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## Advocates Announces Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Events

**Framingham, Massachusetts**, March 11, 2009...Advocates, Inc., a leading Massachusetts human services provider, is pleased to announce several activities honoring national Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in March.

Highlights of the month include an agency-wide essay contest, a special business open house and the premiere of an Advocates-produced documentary about improving medical treatment for people with developmental disabilities.

"The heartfelt essays of the people we support and our staff show their tremendous strength and compassion, and we hope our documentary continues a critical health care discussion," said Bill Taylor, President and CEO of Advocates, Inc.

***Bring to Light Candles Company Open House and Tour.*** On March 12, the public is invited to join the Bring to Light Candles Company - founded by people with the developmental disability Prader Willi Syndrome – as the team hand pours its specialty jar candles. *12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m. at 290 Eliot St., Ashland. For more information, call 508-881-6494 or 508-628-6300.*

***Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Reception.*** On March 24, Advocates will host a reception for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month from 3-6 p.m. at its Framingham headquarters. Winners of its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Essay Contest "The Personal Road to Wellness" will be announced.

Over 60 members of the Advocates community put pen to paper for this year's contest. Writers participated from all over the organization, including Advocates' brain injury programs and the Autism Alliance of MetroWest, which joined Advocates in December 2008.

"The essay contest is an important way for us to learn about each other as Advocates grows," Taylor said. "I thank everyone for participating."

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Advocates, Inc. is a Not-for-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization.

**Premiere of “Going to the Doctor.”** Advocates will also show its original documentary, “Going to the Doctor,” for the first time on March 24. Funded by the MetroWest Community Health Care Foundation, the short film aims to help people with developmental disabilities, support workers and doctors improve communication during medical appointments.

Advocates initially plans to show the documentary to the people it supports with developmental disabilities and staff, then hopes to share it with other medical professionals for feedback.

A recent report by The Arc of Massachusetts also addressed the obstacles people with developmental disabilities face in getting medical treatment, saying many are now left unable to find primary care doctors.

The report, “Left in the Cold: Health Care Experiences of Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Massachusetts,” recommends training for doctors in treating adult patients with disabilities and increased insurance reimbursements to compensate for longer appointment times.

#### **About Advocates, Inc.**

Advocates, Inc., headquartered in Framingham, is among the 20 largest human service organizations in Massachusetts. With a staff of over 950, Advocates is a leading provider of residential support services; outpatient mental health and substance abuse services; intensive home-based intervention for individuals and families; job training and support; housing, benefits and legal services; and community justice programs. Advocates provides services at sites throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts.

More information is available at [www.AdvocatesInc.org](http://www.AdvocatesInc.org).

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