

For immediate release:

Contact United Stroke Alliance at 309-688-5450

SUMMARY: Each year approximately 1500 people in the Central Illinois area suffers a stroke. On an average day, local hospitals will see 3-5 people who are exhibiting the signs of a stroke. Some may be young, some may be older, but all experience a life changing event. Unfortunately, many did not know the signs of stroke. Over the last 15 years, United Stroke Alliance™ and Retreat & Refresh Stroke Camp, a division of United Stroke Alliance™, have been delivering the message of stroke education and awareness. With May being Stroke Month, every effort is made to educate people on the signs of stroke and the need for an **immediate response**.

For the approximate 700,000 people nationwide, that suffer a stroke each year, it is a life changing event. For the majority of those that live through the experience, it becomes a journey of recovery that sometimes last a life time. For others, recovery is a few months, for others recovery takes years. The challenges that stroke survivors experience are many. Some have lost their ability to speak, others have lost the ability to walk, most have experienced loss of a job, relationships, finances and a way of life. As a result, stroke is the #1 adult disability in the country.

The common denominator between a heart attack and a stroke is that it is an EMERGENCY requiring immediate attention. For every minute that passes for stroke, approximately 2 billion brain cells are lost. As more brain cells are lost the greater the potential damage to the brain. Unfortunately, most people do not know the signs of stroke or know that it is an EMERGENCY. United Stroke Alliance™ has created the acronym, **BE-FASTER**, to help recognize the signs of stroke. The letter **B** stands for Balance, **E** represents Eyes, **F** is for Face, **A** is for Arms, **S** stands for Speech, **T** is for Time, **E** is for Emergency and **R** represents Response. In short, the quicker a person recognizes the signs of a stroke and calls 911 immediately, the better probability of a better outcome.

During the month of May, United Stroke Alliance continues to offer the BE-FASTER message through Youth Education on Stroke (YES) and the Prevention of Awareness and Recovery on Stroke (PARS) to local businesses, organizations, churches and clubs. For more information, go to www.unitedstrokealliance.org and www.strokecamp.org or call 309-688-5450.