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[Life is what you make of it!](#)

Elaine, had a stroke that left her paralyzed and with some memory loss. After months at a rehabilitation facility she went to a nursing home, where she remained for several years. Her husband did not want her back home and her children did not feel they could take care of her. But Elaine wanted to go home.

She began working with one of our advocates and set up appointments to apply for accessible apartments and housing assistance. She started saving money for her security deposit and looked for some furniture she could afford for her new place. She also interviewed doctors in the community to find one that would work with her. She applied for Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Services. After six months of hard work, Elaine now has her own place! Her favorite thing is to have her grandkids sleep over. There's nothing like freedom!

[HEALTH CARE PROXY, WHAT IS IT?](#)

Do you ever worry about who would make health care decisions for you if you couldn't? Who would tell your doctors what to do if you were in a coma? If you don't plan ahead, strangers could be making those decisions.

There's an easy way to make sure that such decisions are made by people who know you and know what you want. It's called a **Health Care Proxy**. It's a simple legal document that allows you to choose someone to make medical decisions for you, if, for any reason, you are unable to make these decisions yourself.

The person you choose (your "agent") must be at least 18 years old, and should be someone you **know** and **trust** to act in **your best interest**. You can give your agent the authority to make all medical decisions for you, or you can limit your agent's authority by including a list of specific medical treatments you would accept or reject.

Your health care proxy will take effect only if your physician declares in writing that you are unable to make your own decisions. This could happen if you were unconscious or in a coma, or mentally incompetent, for example. Your agent would then be allowed to talk to your doctors about your health, and would have the authority to accept or refuse treatment for you. You do not need a lawyer to complete a health care proxy. You can fill out the form yourself. The only requirement is that you sign your health care proxy in front of two adult witnesses. (Your agent cannot be a witness.)

Please remember: before you name someone as your agent, make sure they understand what you're asking them to do. And make sure they're comfortable with making decisions for you when you can't. Always make sure you talk about your basic values and health care choices with the person you name as your agent, so you can be confident that what you want is what you get.

Once you have signed the form, you should give a copy to your agent, your doctors, family members, and any health centers where your medical records are kept. You may change or revoke your health care proxy **at any time**. Your DOCTOR should not be your health care proxy.

If you want more information on health care proxies visit the [MassResources Website](#)¹ or call STAVROS at 201. We'll be happy to mail you some blank forms!

UMASS CUTTING EDGE OF TECHNOLOGY



Researchers from the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department at the University of Massachusetts are developing a new system aimed at improving the lives of the 285 million people around the world who have visual impairments.

The system, known as PERCEPT, uses smartphones equipped with accessibility features to provide audible navigation instructions for people in unfamiliar indoor environments. Users can select their starting point and destination, and the application will provide step-by-step directions using landmarks and other options.

The system uses Near Field Communication (NFC) and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology. A sensor inside the smartphone scans special tags placed on signs next to each doorway in a building. To get started, the user just has to open the PERCEPT application, tap their phone against one of these tags and select their destination. From there, the application will provide audio instructions.

A beta version of the system was installed in the main hallways on the first and second floors of the Whitmore Administration Building, and is expected to be fully operational and available to the public by next fall.

The system is developed at the 5G Evolution Lab directed by Dr. Aura Ganz at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, with financial support from the National Institutes of Health/National Eye Institute, and mentorship from Massachusetts Mobility and Orientation division from Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. To learn more about this technology go to the [Percept website](#)²

DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT RECYCLING

For many persons with disabilities, a wheelchair, scooter, or lift can be the difference between dependency and freedom. Massachusetts is hoping that a new approach to Durable Medical Equipment (DME) will make it easier for individuals in need to get critical pieces of equipment. The program, now called REquipment, and its [web portal](#)³ featuring equipment available for reuse went live in late December.

At Stavros we are now beginning to reach out to organizations and individuals asking for

donations of “gently used” DME. The REquipment pilot is currently accepting power and manual wheelchairs, scooters, mechanical lifts, tub seats and shower chairs, standing frames, transfer chairs, and portable ramps, as well as bariatric and pediatric DME. Items should be gently used and less than five years old. If you have any of these items to donate please contact the folks at REquipment at reuse@massmail.state.ma.us or 1-866-244-6156 to discuss.

STAVROS CELEBRATE THE PROMISE

Celebrate the Promise will be in **SPRINGFIELD** this year!

**September 20, 2014 from 11 am to 4 pm at 227 Berkshire Avenue
Springfield.**

Yes, Springfield! We are looking to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act with you! If you are a crafter, artist, vendor of food or a non-profit that wants to participate call us to reserve your spot today. 1-800-804-1899 ext. 200

WHEELCHAIR CLINIC

Stavros, in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is having a wheelchair clinic every four months at our Amherst Office. You must register in order to attend.

If you are having issues with you wheelchair or your seating position, please call and sign up! The clinic is **by appointment only. Call Tory at 1-800-804-1899 x200 for an appointment.** Only four to five people can be seen at each clinic, so call today

Housing Workshops

Stavros holds a housing workshop once a month to review your housing options from A to Z. Topics include: subsidized housing, governmental programs, tenants’ rights and responsibilities, reasonable accommodations, and how to search for housing. Attendees will receive an informational packet at the session. For more information contact Jim Wolejko at 1-800-804-1899, ext. 216

We recommend you check our [online calendar](#)⁴ for all events and workshops happening at [Stavros](#).⁵

STAVROS IS 40!!!

It is our birthday and we want to celebrate our accomplishments with you. Here is a comparison on how we have grown.

In 1974

Now in 2014

Three part time people worked at Stavros plus we had 2 goats.

135 people work at Stavros and no more goats.

We helped 2 people out of institutions

We helped an average of 40 people get out of nursing homes every year

What transportation?

We are advocating to make transportation affordable for all

We were working with the town of Amherst to make new developments accessible

We are working to make sure all new and old housing is accessible

Deaf Services is a dream

Where would we be without deaf & hard of hearing services?



Last year, we provided services to 6,876 people with disabilities in western Massachusetts. We are going places!!

To continue our work Stavros depends on the support of people like you. **JOIN us in our work** – to be a part of this quiet, wonderful revolution that **helps people fulfill their dreams**. This year we're looking for \$40,000 to help us make more of a difference than ever before. Believe me, there's plenty to do! According to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, there are over 10,000 people in Western Massachusetts with disabilities who are turning 60 in the next few years and who will require special support and a shift in how their services are provided. Further, the Massachusetts Department of Education tells us that there are over 18,000 children between the ages of 5 and 21 who are disabled and in need of services in the Valley.

You hold the key! You're the one who can help us build ramps, who can help us get a kid involved in sports instead of sitting on the sideline, who can help us change lives. We are looking for \$40,000 to help people with disabilities live independent lives. And we're looking for **YOU** to give Your best support by making a donation to our 40th Anniversary Campaign. A donation of any amount will help us go into the future with confidence.

Your support is vital. Join us – it really is the adventure of a lifetime. Thank you for considering a gift that will take us into the future.

You may **send your gifts of any amount to: Stavros**, 210 Old Farm Road, Amherst MA 01002, Attention 40th Anniversary Campaign or you may [donate online](#) ⁶

We Thank You for Your Support!

Follow us on Twitter and Find us on Facebook



twitter

facebook

Stavros would like to remind you that you may donate at any time on our [website](#).⁷

Endnotes:

1 Mass Resources at <http://www.massresources.org/advance-care-planning.html>

2 Percept at <http://percept.ecs.umass.edu/>

3 ReEquipment at <http://dmerequipment.org/>

4 Stavros Online Calendar at <http://www.stavros.org/events-calendar.html>

5 Stavros Online Calendar at <http://www.stavros.org/events-calendar.html>

6 Stavros Online Donations at <http://www.stavros.org/donate.html>