

For Immediate Release

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Heart of Florida United Way Honors Longtime Stroke Advocate *Valerie Greene, Stroke Survivor & Nonprofit Founder, Earns Top Volunteerism Award*

Orlando, Fla. (July 17, 2014) — The Heart of Florida United Way (HFUW) — Central Florida’s most comprehensive health & human services charity and largest funder of regional programs — hosted its **Community Volunteer Excellence Awards** on Tuesday, July 15, 2014 at the Orlando Shakespeare Theatre. The inaugural event, which received nearly 60 nomination entries for seven award categories, celebrated the impact of local volunteerism with a program that included introductions by Robert Brown, HFUW President/CEO; emcee duties by Scott Maxwell, Orlando Sentinel columnist; and entertainment by SAK Comedy Lab.

The “Above & Beyond” award, the evening’s top honor and final prize, was presented to two recipients: a company/group and an individual. After Disney Robotics accepted the group award, the packed theatre — comprised of philanthropic-minded volunteers, community leaders, and supporters — erupted in applause as **Valerie Greene** was announced as the **“Above & Beyond” individual award recipient** for her outstanding local and global work as a **stroke advocate**.

Nineteen years ago, Greene, then just 31, nearly died from two debilitating strokes but, rather, defied odds to regain her mobility and verbal skills. She then directed her positive energy into becoming a dedicated stroke advocate, charged with empowering the 15 million people who suffer strokes annually worldwide — including 42,508 Orlando residents — by performing volunteer efforts in conjunction with community partners, including the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, Central Florida Stroke Alliance, Central Florida Stroke Club (now as Chapter President), Femme de Coeur, Florida Hospital, Orlando Health, Scott Coopersmith Stroke Foundation, and the University of Central Florida. Some of Greene’s volunteer highlights include: setting a national fundraising record (\$12,000) as an individual participant for the ASA’s Train to End Stroke marathon program (and racing despite partial paralysis), serving as a lobbyist to pass the Florida Stroke Act (signed by Gov. Jeb Bush), and touring as a motivational speaker. Greene went on to author two educational books and founded Global Stroke Resource Inc., a nonprofit also known as Bcenter (Bcenter.com), an **online stroke center** that provides resources, hope, and direction for stroke survivors, caregivers, and others afflicted by disabilities. Greene explains that, “Bcenter.com ‘is like a GPS for stroke survivors’...guiding many on the road to recovery.”

In regards to her volunteerism, Greene says her “stroke coach” efforts, similar to that of a life coach, are most helpful to fellow survivors (and caregivers) who are striving to improve their health. However, she foresees big expansions via both volunteerism and the Bcenter. “My vision is to build a world-class, all-inclusive wellness center in Orlando, Florida, specifically designed to meet the unique recovery needs of stroke survivors,” said Greene.

According to the World Health Organization, of the 15 million people who suffer strokes each year, 5 million will die and another 5 million left with permanent disabilities. Visit Bcenter.com or call (888) 942-Bwell (9355).

About Bcenter: Bcenter, also known as Global Stroke Resource, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) **nonprofit organization** with a mission to empower, educate, and light the path to recovery for stroke survivors and families. Bcenter is dedicated to providing treatment resources, hope, and direction. **Founder Valerie Greene** personally overcame grim odds in the aftermath of two debilitating strokes that nearly took her life at just 31 years old. Acknowledging that her miraculous survival and recovery could impact others afflicted by stroke or any disability, Greene crusaded for years to support healthcare advocacy, programs, and education, and now serves as a stroke coach. Visit Bcenter.com or call (888) 942-Bwell (9355).