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**DISABLED CANINE AND 96 YEAR-OLD VOLUNTEERS AMONG THOSE
HONORED FOR SERVICE TO DALLAS COUNTY NONPROFITS**

DALLAS, TX (November 3, 2009) – Over 35 individual and group volunteers will receive the President’s Volunteer Service Award at the 3rd Annual *Lone Star Salute!*, a Texas-inspired volunteer celebration starting at 8 a.m., Thursday, November 5, 2009, at Eddie Dean’s Ranch in Dallas, TX. Cheryl Jackson from WFAA’s Good Morning Texas will serve as the morning guest speaker.

Among those being recognized for their contributions is Leo Keiles, a 96 year-old volunteer with Baylor Hospital. He is originally from Berlin, Germany and a survivor of the Holocaust. Leo visits around 200 patients each week, sharing encouragement, humor, songs and support to those in need.

“The best part of my day is when the person I’m talking with smiles,” said **Leo**. *“I start off by saying, I’m here to cheer you up, so how about giving me a smile, and it usually works!”*

Leo dresses in a suit and tie each day and rarely takes breaks during his day-long shift. He rides the DART bus to the hospital, and both patients and hospital staff eagerly anticipate seeing him each week. Leo turns 97 this month and looks forward to talking with patients when he is 100 years-old!

Additionally, Charlie, a Labrador retriever whose two back legs are paralyzed from a herniated disc in his spine, and his owners are being recognized by the ARC of Dallas. Bernard and Nellie Bretherick, originally from England, and Charlie make weekly visits to a group of disabled children. Charlie is wheelchair-bound and develops a special relationship with patients.

“Some of them also have wheelchairs and most of them have mental disabilities. Charlie is very therapeutic for them,” said **Nellie Bretherick**, Charlie’s owner. *“It makes me feel good, too, to think that I have helped in some way.”*

The *Lone Star Salute!* is a signature event for the Volunteer Center of North Texas, where volunteerism is celebrated in a festive and lively environment. At the conclusion of the event, a group photograph of the 2009 honorees will be taken. Each volunteer will receive the President’s Volunteer Service Award which includes a personalized certificate, congratulatory letter signed by President Barak Obama and an official lapel pin. The President’s Volunteer Service Award indicates the completion of at least 100 community service hours.

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Attendees are encouraged to dress in casual or western attire as they enjoy breakfast, entertainment and participate in door prize giveaways. In addition to receiving prizes, Cheryl Jackson of WFAA, the guest speaker for the event, will inspire honorees to continue in the spirit of service.

About the Volunteer Center of North Texas

The Volunteer Center of North Texas (VCNT), founded in 1971, is one of the largest and most active volunteer centers in the country. A primary purpose of VCNT is to recruit volunteers, including individuals, corporations and civic and faith-based groups, to serve nonprofits and their clients throughout the North Texas area. For more information, visit www.vcnt.org

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