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St. David's Center Re-Launches *My Life* Social Networking Site for Children with Special Needs

MINNETONKA, Minn. (December 10, 2009) – St. David's Center for Child & Family Development announces the launch of an updated version of its *My Life* social networking site for children with special needs. This *My Life* project provides an opportunity for children with disabilities involved with St. David's Center to increase their communication skills and self-esteem while decreasing the social isolation they often feel. The new site, found at www.stdavidscenter.org/mylife, is funded by a grant from the Best Buy Children's Foundation and is the second phase of St. David's Center's new Web site, which launched in early September.

"*My Life* engages children and youth with special needs in sharing stories with family and friends, connects them to their support system in meaningful ways and motivates them to build new relationships," explains Julie Sjordal, acting executive director, St. David's Center. "*My Life's* interactive technology allows children with limited verbal and written skills to tell stories that inspire us all."

Parents of the children involved with *My Life* appreciate how it provides a more protected environment for their child than My Space or Facebook, for example, while giving this often isolated population an opportunity to experience what their "typical" peers do.

"My daughter Miranda always wanted a Facebook page, but I didn't feel comfortable with her having one; I felt it may have been too public," explains Helen, a parent of a young adult in the Personal Care Assistance program at St. David's Center. "When *My Life* came along, I thought it would be perfect."

Together with their personal care assistant (PCA) or while onsite at St. David's Center's after school Adventure Program, the children and young adults can submit entries, post photos, look at other children's entries and e-mail their page to family and friends.

"*My Life* is good for me; it helps me remember my day," adds Miranda, who has always liked to use the computer and uses *My Life* as a journal. She also enjoys sharing her entries with family, friends and colleagues.

Created by Creed Interactive, the updated site features more of a blog-style where friends and family can read and respond to posts and photographs. All of the entries and responses are then reviewed by St. David's Center staff for security before being posted online.

To learn more about *My Life* go to www.stdaidscenter.org/mylife.

About St. David's Center

St. David's Center for Child & Family Development provides early childhood education, therapy services and in-home support throughout the West metro. For nearly 50 years, our experts have partnered with families to nurture children of all abilities. As a leader in child development, our goal is to create supportive family environments where all children thrive. For more information, go to www.stdaidscenter.org.

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