

STAVROS NEWS SUMMER 2016 VOLUME 9 ISSUE 2

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Your Vote Counts !!

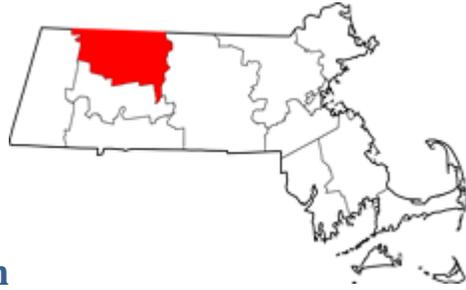
Why should I vote? It is your right and responsibility to participate in electing officials that will represent your interests and are able to lead the country.

This year is the Presidential Election. What does that mean to you? The next President will make a lot of decisions that will affect the lives of people with disabilities. What will health care look like? What about the future of Personal Care Attendant Services, or housing subsidies, or educational opportunities? Clinton or Trump will make very different decisions, and you should know enough about each of them to vote for the candidate that's best for you and your family.

You have a responsibility to elect a President that supports your views and interests. It is up to you to vote, but first you must register! You may register at www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/ or at your city or town hall.

Once you are registered you may need some help finding candidates that represent your views. At Stavros we created a page dedicated to the Presidential election. We have a list of candidates and their views at our website www.stavros.org/VOTING_page.html . We DO NOT endorse any particular candidate. This list includes the views of candidates and where they stand on disability related issues; this information was collected from each candidate's website. Don't have access to a computer? Give us a call at 1-800-804-1899 ext 213 and we will mail the information out to you. **Registration deadline is October 19. Election Day is November 8.**

What are you waiting for? You can register with your Mass ID online at: www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/



Transportation

Getting around when you have a disability can be very difficult. Going to the doctor's, the pharmacy, Church, and the library can be nearly impossible if at every step of the way you need someone else to get you from point A to point B. But when you live in a rural area like the Hilltowns you can become extremely isolated. Not because you don't want to, or don't need to go out, but because there's not much transportation available. It is also limited by the fact that almost everything you need is at a greater distance and sometimes out of your local community.

Stavros has been working with the Hilltown Community Development Corporation (CDC) to increase transportation for elders and people with disabilities. In 2015, the Hilltown CDC issued a transportation survey to measure the need for transportation, the common destinations, and the frequency of travel outside and within the Hilltowns. There was no surprise that many individuals travel outside of the Hilltowns in order to access a variety of goods and services. Although much work is still needed, Stavros is looking forward to working with the Hilltown CDC, and the community to find solutions and ensure affordable, accessible transportation options for elders and those with disabilities within the Hilltowns.

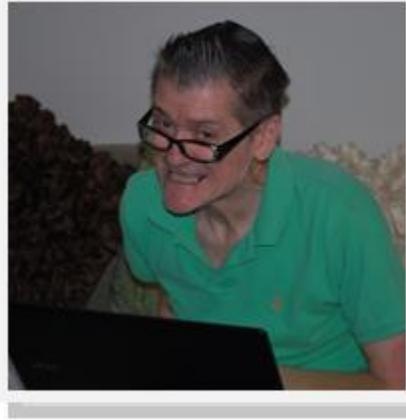


Assistive Technology Trainings MassMatch

Getting technology is not always easy for people with disabilities. Most people know that they need help with X activity but they don't know if there is a "thing" that can help them. Is there a piece of technology out there that can read my emails, if I can't see? Can I control turn the lights on and off if I cannot use my hands? Can my autistic child learn the ABC's or how to write? Most likely there is something out there that will meet your needs.

Then the questions roll in: Where do I get it? How much does it cost? How do I know this works for me? Where can I learn how to use it? The Assistive Technology Regional centers can help with that. They are a phone call or click away at www.MassMatch.org . Our regional center is at United Cerebral Palsy in

Pittsfield and they provide great trainings in the Pioneer Valley. Some of them are the Association for Community Living on Brookdale Drive in Springfield. To get more information on trainings in the area and the services they provide go to www.ucpberkshire.org/ or call them at 413-442-1562 Voice.



Going Home, A DREAM COME TRUE!

John has had a disability for a while. He had been living on his own and he loves his home town of Westfield. What is *there* not to like in the Whip City? This is where he grew up, his family is there, and his friends are there too. John applied for a housing subsidy. His health issues were under control and life was good. Then his health began deteriorating and he needed to go into a nursing facility. He lost his apartment, and all hope for a subsidy seemed to have flown out the window.

That's because when you are in a nursing facility and lose your apartment you don't get your mail. All those letters that tell you it's time to renew food stamps, or to follow-up on housing subsidies, or that you need to set up doctors' appointments: they all get "returned to sender." So, John lost his place on the waiting list for a subsidized apartment. He missed doctor's appointments and now he had no doctor. John lost his place in the community.

Fortunately for John he started working with a Stavros advocate. He had to re-apply for services. He needed to find another doctor and a new apartment in his home town. "It felt like forever" said John, "not being able to go home, not having a home." It took almost two years working with a Stavros Advocate through the Money Follows the Person program for John to find a subsidized apartment in Westfield, and a new doctor. But now he is home, and he could not be happier.

LOOKING FOR FUN THIS SUMMER?

We GOT YOU Covered!

If you have a disability you know that finding fun things to do during the summer months may be difficult. First you have to consider accessibility, then how are you getting there, and last is it going to cost me tons of money? The Department of Conservation and Recreation has a Universal Access program with many fun things to do that are low cost and local.

You can find something for everyone. Like Kayaking? Goshen State Park has

accessible Kayaking activities (yes they have a lifeguard). Water is not your thing? That is O.K. try biking at the Hadley Rail Trail or walking/hiking using our all-terrain equipment at State parks in Massachusetts. You can get more information and the schedule by calling Outdoor Access at 413-259-0009 (Brenda Se habla Español) or call DCR Universal Access Program at 413-545-5758. Most of these programs have a \$3 or \$5 dollar fee per person and there is special pricing for families. More information online at Outdoor Access: www.outdoor-access.org/Outdoor-Access/Welcome/Welcome.html or at DCR Universal Access Program at www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/accessibility/



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