



## MDDC Newsletter

### “The Sandy Houghton Story: An Inspirational Journey”

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) hosted the premiere of “The Sandy Houghton Story: An Inspirational Journey” on Thursday, November 10, 2011 at the Landmark Theatre in Cambridge to a crowd of more than 100 attendees.



The documentary, produced by local filmmakers Dana Cataldo and Craig Shannon, showcases the extraordinary life of Massachusetts resident Sandy Houghton, founder of the Self Advocacy Leadership Series (SALS), the only program in the nation specifically designed to build communication and social skills to help those with disabilities become self-advocates. More than 250 Massachusetts residents are graduates of SALS – and this number continues to grow.

“Sandy Houghton has been one of the driving forces behind self advocacy,” said Representative John Scibak (D-South Hadley), who attended the premiere. “Her many leadership roles, which range from a founding member of the Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong to the development of the SALS program, position her as a critical part of the movement for equal opportunities for those with developmental disabilities.”

In the poignant and heartfelt 40-minute documentary, Sandy recounts the barriers she faced as a person with cerebral palsy, and as a mother of a daughter with a disability, and pieces together the experiences that have shaped her life and her advocacy work.

“Sandy’s story is inspirational and this documentary highlights the tenacity and perseverance which has led her to become a genuine leader in self advocacy,” said Dan Shannon, executive director of the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council. “Her SALS program has grown so much over the past eight years, and we are reaching more people in the state than ever before. Sandy did what few others can do – she used her life experiences to create something to help others with disabilities gain the critical skills to lead full and productive lives.”

The screening was followed by a Q&A during which Houghton and SALS co-trainer Lee Larriu answered questions from the audience.

### Houghton Featured in Daily Hampshire Gazette

To coincide with the premiere event, the [Daily Hampshire Gazette](#) featured Sandy Houghton on the front page of the November 18, 2011 edition. The piece discusses the documentary and includes quotes from Houghton, Lee Larriu, SALS trainer, Dan Shannon, executive director, and directors Dana Cataldo and Craig Shannon.



Winter 2012

Volume 2 Issue 1

### Upcoming Events

#### Meetings

##### Legislative Reception

March 7, 2012

10:30-1:00pm

Grand Staircase Hall, 2nd Floor,  
Massachusetts State House, Boston

Contact:

[adelia.deltrecco@state.ma.us](mailto:adelia.deltrecco@state.ma.us)

##### Quarterly Council Meeting

March 13, 2012

5:30-9:00pm in Quincy

Contact:

[adelia.deltrecco@state.ma.us](mailto:adelia.deltrecco@state.ma.us)



Providing opportunities  
for people with  
developmental  
disabilities and their  
families to enhance  
independence,  
productivity, and  
inclusion.

#### Executive Director:

Dan Shannon

#### Chairperson:

Julie Fitzpatrick

#### Did you know?

Over 150,000  
Massachusetts citizens  
have a developmental  
disability. And we are here  
to support them!



## Tim Kunzier Announced as 2012 Gopen Fellow

Tim Kunzier, a Boston University graduate who participated as a Massachusetts delegate at the annual Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C., has been named the 2012 Barbara Wilensky Gopen Fellow. Kunzier will develop a protocol for medical personnel to follow when working with people who have severe communication issues, particularly communication issues related to a developmental disability. [Read the article.](#)



Tim Kunzier,  
2012 Gopen Fellow

## New Trainers Join SALS Team



New SALS trainers Tamara Huntley (L),  
Chezarae McLeod (C) and Susan Matthews (R)

Tamara Huntley has joined the SALS team as a trainer and Chezarae McLeod and Susan Matthews have joined as support trainers. Tamara, a graduate of the SALS program, earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Bridgewater State College and her Master of Education from Cambridge College. Tamara worked as the lead trainer for Awareness and Action, a program sponsored by Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong. Chezarae is a graduate of Holyoke Community College and Westfield High School. Currently, Chezarae is a mentor for the Institute for Community Inclusion where she helps people with disabilities find jobs through the Work Without Limits program. She is also a legal assistant at the Law Offices of David

Murphy in Boston and Westfield. Susan received her bachelor's of commerce in business from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Susan worked as a consultancy manager for the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in London where she responsible for over 100 projects each year. In her spare time, she volunteered with a social group for adults with developmental disabilities.

## 2011 Citizen Centric Report

MDDC is pleased to present our fifth annual *Report to the Citizens of the Commonwealth*. We believe that government exists to serve citizens, that citizens have the right to an understanding of how their government operates and how their tax dollars are being spent, and that government agencies must be accountable to its citizens. Our 2011 (Federal Fiscal Year 2010) report provides information to the public about the Council and our efforts to achieve our mission. [Read more.](#)

## News & Quick Links

[New Definition of Autism Will Exclude Many, Study Suggests](#)—*New York Times*  
[College Entrance Exams Run Afoul of ADA Requirements, Report Finds](#)—*Disability Scoop*  
[Look, Ma, No Hands! Operating a Laptop with Eyes Only](#)—*New York Times*

NFPA—Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for Persons with Disabilities  
Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts  
Autism Insurance Resource Center

### Questions or comments?

Email [Dan.Shannon@state.ma.us](mailto:Dan.Shannon@state.ma.us) or call 617-770-7676.

To remove your name from our mailing list, please click [here](#).

