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Thoughts from Chairperson Timothy Flynn:

PLEASE VOTE !!!

In this the inaugural issue of the GCD Newsletter I'd like to talk about one of my heroes, and a man to whom us folks with disabilities owe a huge debt of gratitude, Mr. Justin Dart.

Mr. Dart was one of the primary forces behind the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A wheelchair user due to contracting polio as a teenager, he traveled to every corner of the USA and prowled the halls of both legislative bodies in Washington, DC cajoling and badgering legislators, building coalitions among advocates for people with disabilities (*including our own Bob Cooper*) to remove both physical and attitudinal barriers to our full participation in society. Legislation was created, passed by Congress and signed into law by President George Bush in 1990. The ADA is one of the most far reaching pieces of civil rights legislation. It prohibits discrimination toward people with disabilities by government agencies and companies that receive government contracts. It also required better access to public buildings, transportation and other services. President Bill Clinton awarded Mr. Dart the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, in 1998. Mr. Clinton said Mr. Dart had "literally opened the doors of opportunities to millions of our citizens by securing passage of one of the nation's landmark civil rights laws."

Significant among those rights is the right to vote. Here at the commission, we sponsor the Election Assistance Committee. Under the leadership of its Chairperson Rory Carmody, this committee and GCD staff work to increase voter registration and, working with local Boards of Canvassers, inspect all 417 voting sites in RI to make sure they are accessible. In addition the committee arranges for on-site monitors on Election Day to assure access compliance and assist voters in casting their ballot.

Justin Dart passed away in 2002 leaving a legacy of empowerment, self determination and through his life demonstrated that one man or woman can make a difference. As Election Day approaches in about a month, I'd like to take this opportunity to urge those of us with disabilities, our families, friends and those we work with to maintain our independence to exercise our most basic expression of faith in our American political system -that is to inform ourselves of the issues that most affect us and make the effort to VOTE.

"Vote as if your life depends on it, because it does"-Justin Dart

Voter IDs

Don't forget to get your voter ID! Beginning this year, poll workers will ask for an ID when you vote. If you do not have a valid RI driver's license, U.S. passport, or other photo ID, you will need to obtain a voter ID. Any registered voter in need of this ID may obtain one free of charge at the Secretary of State's office. You must bring your Social Security card, Medicare card, or another acceptable form of ID with you. For more information and a list of acceptable documents, see www.sos.ri.gov. For more information regarding accessible polling places, call 401-462-0101.

Colorado becomes the latest State to Offer a Medicaid Buy-In for Children with Disabilities

Colorado has joined the growing group of states offering the Medicaid Buy-In Program for children with disabilities (*Children's Buy-In*). As part of the Colorado Healthcare Affordability Act, this program will give families who make too much to qualify for Medicaid or other children's health plans the opportunity to receive coverage for their child. Through the program, eligible families will 'buy-into' Medicaid benefits for their child by paying a monthly premium based on income. This buy-in program will provide another option for coverage for children with disabilities, including those who are on a waitlist for services or the Medicaid waiver, or who have been denied services. For more information, see www.aspenpitkin.com.

NGA Chairman Wants to Focus on Disability Employment

Following his appointment to the chairmanship of the National Governors' Association in July, Jack Markell announced his goal of developing ways that states can help those with disabilities to find jobs, stating that "[he] wants the association to research and put together a toolkit for states seeking to develop programs for hiring people with disabilities, including in partnerships with business." Markell's role as a champion for those with disabilities began while he was Delaware's treasurer, when during a tour of a company he met a young man with a disability employed there, and was amazed by the impact that the job had on his life. Markell plans to hold a series of regional meetings throughout the country to talk with business leaders and advocates, and to see what does and doesn't work. For more information, see www.nga.org.

Public Forums

The Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities held their annual public forums during the last full week of July. These forums offered a uniquely empowering opportunity for individuals with disabilities and their friends and families to be heard, as representatives of several agencies throughout the state, including the National Federation for the Blind, The Brain Injury Association of RI, the RI Department of Health's Office of Special Healthcare Needs, the Rhode Island Chapter of the National MS Society, Ocean State Centers for Independent Living (OSCIL), Looking Upwards, Opportunities Unlimited, and Perspectives were in attendance to listen to the testimonies. The Commission would like to thank all attendees and sponsors for their role in advocating for those with disabilities. The transcripts from the forums will be available on the GCD website shortly.

RI MENTOR Shared Living Receives a Visit from Congressman Langevin

RI MENTOR Shared Living is an agency that helps to place adults with developmental disabilities in homes throughout the state, and then advocates for these individuals in several different areas of daily life including employment and inclusion within the community. During the last week of September, Congressman Jim Langevin met with MENTOR families at the company's Warwick office. Although he lives with a different type of disability, he told individuals there they have more in common than they realize. After sharing the story of how he became disabled, he reminded individuals of the importance of the support systems they have in the families around them. "We all face challenges in life in one form or another. Nobody gets through life without facing some kind of challenge, yet I also believe that nobody gets through life without a support system. For some, it's the family we're born into; for others, it's the family you make," he said. "This is a great support network in and of itself."

Rhode Island Receives Funding for Disability Employment Efforts

As announced in September, Rhode Island will be one of several states to receive a federal grant in order to fund training and employment services for individuals with disabilities. The grant of \$3.3 million comes from the U.S. Labor Department's Disability Employment Initiative, and is meant to provide education, training, and employment services for young and un-employed individuals with disabilities. The funding will go to Rhode Island's Department of Labor and Training.

Gluten-Free Recipe: Chicken with White Beans and Tomatoes

Ingredients:

2 15.5 oz. cans cannellini beans, rinsed	1 pint grape tomatoes	4 sprigs fresh thyme
4 sprigs fresh oregano, plus leaves for garnish	2 garlic cloves, smashed	
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper	2 tablespoons olive oil	
Kosher salt and black pepper	8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (about 3 lbs. total)	

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 425° F. In a 9x13 baking dish, toss the beans and tomatoes with the thyme and oregano sprigs, garlic, red pepper, 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper.
 2. Pat the chicken dry and place on top of the bean mixture, skin-side up. Rub with the remaining tablespoon of oil; season with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon black pepper.
 3. Roast until the chicken is golden and cooked through, 35-45 minutes. Sprinkle with the oregano leaves.
- Serves 4.



Figure 2: Graphic of gluten-free chicken with white beans and tomatoes

Send in Original Artwork and Poems!

The GCD is looking for some new decorations! Mail us your original artwork or poems with your name and hometown for a chance to have your artwork displayed on our walls!

Movie to See: *Les Intouchables*

The highly acclaimed French film *Les Intouchables* follows the adventures of a quadriplegic aristocrat and the African immigrant from the projects that he hires to be his attendant. Throughout the movie, which has been described by critics as “charming and funny, a movie-going treat,” the cast and crew are able to strike that delicate balance of conveying core disability rights concepts without turning off viewers by being too preachy. Already the recipient of 8 international awards, *Les Intouchables* is well on its way to becoming a movie classic.

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Fall 2012

◀ September	~ October 2012 ~						November ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8 Columbus Day	9	10 World Mental Health Day	11 National Depression Screening Day	12	13 Metastatic Breast Cancer Screening Day	
14	15 White Cane Safety Executive Committee 4-5:30 PM	16 World Food Day	17	18 Employment Committee 9-10:30 AM	19	20 International Osteoporosis Day	
21	22 International Stuttering Awareness Day Accessibility Committee 2-3:30 PM	23 Governor's Commission on Disabilities 50 th Anniversary	24	25	26	27	
28	29 Legislation Committee 3-4:30 PM	30	31 Halloween	Notes:			

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Fall 2012

◀ October	~ November 2012 ~						December ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
				1 All Saints' Day	2 All Souls' Day	3	
4 Daylight Savings Time Ends	5	6 Election Day	7 Disability Business Enterprise Committee 9-10:30 AM RICDHH Annual Coffee Hour/20 th Anniversary 5-8 PM	8	9	10 RICDHH Breast Cancer Awareness Presentation 10am-12pm	
11 Veteran's Day	12 Veteran's Day Holiday Observance	13	14 World Diabetes Day	15 Election Assistance Committee 2-3:30 PM	16	17	
18	19	20 Great American Smokeout Day	21	22 Thanksgiving Day	23	24	
25	26 Commission Meeting 5-7 PM	27	28	29	30	Notes:	

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Fall 2012

◀ November	~ December 2012 ~						January ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						1 AIDS Awareness Day	
2	3 International Day of Disabled Persons Executive Committee 5-7 PM	4	5	6	7 National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8 Hannukah begins at sundown	
9	10 Human Rights Day Legislation Committee 3-4:30 PM	11	12 Disability Business Enterprise Committee 9-10:30 AM	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22 First Day of Winter	
23	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa begins	27	28	29	
30	31 New Year's Eve	Notes:					