



Physical Access in Schools

The Commission on Disability has completed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Review of Andover Schools.

The schools reviewed were: Andover High School, West Middle School, Doherty Middle School, Sanborn School, South School, West Elementary School, Wood Hill Middle School and High Plain Elementary School.

The access deficiencies noted in these reviews will provide a checklist for the town's facility improvements. These federal requirements

will update the formal ADA Transition Plan for the Schools. This gives the Town the priorities of deficiencies to be addressed. The report is also being used as an ADA Training experience for the Commission and other interested Town employees.

Involved in this process are the town's ADA Coordinator, the ADA Action team, and the Andover Commission on Disability. We also need your help. If there are any troublesome areas for your family in any school, please contact us.

Playgrounds for Everybody

We believe that children of all abilities should be able to play together. We have not only researched the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas but also looked at the town's playgrounds in terms of their amusement value. Though the High Plain Elementary School playground (currently the only location

in town) may meet these ADA Accessibility Guidelines, the commission is also concerned with other components that could be feasibly added to improve its "fun for all". The commission wishes to respond to the needs of all its residents. Specific wishes or special requirements concerning Andover's playgrounds should be brought to the attention of the ACOD.

Collaboration with the MA Office on Disability

As a result of individual advocacy projects the ACOD has established a terrific working relationship with the MA Office on Disability. They now provide the "intake" service for any person in Andover with a disability. The person simply calls MOD at (800) 322-2020, asks for "intake" and defines the problem area, such as housing or transportation and the specifics of the problem. MOD has professional advocates and other personnel in place to handle these issues.

The Andover Commission on Disability meets the fourth Thursday of each month at the town library. We invite all people interested in the work of the commission to attend our open meetings and hear what we are doing in Andover.

Memorial Hall Library Wins \$30,000 Grant for Improved Accessibility

Memorial Hall Library is pleased to announce that it has received a federally funded LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grant in the amount of \$30,000 to improve services for People with Disabilities. The plan for improving services was put together after library staff held discussions with people from the community who are either disabled, are parents of disabled children, or are professionally associated with people with disabilities. Three main messages were:

- The need for the library to provide clearer signage for people to find their way around the building independently
- The need for the library to provide more staff training to make staff aware of the needs of disabled people

- The need for the library to provide better public education about its services for people with disabilities.

In addition to improved signs and staff training, the library will also be purchasing some large screen monitors and other equipment and software to make information more accessible.

The library asks everyone to help determine more specifically what can be done to provide outstanding services by responding to a survey. The survey can be conveniently found at the library's website <http://www.mhl.org/disabilities/> or you can ask that a copy be mailed to your home address by calling Ruth Rosensweig at (978) 623-8401, ext. 34. Thank you for your help with this important project.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month



Community Access Monitor (CAM) Training

Do you want to know what's covered under the Americans with Disability Act? Do you want to learn about your rights? Do you want to volunteer your time to help survey sites in Andover?

There will be a two-day Community Access Monitor (CAM) training for interested individuals. Planned for April, 2004, presented by the MA Office on Disability and sponsored by the Andover Commission on Disability, the program will cover the Regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board and the Americans with Disability Act Standards for Accessible Design.

If interested and to be on the mailing list for this training session send your name and address to: coppolaj@comcast.net or leave a message at (978) 623-8335 and we'll send you the specifics in the spring.