

Section 1

Who We Are and What We Do

COD Membership List
Updated September 15, 2015

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Factor, Danny

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Franklin, Lisa

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Harvey, Madeleine (Chair)

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Johnson, Leslie (Treasurer)

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Patton, Cindy (Vice-Chair and Secretary)

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Others Involved in Committee

Antonelli, Kevin, Volunteer

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Osman, Franny, Board of Selectmen Liaison

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COD Member Bios

(Last updated May 2015)

Ann Corcoran

I've lived in Acton for 48 years and raised three children here in Acton. During that time I became involved in many town issues such as water quality(Aces) and worked on many school issues until my career made that impossible. I taught at the Elementary, Middle, High School, and College levels and authored 2 textbooks in a career that spanned 50 years. Now in retirement I find renewed interest in the town and the issues facing it. Currently I am working as a volunteer on the COA Board, the COD, and Acton 2020 (liaison). I am aware of all the great supports that Acton has been working on in recent years to improve the quality of life for seniors, those with disabilities, and children. I am interested in supporting those issues and particularly folks with disabilities not easily recognized. I hope to help in any way I can and look forward to working with the COD. Nancy has been on the COD since 2015.

Danny Factor

Danny Factor has been steeped in the issue of people's rights since his childhood during which he was raised by activist parents. His mother, who was raised in an orphanage as a Jewish refugee from Hitler, taught him to always respect every last ounce of human dignity without exception. His father, who marched on Washington with Martin Luther King lived by King's famous phrase that "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Danny grew up in cooperative housing in the South Bronx in the 1960's, and his first experience with the issue of disability rights was the disabled staff hired by the co-op as part of a program to provide opportunity to all. He attended the Ethical Culture Elementary and High School, and during his tenure at Northwestern University (B.A. Political Science) was arrested occupying the administration building, forcing the university to divest from companies who did business with apartheid-South Africa. He met his partner, Nadia, of 26 years at a job where they both worked as resident advocates for developmentally disabled individuals, and graduated from Vermont Law School where he co-authored a brief which resulted in freeing an innocent man from death row. His solo law practice focuses on representing vulnerable individuals, many of whom are disabled and are in need of benefits or adequate housing. He holds elected office as a member of the State Committee of the Green-Rainbow Party which fights for people, planet and peace, and was the party's candidate for Secretary of State in 2014. However, despite all his experience in the area of disability rights, he has gained most of his experience understanding the triumphs and struggles of people with disabilities as a caretaker for two ill relatives. Danny and Nadia live in Briarbrook Village on Davis Road with their seventeen year old son, Mandela, who attends ABRHS. They enjoy backpacking,

gardening, political work and just being with each other. He has been very pleased to be on the Acton COD since 2010.

Lisa Franklin

Lisa Franklin has been disabled since 1991. Since that time, she has been learning about the Independent living and Disability rights movements. Lisa serves on the Massachusetts SILC (State Independent Living Council) and volunteers for a statewide, non-profit self –advocacy organization run by and for adults with developmental disabilities. As a teacher, Lisa feels we need to do more to prepare the next generation of people with disabilities to become empowered and take up the reins of our struggle. Lisa has been on the COD since 1995.

Madeleine Harvey

Madeleine was born and raised in New York City until age 12, when she and her parents moved to Camphill Village in upstate New York, a community working with disabled adults. She attended college in Vermont, and moved to Boston in the early 1970s. Mady worked at Harvard University for 32 years, most of them at the Kennedy School of Government, serving as admissions director and in various other capacities for the University's public policy and public administration programs. She has lived in Acton for 23 years. Mady has been on the COD since 2013.

Leslie Johnson

I have experience with disabilities across a broad spectrum, including developmental, physical and psychiatric disabilities. As a companion and caregiver, I have served people with developmental disabilities for more than 15 years. I am certified as an assistive technology specialist in technology that aids people with disorders affecting their communication. This education gave me the opportunity to help run an assistive technology resource center at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, which I thoroughly enjoyed. I have been an activist for improving the availability of high-quality, affordable healthcare for people with disabilities. My activities have included volunteering for the organization Health Care for All, and participating in legislative events at the Statehouse. I also have personal experience with mental illness, having survived two disabling episodes in my life. To help in my recovery, I participate in a clubhouse. Clubhouses are dynamic recovery centers that serve people dealing with mental illness. For the past several years, I have been the president of the Massachusetts Clubhouse

Coalition, which advocates for 32 clubhouses in Massachusetts. As a person with a disability, I receive benefits and services for people with disabilities, including SSDI, Section 8 housing, Medicare and MassHealth, and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. I know what it's like to try to navigate the choppy waters of such state and federal services. I have personal experience with having a physical disability. My disability is most noticeable when I walk and climb stairs. Despite my disability, I play a mean game of soccer by participating in indoor soccer with athletes who have disabilities. Leslie has been on the COD since 2013.

Cindy Patton

I have lived in Acton for 45 years. I have been a paraplegic for 37 of those years.. In 1978 and 1979, I did the Boston Marathon in my wheelchair. In 1980, I was on the USA Paralympics team and brought home 5 gold medals.

I have been a teacher of Math and Science for 26 years. I have a BS in Biology and Middle and Secondary Education. I have a MEd in Health Education and a MEd in Special Education. I had to retire from teaching 5 years ago for medical reasons. I have been on the COD since 2013.

Acton COD: An Overview

(Some history, still to come)

COD Accomplishments (many ongoing)

- Initially created a community of People with Disabilities (PWD) at a time when support and inclusion were still rare
- Helped the Town create a Transition Plan as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- “Kids on the Block” puppeteers trained Girl Scouts to bring these interactive discussions to churches, elementary schools, and community events
- Regularly review variances to assist the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (AAB)
- Successfully advocated for high school swimming pool ramp
- Conducted surveys of existing facilities for accessibility
- Advocated for the Town’s Road Runner transportation service, which evolved into Minute Van and Cross-Town Connect
- Donated large bucket swing to Recreation Department: a parent responded: “This is the first time ever my 13-year old daughter was able to play with her siblings at the playground.”
- Established a subscription to New Mobility magazine at Memorial Library
- Conducted survey of needs and numbers of PWD
- Created a dining guide: Guide to Accessible Dining in Acton, a model recognized statewide. Received requests from other communities for guidance with similar guides
- Developed Universal Trail at Arboretum with Friends of Acton Arboretum
- Helped social inclusion of a child with physical disabilities (by request) by speaking with class directly for/with student

- Initiated local temporary parking placards program adopted by attorney general and other towns
- Raised fine of handicapped parking violations in Acton
- Worked with Acton Police Department and Senior Center to resolve problem of parking violations at Junior High School on election days
- Spoke for issues affecting the PWD community at many public meetings and committees (transportation, housing, employment)
- Made presentation and had discussions with Acton Medical Center on Communication Access for patients with disabilities (hearing loss, intellectual, and mental illness)
- Made copies for distribution of Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities
- Worked with Acton Department of Public Health (DPH) to include PWD in Acton's emergency response plan
- Answered numerous calls from individuals seeking assistance or information and connections in town