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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WILLOWS WAY PRESENTS: “FREE TO BE ME!” FESTIVAL
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE**

*A family-friendly celebration of awareness & freedom recognizing 20 years of service to
developmentally disabled men and women in our community*

ST. CHARLES, MO. (June 21, 2010) – For many Americans, July is filled with freedom-themed festivities in recognition of our national Independence Day. Willows Way is proud to announce a celebration of a different kind of independence, kicking off its 20th year of service to the community and the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

For more than 50 million Americans who have disability conditions, July 26th marks a second very special “Independence Day”. This was the day that President George H. Bush signed legislation hoping to end discrimination against people with disabilities.

Steve Brennell, Executive Director of Willows Way, notes that people with disabilities actually comprise the largest minority group in our society and that 30% of the families in America have a family member who is disabled. Brennell states, “People with disabilities were stigmatized and segregated in our communities, schools and workplaces for decades. Since the early 1900’s, disability rights activists have worked hard for equal opportunity in our society and the Americans with Disabilities Act was a significant victory in this movement”.

In addition to the anniversary of the ADA, July 2010 also marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of Willows Way, a not-for-profit organization that provides community support services to people with disabilities in St. Charles and St. Louis. In response to celebrating both of these important anniversaries, Willows Way is inviting local communities to celebrate at its “**Free to be Me Festival**” on July 17, 2010. The festivities will be held at Willows Way in St. Charles from 11am until 4pm. The celebration includes a variety of family friendly activities, live music, a resource fair for disability services, food booths, tours of the Willows Way facility, appearances from local celebrities, visits from US, state, and local politicians, and much more! Invited guests include Missouri Governor Jay Nixon, St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlman, St. Charles Mayor Patti York, and Missouri Supreme Court Justices, among others.

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About Willows Way

Willows Way strives to facilitate meaningful and fulfilling life experiences among developmentally disabled adults by individualizing programs and services based on their unique goals and expectations. Willows Way provides personalized support to individuals with challenges, promoting dignity while fostering independence, growth and life choices within the community. For more information on what you can do to support those in your community living with developmental disabilities, visit the Willows Way website at www.willowsWay.org.

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