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## Advocates Announces Fred Gaspari Fund Grants for Individuals with Disabilities and their Families

**Framingham, Massachusetts**, April 23, 2009...The Family Advocates Alliance, a collaboration of local families and Advocates Inc. of Framingham, announces the start of a new grant program called the Fred Gaspari Fund for MetroWest Families to help area residents provide in-home care for loved ones with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities and their family members living in the MetroWest area are invited to submit applications now through June 15, 2009. Several grants of up to \$500 will be awarded this year and each year going forward in memory of Alfred Pasquale Gaspari, a longtime advocate for the former South Middlesex Association for Retarded Citizens (SMARC).

"Local families are providing incredible support for their loved ones at home and deserve all the assistance we can provide, especially in these hard financial times," said Jeff Keilson, Advocates' vice president for strategic development. "Offering this much-needed support in Fred's memory is a great tribute."

Fred Gaspari was a core member of SMARC for over 20 years before lung cancer claimed his life in 1996. When SMARC voted to dissolve, the organization's remaining money was placed in the Fred Gaspari Fund for MetroWest Families to continue the late advocate's work. One hundred percent of the fund's proceeds will be awarded to local families in need.

Families formerly involved with SMARC teamed up with Advocates, Inc. to establish the Family Advocates Alliance, and they will determine the grant awards. Advocates, Inc. is providing administrative support to process and disperse grant funds.

Grant money will be awarded for many needs related to family members' care, including things like wheelchair accessible ramps, equipment that helps families care for relatives with disabilities and childcare for families who need to attend medical appointments together.

For applications or to make a donation to the Gaspari Fund, please visit [www.advocatesinc.org](http://www.advocatesinc.org) or contact:

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**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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