



NEWSLETTER OF THE DISABILITY JUSTICE TASK FORCE (DJTF)

Welcome!

BY JEFF LAFATA-HERNANDEZ

We are excited to share the second edition of the Triangle "DJ Times" in October, a significant month in the Disability Community locally and nationally. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it is also Disability History Month.

In honor of this month's significance, we hope you find this edition of the newsletter useful in continuing our work at Triangle, Inc., removing the barriers to employment for people with disabilities and providing resources and education for us all to grow personally and professionally in our disability justice and anti-ableism journeys.



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Need to take Ableism Training?  
Sign up at:  
[triangle-inc.org/internal-ableism-training](https://triangle-inc.org/internal-ableism-training)

# Accessible Recreation - Leaf Peeping Through Trails

BY MELISSA STROUT

It's that time of the year! The season has changed, and we have some beautiful foliage. There are so many ways for leaf peepers to take in the sites. One of my favorite activities is hiking trails around the state. There are some great accessible trails throughout the state. These trails are paved or made of stone dust and at least 36 inches wide making them great for everyone. Many of these trails also follow US Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines.

In honor of Disability History Month here in Massachusetts, here's a bit more information about the history of the Universal Access Program (UAP):

- The UAP was established in 1995 to ensure equal access to MA state parks by offering recreational equipment to use at the parks and adaptive recreation programs
- It was one of the first state-level organizations in the US dedicated to providing outdoor recreational opportunities at state parks for people of all abilities.



The link below gets you access to a list of trails. Enjoy the beauty!

[www.mass.gov/info-details/accessible-trails](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/accessible-trails)


## Everyday Accessibility - Apps We Love

BY ANNE GACHOHU

With the ongoing development in technology, it has become easier for people to get custom apps to serve specific needs. This is of great value, especially due to the diversity among people with disabilities in terms of their physical appearance, cognitive, and social emotional disabilities. Perhaps more than any other group of people, individuals with disabilities can adapt to different situations and circumstances. This has been made easier in part due to the availability of apps. We have highlighted some apps that make life and work more accessible.

### Audio apps

There are plenty of apps that can help with audio and transcription.

-  **Roger Voice** adds captions to voice and video conversations in real-time when using the app.
-  **Google Live Transcribe for Android** offers "real-time transcription of speech and sound to text on your screen."
-  **Otter** focuses on meeting transcriptions but it also transcribes conversations. Otter is available on Apple and Android.



- **Just Press Record app for iPhone** transcribes audio recordings, such as lectures, talks, or meetings.









- **Glean** allows students to record classes and add notes. Then you can organize them.



- **Google Sound Amplifier** helps you hear what's happening around you more clearly. This might be by reducing background noise or boosting the sounds you want to hear.




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## Vision apps

-  • **Lookout by Google** is available on Android devices.
-  • **Envision AI:** You can train this app to recognize friends and family. Available on Apple and Android.
-  • **Seeing AI** can describe photos on your phone and in other apps. Available on Apple and Android.
-  **be my eyes** • **Be My Eyes** connects you to a volunteer via a live video call. Volunteers can help you with things like: checking expiry dates, distinguishing colors, reading instructions, and navigating new surroundings
-  • **BlindSquare** is an accessible app that describes the environment. It announces points of interest, like shops or restaurants, and street crossings as you travel. Available on Apple devices.
-  • **Lazarillo** guides you through city and building environments with real-time voice messages. Available on Apple and Android.




## Communication apps

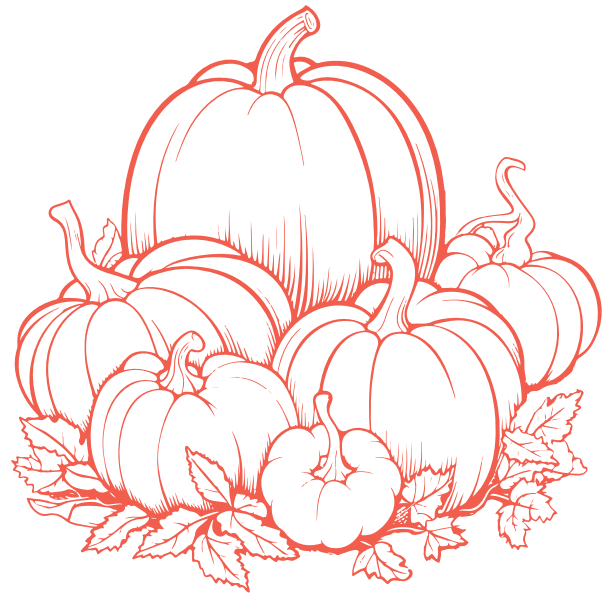
These might include apps that speak prepared phrases and text, help you communicate in writing, and work as an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tool that will let you choose different voices. These apps include:

-  • **Proloquo2Go** enables non-speaking children and adults to express themselves confidently and initiate conversations.
-  • **Grid iPad** app for symbol and text communication: If you have a Grid device, Grid Player lets you transfer your grid sets to your iPhone or iPad.
-  • **Speak for Yourself** is a flexible AAC app on the App Store. It gives a voice to adults and children who are not able to speak or are limited in their ability to express themselves verbally.
- **The Open Voice Factory** is for AAC. You can create communication boards for free as it is open source.

## Reading and dyslexia apps

Some apps can help people with dyslexia or reading challenges. These apps can help by reading out text, copying text from documents and images, highlighting text as it is spoken, and correcting spelling, grammar, and misused words.

-  • **Claro Read** can help you with reading text, editing PDFs and magnifying text.
-  • **Voice Dream** apps can help with reading, writing and scanning documents. Available on Apple devices.
-  • **ClaroSpeak** is a reading and writing notetaker app with high-quality text-to-speech, formatting controls, a wide range of fonts, styles and cloud storage integration.
- **NaturalReader** is text-to-speech for multiple formats.



# Local Arts + Culture

BY CHARLIE WARREN

This month, Triangle participants gained experience in various elements of theatrical production in a new arts collaboration with Deadword Theatre Company. For their production of Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound and After Magritte*, Deadword hired as their Assistant Scenic Designer a participant from our Prism Program. The job involved learning and using tools, design, and construction techniques, and budget management. At our Broadway site, Triangle participants helped assemble stage flats for the play while learning how to safely use a drill and impact driver, and how to measure and mark lumber accurately.

The production runs October 10 - 20 at the Boston Center for the Arts Plaza Theater at 539 Tremont St. in Boston. Tickets can be found at the link below, and a link to Deadword's inclusive mission statement as well.

## Useful links:

Hound/Magritte ticket link:

[www.bostontheatrescene.com/shows-and-events/the-real-inspector-hound-and-after-magrittea/](http://www.bostontheatrescene.com/shows-and-events/the-real-inspector-hound-and-after-magrittea/)

Deadword Mission Statement:

[www.deadwordtheatreco.com/about-us](http://www.deadwordtheatreco.com/about-us)



**Charlie and Anthony build sets at our Broadway site**

# Accessible Meditation

BY KRYSTAL LINN

Forest Bathing, or shinrin-yoku, is a form of nature meditation. Shinrin in Japanese means ‘forest,’ and yoku means ‘bath.’ In 1982, the Forest Agency of Japan proposed a national health program for Shinrin-yoku to reduce stress in workers and promote human health (NIH). However, meditatively exploring nature traces back to early human civilization.

Forest Bathing has been shown to increase natural killer cells within the body. Natural Killer cells are a type of immune cell with enzymes that can kill tumor cells or cells infected with a virus. Forest Bathing also regulates the nervous system. Studies have shown that Forest Bathing may increase the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system and reduce the activity of the sympathetic nervous system, showing relaxing effects. Forest Bathing can reduce stress hormones, such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, and cortisol, contributing to stress management. Forest Bathing may lower blood pressure, reduce insomnia symptoms, and uplift depressed states. (NIH)

Forest Bathing is not hiking or exercise. It is the act of meditatively taking in the natural environment using all of one's available senses. It is simply being in nature and connecting to the surroundings, making Forest Bathing accessible to most, as all you need to do is be. Forest Bathing can be done while standing or sitting. Accessible hiking trails, boardwalks, and paved park paths allow for accessibility while Forest Bathing. If a forest is not local or accessible, spending time in any outdoor environment, such as parks, beaches, a backyard, or any green space, is a beneficial form of Forest Bathing.

The following lists offer information regarding accessible trails, parks, and green spaces:

Accessible Trails:

- [www.mass.gov/info-details/accessible-trails](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/accessible-trails)
- [thetrustees.org/program/ada-accessible-trails/](http://thetrustees.org/program/ada-accessible-trails/)

Accessible Massachusetts:

- [disabilityinfo.org/fact-sheet-library/recreation/accessible-boston/](http://disabilityinfo.org/fact-sheet-library/recreation/accessible-boston/)

Accessible Beaches in Massachusetts:

- [www.mass.gov/info-details/accessible-beaches](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/accessible-beaches)

National list of accessible places and spaces:

- [www.accessiblenature.info](http://www.accessiblenature.info)

Works Cited:

Li, Q. (2022, November 1). Effects of forest environment (Shinrin-yoku/forest bathing) on health promotion and disease prevention - the establishment of “Forest medicine.” Environmental health and preventive medicine.



# Anti-Ableism Resources & Tips

BY JEFF LAFATA-HERNANDEZ

Part of anti-oppression and anti-ableism work is understanding our history and how we have arrived at this time in the Disability Rights Movement and Disability Justice. In honor of Disability History Month in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I thought this was a great time to share a resource to learn more about Disability History and the Disability Rights Movement.

*Crip Camp* is a documentary about a groundbreaking summer camp for teens with disabilities that proves so inspiring that a group of its alumni join the disability rights movement to advocate for historic legislation changes. This film is a great tool for learning more about Disability History and the stories behind some of the leaders in this movement.

*Crip Camp* can be streamed on Netflix and is available for free on YouTube. After watching this film, if you feel this may be a good tool for education for the individuals you serve, there are also educational resources, guides, and curriculums to pair with the film at [cripcamp.com](http://cripcamp.com)

“

The ADA was a wonderful achievement. But it was only the tip of the iceberg. You can pass a law but until you can change society's attitudes, that law won't mean much.

– Denise Sherer Jacobson, *Crip Camp*

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Want to join the DJTF?  
Reach out to Jeff at  
[jlafata@epicleaders.org](mailto:jlafata@epicleaders.org)

# Disability History - The History of NDEAM



BY KASSI SOULARD

Shortly after World War II ended in 1945, soldiers returning home with physical disabilities were facing high rates of unemployment, so Congress enacted Public Law 176, which declared the first week of October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. The word “Physically” was removed in 1962 to acknowledge the needs and contributions of people with all types of disabilities. 26 years later, in 1988, thanks to the disability rights movement and decades of advocacy efforts, Congress expanded the week to a full month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Some additional milestones include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, which was created in 1996 to provide a federal tax credit to companies that hire workers with certain disabilities. In 2001, the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), which is housed in the Department of Labor, assumed responsibility for NDEAM. Their mission is “to develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.” In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law, which helps job seekers, including those with disabilities, gain access to employment, training, and support services.

NDEAM's goals of raising awareness about disability employment issues and creating a more inclusive workplace are ones we strive for every day here at Triangle.