



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Robin D. Stauffer, Executive Director
Essence of Humanity Award Program
717-293-4487

**The Capital Region United Way Honors Elsa Baker
through Essence of Humanity Award Program**

Harrisburg, Pa. (April 17, 2008) – The Capital Region United Way Tuesday honored Elsa Baker of Harrisburg through the Essence of Humanity Award Program. The award was presented during the organization’s Volunteer of the Year Award Ceremony at the Beth El Temple in Harrisburg.

The Essence of Humanity Award is intended to recognize individuals who, beyond the requirements of their work, demonstrate remarkable human qualities including courage, love, strength, determination, and persistence when dealing with adversity. The award also honors those who demonstrate a spirit of caring and provide inspiration to such individuals on a daily basis.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Elsa Baker, the only deaf student in her high school of 2,500 students, graduated in 1954 and a year later moved to Harrisburg with her husband Dave. After retiring from PennDOT, Elsa became involved with volunteering by managing basketball clubs for deaf children in Baltimore, York, and Harrisburg. In the past eight years, Elsa has extended her reach to those outside the deaf community, volunteering in the Pinnacle Health Hospice office and Pinnacle Health Homecare medical records office where she supports various administrative, communications, and marketing efforts. She currently volunteers approximately 100 hours per month.

“I was able to face the hearing world of Hospice armed only with a smile, positive attitude, sign language, and my signature pen and pencil,” says Elsa.

Additional service organizations Elsa is involved with include the Greater Harrisburg Association of the Deaf, Keystone Central Deaf Senior Citizens, Hebrew Association of the Deaf, Inc., Deaf and Hard of Hearing Senior Citizens, and Interstate Association of the Deaf.

About Essence of Humanity

There seems to be consensus that as a culture, we often can't identify enough role models. The intent of the Essence of Humanity Award is to elevate the stories of the inspirational role models that indeed do exist in our communities. The program began in 2001 when business and community leaders in South-Central Pennsylvania established the Essence of Humanity Award. The award is presented by participating organizations in collaboration with the Essence of Humanity program's steering committee, which evaluates the nominations. For more information, contact Robin Stauffer, Executive Director, at 717-293-4498, or visit the website at www.essenceofhumanity.org.

#