



## Big Victories and Great Services

**2009** was another outstanding year for BCIL. We had major advocacy victories and expanded our direct service efforts, advancing the independence of thousands of people with disabilities in Greater Boston. The dedication of our staff and the passion of our members and board are the keys to BCIL's success.

Two achievements of significant stature became public on consecutive days in June. On the 25th, Governor Deval Patrick established Massachusetts as a Model Employer of people with disabilities, an initiative that BCIL helped spawn through its leadership with the Employment Now Coalition. Then on the 26th, a landmark agreement was announced by Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital to improve accessibility of their services and care to people with disabilities, the culmination of fifteen months of discussions with BCIL and Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS). These big victories are discussed in detail within this report.

A major BCIL effort to promote awareness and understanding of the contributions of people with disabilities—and involve youth with disabilities in advocacy and leadership—also came to fruition when An Act Establishing Disability History Month (for October) was passed in August. This law was the creation of Act Today Influence Tomorrow, a



*The Act Today Influence Tomorrow group celebrates receiving the Organization Advocacy Award from the Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council for their efforts on the Disability History Month bill.*

group of young, high-energy leaders organized by Easter Seals and BCIL. Senator Steve Tolman and Representative Barbara L'Italien provided spirited legislative leadership.



*Mel King, civil rights leader, addressed BCIL's Annual Advocacy Summit in April.*

At the opposite end of the age spectrum, great gains were made in promoting independent living among seniors with disabilities through the formal establishment of the Suffolk County and Greater Boston Aging Disability Resource Consortiums. These undertakings link BCIL with eleven outstanding providers of

elder services to help individuals obtain the community services and supports they need to leave a nursing home or not go into one in the first place. BCIL is excited to work collaboratively with leaders in the senior services arena.

Those on BCIL's Personal Care Attendant program continued to receive quality services throughout the year. Our program rose by 10% to 1,200 consumers, growth that mirrors a statewide increase in the number of people using PCAs.

Strong advocacy to ensure the program's integrity and effectiveness for the nearly 20,000 people on the program in Massachusetts is often led by the Statewide Personal Assistance Coalition, organized by BCIL.

Continued success was achieved in implementation of key provisions of the 2006 settlement of the class-action lawsuit brought by BCIL, GBLS, and eleven individual plaintiffs against the MBTA for failure to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Bus service is substantially improved for passengers with disabilities, as drivers have gone through a rigorous training program; access barriers to fare gates for people with vision disabilities were removed;

**The actions that the disability community has taken indicate that you know you deserve your rightful place... which is a positive thing for the whole city, the whole community, and the whole country.**

*Mel King*

Continued from page one

and elevator operating performance, once the bane of anyone unable to use the stairs in the T's many subway stations, now consistently approaches 100%, while a new elevator was opened at the Arlington Street Station, formerly the cause of heated BCIL protest when neighborhood groups sought to delay access improvements. In addition, legislation supported by BCIL was passed in January expanding the authority of police departments to ticket those illegally parked in bus stops, something that frequently impedes access to buses for people needing to use a bus ramp or lift. There remains much to be done to bring the T into full ADA compliance — but the \$310 million settlement is proving to be of great service to the people who use the nation's fourth largest transit system.

BCIL organized a rally in June on the tenth anniversary of the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision, which mandates that government provide services to people with disabilities in the most-integrated, least-restrictive setting. Over 200 people assembled at the State House and delivered a Top Ten List to legislative leaders and the governor on ways to ensure state compliance with Olmstead. Topping the list were the demands to close costly institutions that segregate people with disabilities and correcting the bias in Medicaid funding for nursing home care over community-based services.

All these accomplishments in the past twelve months would not be possible without the support of many individuals and organizations. BCIL thanks those who respond to our annual membership appeals, or join us on the advocacy front lines, or sponsor our special events. We remain indebted to United Way, The Boston Foundation, the Hyams Foundation, the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, and the Lenny Zakim Fund for their generous backing of our advocacy and service work. Critical funding for our IL services is provided by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and by MassHealth for the PCA program, while the Executive Office of Elder Affairs is backing our work with organizations serving seniors. Dr. Robert Master continues to provide terrific energy for the annual BCIL Marie Feltin Awards Ceremony and O'Connor Constructors and the Perini Corporation remain true champions of our annual Construction Industry Night at the Pops.

As we look to 2010, we see challenges and a call to action. The nation and the state have endured a fiscal crisis that has threatened critical services — and BCIL must help lead the fight to preserve vital programs for people with disabilities. We also must proclaim that the equality promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act is aggressively upheld. On July 26 the ADA will be twenty years old. It is sure to be a time to proudly celebrate and renew our commitment to the cause of civil rights and independent living.

We thank you all for being there for BCIL.

Bill Henning  
*Executive Director*

Sergio Goncalves  
*Chairman of the Board*



*Joe Bellil of Easter Seals addresses the gathering at the Olmstead Celebration at the State House on June 22.*

## **CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY NIGHT AT THE BOSTON POPS**

Once again, the construction industry came together in support of BCIL at our 30th Annual Construction Industry Night at the Pops. 300 attendees were treated to a gourmet reception at Symphony Hall and a terrific performance by Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops celebrating Benny Goodman's birthday and the contributions of the Pops' original maestro, Arthur Fiedler. BCIL is grateful to our Host Sponsors, O'Connor Constructors, especially President Tom O'Connor and Chris Mayo, and the Perini Corporation, especially President Bob Band and Doug Mure, for their leadership, backing and efforts on our behalf, along with our additional Sponsors and attendees who joined in to demonstrate their support for our work in the disability community.

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# SUCCESS STORIES

*The creativity, perseverance, and experience of BCIL staff assist many people to move from tough situations to greater independence. Here's a sampling of recent accomplishments.*

- A 27-year old woman with a spinal cord injury from a diving accident asked for a Stander, equipment that helps her get out of her wheelchair so she can strengthen her legs and improve her circulation and general health. Medicaid denied her request. BCIL helped her appeal the decision—and she won! She was crying when she called to tell us the Stander had been delivered.
- A 48-year old man with a mental health disability is starting his own handyman business. BCIL helped him develop a self employment plan with Social Security to achieve self support, which is enabling him to take classes in masonry, wood working, plumbing, and electrical wiring to enhance his handyman business.
- A 62-year old woman fell down a flight of stairs in late December and woke up from a coma two weeks later to find she was paralyzed. She went through the medical system as BCIL worked closely with her rehabilitation team to assure that a safe home environment was prepared in advance of her discharge from the rehab facility. BCIL also spent considerable time getting her on the PCA program and building a team of attendants. She's now back at home.
- A 28-year old man spent the last three years in a hospital due to complications from paraplegia. His isolation caused him to lose connections to the outside world and he did not have family and friends as a support network. BCIL helped him search for, find and secure housing and get on the PCA program. He has moved out of the hospital and into his own home.
- A 25-year old woman with a mental health disability had been unemployed for several years. BCIL guided her through the Social Security maze, allowing her to use their work-incentive programs while retaining vital MassHealth insurance coverage. She is now working full-time at the Department of Transitional Assistance.

**CELEBRATE!**

## **July 26, 2010. The 20th Anniversary of the ADA!**

Contact BCIL early next year for details on our activities to reaffirm the ADA and the civil rights of people with disabilities.

## **A Model Employer of People with Disabilities**

Before a packed room of disability advocates from the Employment Now Coalition on June 25, Governor Deval Patrick released a strategic



Plan to Make Massachusetts a Model Employer for People with Disabilities. This document was prepared by the state's Disability Task Force on Employment and provides "a set of recommendations for affirmatively promoting the hiring and retention of people with disabilities in the Executive Branch of state government." The Coalition, led in part by BCIL, was the prime advocate for this initiative.

More than 45,000 people work in the executive branch of state government, so it's a potential job gold mine for a population that is notoriously underemployed or without work. Some figures peg the national unemployment rate for people with disabilities in the 60% range.

Vital elements of the state's Model Employer initiative include:

- Enhancing targeted outreach and recruitment of people with disabilities;
- Supporting internships and training opportunities for people with disabilities;
- Ensuring the successful retention and promotion of state workers with disabilities and older workers who age into disability;
- Encouraging people to self identify as a person with a disability;
- Assuring appropriate and timely assessment and provision of reasonable accommodations, including access to assistive technology; and
- Fostering an environment and workforce able to support and facilitate the employment of people with disabilities.

In his remarks announcing the plan, Governor Patrick emphasized that his goal is to affect more than just the executive branch. His hope is that all employers in the state will make concerted efforts to hire people with disabilities.

# Hospitals Launch Initiative to Improve Access for People with Disabilities



Panel at the June 26th press conference at Mass General Hospital announcing the agreement.

BCIL, Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS), Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) and Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) have begun a comprehensive, landmark collaboration to improve access and care at the hospitals for people with disabilities. The initiative, formally announced on June 26th, provides for an ongoing assessment by MGH,

BWH and BCIL of how the hospitals are addressing the health care needs of people with disabilities, and what steps need to be taken to further improve care.

In September 2008, BCIL and GBLS gathered a group of disability activists together for a meeting with the heads of BWH and MGH to make them aware that patients with disabilities felt they were not consistently getting the care and services they needed. The activists cited a number of concerns including: not being weighed because they use a wheelchair; being examined in a wheelchair instead of on an adjustable exam table; the inability to get a proper mammogram; and a lack of sensitivity to their disability by some caregivers.

Brigham and Women's Hospital President Gary L. Gottlieb, MD, MBA grew "very upset" as he listened to the stories that day, stating "we are all to be judged by what we do for those who need us the most." And in these cases, he acknowledged, his hospital had failed. MGH President Peter L. Slavin, MD, commended members of the disability community for their "courage, tenacity and willingness" to work with the hospitals to address this challenging issue. Pamela Daly, BCIL board member and a leader of the activist effort, feels the agreement is an acknowledgement of the lack of access people with disabilities have endured and that "we finally get to have a voice."

Over the next year, representatives from the hospitals, Partners HealthCare, BCIL and GBLS will meet to develop a comprehensive plan. BWH has committed \$12 million on equipment and other capital improvements over the next six years while MGH says that it is not sure how much the initiative will cost but that the figure would be in the several millions. "It's an agreement entered into voluntarily by all of us as a way of indicating our commitment to each other and to the populations that we're serving," said Matt Fishman, Vice President for Community Health at Partners.

Gary Gottlieb said "This initiative is intended to go well beyond providing ramps and eliminating architectural barriers. It is designed to build a stronger partnership between health care providers and patients with disabilities, and help to fundamentally change the culture of access and care for people with disabilities." GBLS's Dan Manning called the initiative a "model for hospitals in Massachusetts and nationwide."

The Massachusetts' Executive Office of Health and Human Services is keeping a close eye on the agreement. "It's hugely significant because these are major hospitals in a major hospital system," said Jean McGuire, Assistant Secretary for Disability Policy and Programs for EOHS. "This is a strategy that is good for everybody because any of us can become disabled, and making sure we can find accessible and responsive healthcare is something we want to see everywhere."

**BCIL is currently examining access at other Boston-area hospitals. Have you had problems getting on exam tables, being weighed, finding an accessible restroom, or encountered other barriers to medical services? If so, please contact Evelyne Milorin at BCIL.**

## STAFF:

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**The Boston Center for Independent Living gratefully acknowledges the support of the United Way.**



# Donations

A donation to BCIL helps us serve over 5,000 people with disabilities and advocate for tens of thousands more in a number of critical areas including housing, healthcare, PCA services, transportation, adaptive technology, communications, civil rights law, education and employment. BCIL relies on the generosity of members, corporations, foundations and individuals who see the independence of people with disabilities as an important part of the social fabric of the Greater Boston area.

We thank all our members and donors for their loyalty, enthusiasm and grassroots assistance. Your ongoing annual support enables BCIL to tackle key issues affecting the disability community and provide high-quality services. Please consider an end-of-the-year gift to help us continue to deliver our direct services and improve the quality of life for people with disabilities throughout Greater Boston.

Yes! I want to make a \$\_\_\_\_\_ contribution to BCIL.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\$\_\_\_\_\_ (amount of total contribution)

Enclosed is my check payable to BCIL

Please charge my  Visa  Mastercard  American Express  
 Discover  Diners Club

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp.Date \_\_\_\_\_

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*Thank you.*

Please send to BCIL, 60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111-1324

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30, 2009

### ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 118,508
Certificates of Deposit	\$ 388,365
Accounts Receivable - Third Parties, Net of Allowance for Doubtful Accounts of \$10,000	191,460
Accounts Receivable - Contracts	137,186
Accounts Receivable - Other	18,768
Prepaid Expenses Et Deposits	40,032
Property and Equipment, Net	31,185
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 925,504</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable	\$ 21,674
Accrued Expenses	123,242
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>144,916</b>

#### Net Assets

##### Unrestricted:

Available for Operations	457,440
Board Designated	225,346
Net Investment in Property Et Equipment	31,185
<b>Total Unrestricted Net Assets</b>	<b>713,971</b>
Temporarily Restricted	66,617
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>780,588</b>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$ 925,504**

## Boston Center for Independent Living ANNUAL MEETING

November 17, 2009

at 6:00pm

Transportation Building

10 Park Plaza, 2nd Floor, Boston

*A light meal will be served.*

### Guest speakers

Dr. Gary Gottlieb, President, Brigham and Women's Hospital

Dr. Peter Slavin, President, Massachusetts General Hospital

### ***Speaking on the hospitals' landmark equal access agreement with BCIL***

RSVP by November 11, 2009

617-338-6665 or [dsternburg@bostoncil.org](mailto:dsternburg@bostoncil.org)

## BCIL MARIE FELTIN AWARD CEREMONY

On March 13, 2009, 275 people attended the 13th Annual BCIL Marie Feltin Award Ceremony honoring individuals and institutions that embody the pioneering spirit of the late Dr. Marie Feltin, who was a powerful advocate for patients with disabilities. This year's honorees were 1199 SEIU, United Healthcare Workers East for ensuring quality home care for people with disabilities; Mary Lou Maloney for her longtime efforts as a disability rights activist and strategist; and BCIL's own Courtland Townes III for his years as a civil rights advocate and service provider for people with disabilities.



*Honorees Mary Lou Maloney, Mike Fadel and Rebecca Gutman of 1199 SEIU, and Courtland Townes III.*

for the evening, along with all our other Sponsors and attendees whose support helped make it a most successful event:

The ceremony would not have been possible without the efforts of BCIL's great friend, Dr. Robert Master, and our Master of Ceremonies for the evening, Dr. Lisa Iezzoni. BCIL gratefully acknowledges Partners HealthCare and 1199 SEIU for being Host Sponsors

### HOST SPONSORS

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**BOSTON CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

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