

The Newsletter of the Andover Commission on Disability
Winter 2020
Access Andover

**Andover
Commission
on Disability**

Julie E. Pike, *chair*
Faisal Bashir
Justin J. Coppola, Sr.
Kathleen Dolan
David Kahan
Jemma Lambert
Trish Leelman
Bernadette L. Lionetta
Virginia McLeod
(Mary) Eileen Reilly
Stephen W. Surette
Susan McKelliget,
clerk

Liaisons:

Annie Gilbert,
Select Board
Molly Bicking,
Council on Aging
Janet Nicosia,
ADA Coordinator

Website

[http://andoverma.gov/
boards and
commissions
A-E/ commission on
disability](http://andoverma.gov/boards_and_commissions/A-E/commission_on_disability)

Email

Andovercod@gmail.com

Meetings

4th Wednesdays,
6:30pm

Mission

To address Andover's
disability needs for the
town and its residents,
visitors and families with
disabilities

1995 – 2020

ACOD Celebrates 25th Anniversary

This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the Andover Commission on Disability (ACOD). Founded in 1995, the ACOD was the vision of people including Mark J. Walker, Michael A. Warshawsky, and David E. Ray, who felt passionately that Andover should be a model community for people with disabilities.

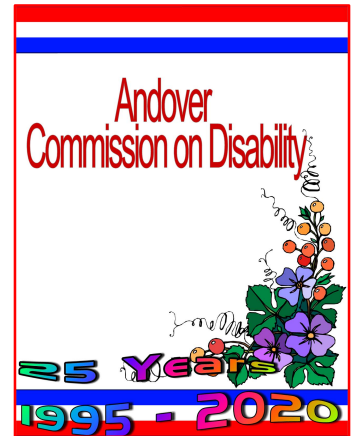
Other founding members of the ACOD – one of the first municipal commissions on disability in Massachusetts – were Gina B. LaFortune, Paul A. Clinton, Neil R. Gordon, David E. Ray, Joanne J. Stephen, James J. Wiseman, and Timothy J. McCarron.

Also among the pioneers of the ACOD is Justin Coppola, Sr., a 20-year member who received the Thomas P. Hopkins Disability Access Award in 2019 as Massachusetts' Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advocate of the Year.

During its 25-year history, the ACOD has:

- Monitored and improved the ADA plan for Andover's schools;
- Reviewed all schools for ADA conformance;
- Advocated for curb cuts and sidewalks for wheelchair access;
- Established the Handicap Parking Ticketing Program with the Police Department;
- Planned for Americans with Disabilities (ADA) training for town employees;
- Increased collaboration and liaison with the Senior Center;
- Built a collaboration with the Massachusetts Office on Disability;
- Conducted ADA monitoring of the Main Street Project;
- Conducted ADA monitoring of the Merrimack Valley Regional Transportation Authority (MVRTA);
- Sponsored artists with disabilities at the Andover Artists' Guild Art Show; and
- Introduced programs such as Project Lifesaver, Lock Box, the Kids on the Block, MVRTA's extended hours, and My Own Voice (see page 2).

The ACOD's initiatives that increase accessibility benefit not only people with disabilities, but other Andover residents and visitors as well, especially senior citizens, new parents, children, and people with temporary physical disabilities.



Resources in Andover Benefit People with Disabilities



Project Lifesaver (PLS), the premier search and rescue program operated internationally by public safety agencies, is designed for “at risk” individuals who are prone to the life-threatening behavior of wandering. For more information about PLS, please contact Officer Robin Cataldo of the Andover Police Department, 978-475-0411 x1004, rcat@andoverps.net.



The Residential Lock Box Program assists firefighters and emergency service personnel in gaining rapid entry into the home of a person with a disability in an emergency, saving time and property by eliminating the need for forced entry. For more information, go to andoverma.gov and search for *Residential Lock Box*.



My Own Voice is a community-based choir for children and adults with cognitive and physical disabilities. Contact Bernadette Lionetta at BLionetta9@verizon.net or go to <https://www.facebook.com/treblechorusne>.



Emergency 911 also allows people to individually register with the Police Department by filling out a Disability Indicator Form, available at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/request-a-disability-indicator-landline-telephone-service-subscribers-only> or by calling 978-475-0411 X3028. Mail or drop off the form at the Public Safety Center or email Chuck Jessico, cjes@andoverps.net.



School Accessible Resources include *Andover Public Schools Special Education Procedural Manual* and *Andover Public Schools Special Education Parent Guide*. Go to <http://www.aps1.net> or call the Office of Student Services, 978-247-7040.



Library Accessible Resources can be obtained at <https://mhl.org/disabilities> or by calling 978-623-8430 or emailing rdesk@mhl.org.



Senior Center Accessible Resources are available to seniors in Andover. The ACOD was instrumental in ensuring that the renovation of the center, renamed The Robb Center, meets Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirements for accessibility. For more information, go to andoverma.gov and search for *Senior Center* or call 978-623-8320.



Veterans Services Accessible Resources and programs are available to Andover’s veterans. For more information, go to andoverma.gov and search for *Veterans* or call 978-623-8380.



Accessible Transportation is available through “EZ Trans” Service, a public transportation bus/van service 978-469-6878, <https://www.mvrta.com/special-services>), as well as by MBTA commuter rail, buses, and subway, <https://www.mbta.com/accessibility>, 617-222-3200. Access guides are available.



Free IDs for those who don’t have a driver’s license are issued by the Essex County TRIAD and the Council on Aging, through the Senior Center, 978-623-8321.



The Masons’ Hospital Equipment Loan Program (HELP) loans medical equipment, wheelchairs, and/or walkers for home use. Equipment may be dropped off or picked up on Saturday mornings, 9:00AM - 12NOON at the Masonic Building, 500 West Cummings Park (Rear), Suite 1150, Washington Street, Woburn, MA 01801. For more information, call 781-322-1052 on Saturday mornings or go to <https://smd-help.org>.