



NEWS RELEASE

Tomorrows Careers Helps to Curb Staggering Unemployment Rate Among People with Disabilities

LINCOLNSHIRE, Ill. (November 20, 2008) – As America’s overall unemployment rate reaches levels not seen in 25 years (6.5 percent, leaving 10.1 million working age individuals without a job, according to the U. S. Department of Labor), Protected Tomorrows, a Chicago area-based business that helps families plan a safe and fulfilling life for their loved one with special needs, launches a new division, Tomorrows Careers, which is designed to help people with disabilities find work.

“This job placement service is needed now more than ever,” said Mary Anne Ehlert, founder and president of Protected Tomorrows. The jobless rate among people with disabilities is more than 60 percent, which translates into over 13 million people. “The statistics speak for themselves,” Ehlert adds. “Many people with disabilities are being overlooked in the workforce. We are here to help them understand in which work environments their talents are best suited and make companies aware of the many abilities of these workers.”

Tomorrows Careers has the expertise to connect the disability community with the business community. It makes the match through a number core services for job seekers include:

- **Career Assessment:** evaluating skills and interests to determine career goals
- **Career and Transition Planning:** creating a plan to guide career activities
- **Job Search and Placement:** helping locate and secure employment
- **Job Coaching and Follow Along:** developing natural supports to help maintain and enhance careers

Tomorrows Careers also helps companies identify opportunities to hire people with disabilities. The consultancy learns the business’ culture, shows how a disability initiative might work in a company, helps to find appropriate workers, and offers job coaching supports when appropriate.

"There is a wide spectrum of opportunities in the world of work," said Karen Steffan, a Tomorrows Careers Job/Transition Consultant. "We are here to match the individual's skill sets, interests and values with the right work environment."

Tomorrows Careers—Page 2

The Tomorrows Careers team is business focused and creative in its approach to job placement. “We look at the needs of the company in filling a position and the value our clients can bring to the job,” said James Emmett, a Tomorrows Careers consultant, and national leader in vocational rehabilitation services and outreach efforts with corporations.

More companies are seeing the benefits of hiring a person with special needs—they have equal or higher performance ratings, higher retention rates and lower absenteeism. Studies have shown diversity in the workplace creates better business solutions, and people with disabilities motivate work groups and increase productivity. A diverse workforce also is good for the economy—more than \$1 trillion is spent annually by individuals with a disability. In addition, companies that hire people with disabilities receive tax breaks that could provide up to 40% of the first \$6,000 paid yearly to the new employee.

As baby boomers retire, the U.S. employers stand to lose 20 million workers by the year 2020. Employees with disabilities can fill that gap and will likely become even more valuable to businesses.

Tomorrows Careers sees helping companies realize these benefits by working with high school and college transition counselors, recruiters, special needs coordinators, and job seekers—initially in the Chicago area—in finding qualified employees. Tomorrows Careers is set to expand nationwide online in January. “We plan to grow one family and one company at a time,” Ehlert notes.

For more information on Tomorrows Careers, call (847) 522-8086 or visit www.protectedtomorrows.com.

Protected Tomorrows, Inc. is an advocacy firm that enhances the lives of people with special needs through a comprehensive life planning process. Our specially-trained nationwide network of Advocates—stretching coast to coast—creates Future Care Plans™, which address the needs of the individual with developmental disabilities, mental illness, physical disabilities, or cognitive and neurological diseases in the following areas: education, health care, residential, government benefits, financial, vocational, legal and recreational. The Future Care Plan is an all-encompassing approach to address the fears, hopes and dreams of families with a special needs individual. Since 2004, Protected Tomorrows has inspired real change in the special needs community through presentations and workshops on life planning focusing on family communication, special needs trusts and government benefits. Protected Tomorrows also has served as a resource with its connections to legal, financial, medical and social service professionals, parents, siblings, providers and other advocates working together to find innovative solutions for families.

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