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**Safeway executives unveiled the 2009 Safeway Foundation's Empowerment Grant award winners during Easter Seals annual convention in Washington, D.C., granting \$1 million to expand programs across the country that measurably improve access to services and outcomes for children and adults living with autism and other disabilities.**

Now in its second year, the 2009 Safeway Foundation's Empowerment Grants are awarded to Easter Seals affiliates across the country whose innovative programming truly makes a difference in the lives of people with disabilities, whether through autism services, employment support, inclusive child care, early intervention, medical rehabilitation or respite. The fact is, while society has made substantial progress in leveling the playing field, people with disabilities and their families still face significant barriers when it comes to living independently, securing employment, accessing quality, affordable health care, finding opportunities for recreation and playing an active role in their communities.

"The Safeway Foundation's grant supports the expansion of critical Easter Seals local programs and helps us reach more families living with autism and other disabilities who desperately need access to services that can positively impact their lives," said Gerard P. Mattimore, Chair of the Board of Directors, Easter Seals. "And more than this, Safeway has a long-standing commitment to hiring people with disabilities and making their stores accessible for employees and customers alike."

This year's 2009 Safeway Foundation's Empowerment grantees are:

- From Safeway's Dominick's Division in the Chicagoland area, Easter Seals Joliet for its Family Resource Center;
- In Safeway's Tom Thumb Division, Easter Seals North Texas for its Youth Employment Skills Camp;
- Out of Safeway's Eastern Division, Easter Seals Greater Washington-Baltimore Region to expand its Child Development Center and Easter Seals Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore to grow its Early Intervention Services;
- From Safeway's Seattle Division, Easter Seals Northern Rocky Mountain's Autism Intervention Training Program in Idaho and Washington; and,

Easter Seals Washington's Safeway Assistive Technology Project and Safeway Autism Early Intervention Project;

- Through Safeway's VONS Division, Easter Seals Southern Nevada for its Vons Transition Program and Easter Seals Southern California for its WorkFirst Programs for Employment and Social Skills;
- In Safeway's Northern California Division, Easter Seals Central California for its Autism Parent Training Program in Monterey; Easter Seals Bay Area for both its Safeway Autism Initiative and Safeway Parent Empowerment Grant; and, Easter Seals Hawaii for its Safeway Teen Transition Program.

#### About the Collaboration

This past April, for the fourth year, Safeway dedicated the entire month to in-store fundraising to support Easter Seals services for people with autism and other disabilities. During the campaign, Safeway asked customers at all of its 1,700 Safeway stores in North America -- Vons, Tom Thumb, Dominick's, Randall's, Genuardi's, Carrs and Pavilions -- if they wanted to contribute a dollar or more at checkout to support people with disabilities.

"2009 was a record-breaking year for Safeway," added Mattimore. "The generosity of thousands of Safeway customers and employees is overwhelming. In just five weeks time, the campaign raised more than \$8.8 million for Easter Seals and helped Safeway exceed the \$100 million mark in overall contributions to our organization, the first of our corporate partners to do so."

#### About Safeway

Safeway Inc. is a Fortune 50 company and one of the largest food and drug retailers in North America. The company operates 1,739 stores in the United States and Canada and had annual sales of \$44.1 billion in 2008. The company's common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol SWY. [www.safeway.com](http://www.safeway.com).

#### About Easter Seals

Easter Seals is the leading non-profit provider of services for individuals with autism, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities and other special needs. For more than 90

years, we have been offering help and hope to children and adults living with disabilities, and to the families who love them. Through therapy, training, education and support services, Easter Seals creates life-changing solutions so that people with disabilities can live, learn, work and play. Support children and adults with disabilities at [www.easterseals.com](http://www.easterseals.com).