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JILL DUFF-HOPPES/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Winter Park author Valerie Greene will sign copies of her book at the 'Heart and Sole' silent auction this weekend in Casselberry. Her life changed dramatically in 1996 when she had a massive stroke at age 31.

## Author who had stroke: 'I paint with a pen'

By JILL DUFF-HOPPES  
SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

Valerie Greene thinks she shares a kindred spirit with artists.

Greene, of Winter Park, is the author of *The Fire Within: A True Story of Triumph Over Tragedy*.

The book is about her recovery from a massive stroke at age 31, which left her paralyzed and unable to speak. Six months earlier, she had suffered a mini-stroke.

Greene, who is now 40, will sign copies of her book this weekend at "Heart and Sole," an art auction fund-raiser. The event is sponsored by the Women's Caucus for Art Florida Chapter at the Casselberry Art House on Friday and Saturday.

"I understand the depth of what they feel when they find subject matter to draw," Greene said.

"In a sense, we're both artists. I just don't paint with a paintbrush, I paint with a pen."

At the "Heart and Sole" event, shoes and wooden hearts that were hand-painted and

decorated by WCA members and other volunteers will be sold via silent auction.

Proceeds are to benefit the American Stroke Association, the American Heart Association and the WCA Scholarship Fund.

Now, despite a speech impairment from her massive stroke, she is a motivational speaker who works to raise stroke awareness.

Her goal is to educate people, especially women, about the warning signs of a stroke. She was selected as a "Stroke Hero" by the American Stroke Association.

The "Heart and Sole" reception and silent auction will be from 6 to 9 p.m. Friday at the Art House, 127 Quail Pond Circle, behind Casselberry City Hall. Harpist and vocalist Victoria Lynn Schultz will perform. Refreshments and wine will be served.

The silent auction will continue from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at the Art House.

To learn more about Greene and her book, visit [www.thefirewithin.net](http://www.thefirewithin.net).