



# Winter Park — Maitland Observer



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## Winter Park Stroke Survivor Named Top Fundraiser in Country

By Carole Arthurs  
Observer staff

Some people, when stricken with a devastating or disabling disease, complain, fret, acquire a "why me" attitude, go into denial, or just plain give up, while others dig in and fight. Winter Park resident, Valerie Greene, fought and won.



Valerie Greene

Eight years ago, at the age of 31, Greene had a massive stroke. One day, she was an athletic successful entrepreneur. The next day, she was paralyzed, unable to talk and told she may never walk again.

"In my efforts to recover, I pursued both medical and holistic treatments, and worked hard, to relearn to walk and talk," said Greene. "And in the process, I've regained much more than these abilities -- the lessons I've learned along the way have transformed my life."

In the face of overwhelming odds, Greene has not only recovered, she wrote a book about her experience - *The Fire Within*, scheduled for national release summer 2004.

In an effort to raise funds for stroke research and prevention, Greene walked the Walt Disney 13 mile half marathon on Jan. 11 and was honored for being the top fundraiser in the country, raising more than \$11,500, and earning the title "Stroke Hero" by the American Stroke Association. Greene walked 13.1 miles in less than four hours in the marathon.

"In my efforts to raise funds for stroke awareness, I gathered thousands of donations from hundreds of supporters throughout Winter Park," said Greene. "Brandywines Deli (on Park Avenue) was only one local business that featured my fund raising campaign and helped me become the top fundraiser in the country for the American Heart Association."

Greene credits her strength to her "faith, positive attitude, and circle of support."

Advanced copies of her book, *The Fire Within*, will be available in May during National Stroke Awareness month.

