



MDDC News!

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Sandy Houghton Featured in *Education Week*

June 2011

“I struggled to get where I am today, and it pains me to see that young people are still facing the same struggles decades later.”



Sandra Houghton’s thought-provoking opinion piece on living with a disability was featured in *Education Week*, a nationally recognized publication, as well as multiple local publications. She shares her story of struggling to find her place in the world. The piece discusses the importance of helping people, children in particular, with disabilities learn soft skills.

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

For Sandy, joining MDDC gave her the support she needed to become a self-advocate. Through her Gopen Fellowship, Sandy created the Self-Advocate Leadership Series (SALS) program which has helped over 200 people learn the skills they need to be leaders and make life of opportunity for themselves.

Upcoming Events

Lora Brugnaro appointed Vice Chairperson

Celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act!

The Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council is pleased to announce the appointment of Lora Brugnaro as Vice Chairperson of the Council. Lora holds a Master’s degree in vocational counseling from UMass Boston and two decades of employment in the field of human services in mental health, rehabilitation employment and developmental disability services. She is committed to the principles of inclusion and full integration into the community believing people with disabilities must be authentically challenged to strive towards their full potential.



Lora currently works for Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission in the Community Services division. When she is not working with people she is working with horses who continuously challenge her to become a better leader. She was recognized last year with an MVP Patriots award for her dedication to volunteerism. She has been on the Council for three years, sits on the Shriver Center’s Consumer

Friday, July 22, 2011!
Dunn Pond State Park
Gardner, MA 11 am - 3 pm

Food and Entertainment provided. The Park is accessible, and offers swimming, trails, kayaking and more.

Advisory Committee and is a regular contributor to MRC’s Consumer Voice publication.

Check Out the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Home Modification Loan Program!

Did you know?

119,000 Massachusetts citizens have a developmental disability. And we are here to support them!

The Home Modification Loan Program provides no- and low-interest loans to modify the homes of adults and children with disabilities, and elders. The Program offers loans of up to \$30,000 to finance modifications that make homes more accessible, such as installing ramps or lifts, widening doorways, or renovating bathrooms or kitchens. For more information visit the loan program website [here](#).





Council Wins 3rd Consecutive Award for Transparency in Citizen Reporting

MDDC's Annual Report to the Citizens of Massachusetts received the Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting for the third year in a row. The Association of Government Accountants, the leaders for government accountability, evaluates reports for the Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting. AGA determines award recipients based on content, visual appeal, readability, distribution, and timeliness of reporting. MDDC's Annual Report to the Citizens of Massachusetts received the Certificate of Excellence in Citizen-Centric Reporting for the third year in a row. William Kilmartin, Boston Chapter President of the AGA, presented the award to Julie Fitzpatrick, MDDC Chairperson and Dan Shannon, Executive Director at the March 15th Council Meeting.



Go [here](#) to obtain a copy of the MDDC 2010 Report to the Citizens of Massachusetts.

Autism Information

[Autism Commission](#)

[Autism Insurance Resource Center](#)

Quick Links

[Boston one of best places to live with autism—*Boston Globe*](#)

[Learning life at school: Inclusive approach for special students—*Boston Globe*](#)

[‘Sopranos’ actress talks about raising special needs child—*Brockton Enterprise*](#)

[Access Letter—*Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities*](#)

[NFPA—Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for Persons with Disabilities](#)

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