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**United Way recognizes Blind & Low Vision volunteer
at Heart in Hand Recognition Awards Luncheon**

Smyrna, GA/April 28, 2009/ - Nancy Eaton, Board Chair for Blind & Low Vision Services (BLVS), is pleased to announce that fellow board member Deidri Cumbie was recognized for her volunteer work with BLVS at the United Way's Heart in Hand Volunteer Recognition Awards luncheon. Deidri spends countless volunteer hours each year on behalf of Blind & Low Vision Services.

Deidri became blind after surgery to remove a brain tumor 18 years ago. The blindness was an unexpected side effect and a shock to her when she awoke from her surgery. At the time, she was a wife, a mother of two young daughters and a successful working woman. As a result, she felt that she couldn't work, take care of her children, her home or do everyday tasks. In the grips of her despair, someone told her about Blind & Low Vision Services (BLVS). When Deidri came to BLVS, her first priority was to learn how to take care of her children. She learned that she could regain her independence by learning techniques to care for herself, her family and her home. The Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (CVRT) and the Computer Access Technology instructor at BLVS offered encouragement and taught her how to read Braille, use adaptive computer technology and how to travel using a white cane through Orientation & Mobility training.

Today, Deidri is very active and is able to accomplish things above and beyond her expectations. She helps other visually impaired individuals by speaking to countless civic organizations, religious groups, schools and corporate-employee groups about the programs and services provided by Blind & Low Vision Services so that she can share her story throughout the community. Inevitably, someone in the audience has a visually impaired parent, child, friend, co-worker, or other acquaintance and this person did not know there were services that could be of benefit.

BLVS Executive Director and CEO, Joan M. Stuart, commented "Through Deidri's presentations individuals become aware of services and programs that are designed to teach people who are

blind or visually impaired the skills and techniques they need so they can learn to maintain their independence.”

In addition to her dedication to Blind & Low Vision Services, Deidri also serves as Chair of the Graduate Advisory Council of Southeastern Guide Dog Institute, having served as Vice Chair for the two previous years. She works with Georgia Puppy Raisers as a presenter and also answers the raisers questions from the point of view of a handler. She participates in the Volunteer/Community Service Fair at the Walker School, and works the booth at the Big Shanty Festival with the Kennesaw/Acworth Lions Club. She is a member of Georgia Guide Dog Users and very active of the Public Education and the Planning committees. She also serves on the Missions Committee of Powder Springs First United Methodist Church.

About Blind & Low Vision Services (BLVS) – Blind & Low Vision Services is dedicated to assisting persons who are blind or visually impaired so that they may function independently in their environments such as their home, school, place of work, house of worship, shopping and other places. Founded in 1983, Blind & Low Vision Services is fully accredited by the by the National Accreditation Council for agencies serving individuals who are visually impaired. Contact information: 770.432.7280, www.blvsgeorgia.org.

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From left to right: Megan Egan, Area Director of United Way in Cobb County and Deidri Cumbie with her guide dog Duke