group and are excited to see it scheduled to start this spring. This is the perfect time for businesses to upgrade their entrances to allow people in wheelchairs to access their locations. We have surveyed 100 downtown businesses and are advocating that 24 businesses can be made accessible to people in wheelchairs. Work should begin now to eliminate the step that is a barrier to wheelchairs entering their facility. Many downtown businesses have accessible entrances today, and others cannot easily be renovated because of multiple steps or no private land to build the required ramping. We have sent letters to the businesses and property owners with locations that we realistically feel can be made more accessible. We look forward to them eliminating the barriers to entry by people in wheelchairs. The IRS provides tax credits for those who modify their businesses. The potential increase in business makes this a win-win proposition.

If you need information about access or have a question or complaint, please contact one of the Commission members. We all must work together to make Andover all that it can be, and open for all of its citizens.

Did you know that The Americans with Disabilities Act protects Diabetics?

If you are a diabetic, the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal and state anti-discrimination laws prohibits your employer from taking any improper employment action because of your disability. This means that your employer cannot discriminate in promotion, pay, hiring, firing, job training, fringe benefits, discipline or in any other condition or terms of employment. They also cannot retaliate against you for asserting your rights. These laws only protect you if your employer knows that you are a Diabetic even though you are not required to inform your boss that you have Diabetes.

Your help is needed to find a cure for Diabetes, volunteer for the Walk for Diabetes now.

Walk for Diabetes 2006 Events:

Corporate Reception:
May 23, 2006 5-7 P.M.

Call Julie @ (978) 475-5406

**Sixth Annual
Andover Walk for Diabetes:**
Sunday Oct 15, 2006 9:00 A.M

Starts at Merrimack College
Information & Register at:

Diabetes.org or

Call Julie @ (978) 475-5406

Newsletter Feedback Welcomed

Send comments to coppolaj@comcast.net or leave a message @ 978-475-0363