



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **A Special Approach to Getting Organized**

**LINCOLNSHIRE, Ill, (January 22, 2008)** – Getting organized is one of the Top 10 New Year’s Resolutions. It becomes even more important to keep your commitment if you care for someone with special needs. The Lincolnshire-based advocacy firm, Protected Tomorrows, Inc. is helping families do just that with a special tool—the *My Special Life*<sup>™</sup> workbook.

The easy-to-carry, spiral bound workbook outlines all the information needed to care for an individual with a developmental disability, cognitive disorder or mental illness. The user friendly guide helps a parent or other caregiver document such important information as phone numbers, medical diagnosis, daily routines, friends, likes and dislikes, financial matters, and legal issues.

“It not only makes the parent’s life less stressful knowing they have one place to turn to quickly reference needed information, but also gives them peace of mind knowing if something happens to them, a future caregiver will have essential information to seamlessly manage the life of the individual with special needs,” said Mary Anne Ehlert, president of Protected Tomorrows, who was inspired to establish the firm after helping her parents plan for her sister Marcia who lived with cerebral palsy. Understanding firsthand how daunting the process is, Ehlert wanted to reach out to other families that aren’t sure how to go about planning a future for their loved one.

A completed *My Special Life* workbook is essentially a biography of a child’s life, whether that person has a developmental disability like autism, Down syndrome or Angelmans syndrome; or a mental illness. The guide also can be adapted to document important information about an older adult with such diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Lou Gehrig’s (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), or Multiple Sclerosis. It is similar to a “letter of intent;” though not legally binding, it will give a future caregiver the knowledge of how to care for the individual with special needs.

“We hope that with *My Special Life*, we can ease anxiety and offer guidance,” Ehlert added. “We want to help families plan a safe and fulfilling life for their loved one with special needs or who is aging.” So Ehlert hopes more people approach their “get organized” resolution with a sense of urgency this year. “Often times, a life altering injury or even death happens when you least expect it. Make sure you’re properly prepared. It will make all the difference for your loved one with special needs.”

For more information on the *My Special Life* workbook, visit [www.ProtectedTomorrows.com](http://www.ProtectedTomorrows.com) or call (847) 522-8086.

*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<sup>™</sup>, 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 a comprehensive way to approach and 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.*