

## DEEDRA COFIELD

Dawsonville, GA

This year the miracle story of the team and perhaps of the entire group of 1,200 walkers was Deedra Cofield of Dawsonville. In April of 2007 Deedra was diagnosed with a benign brain tumor. Three months later she had surgery to remove the 4cm tumor (most never get over 1 cm). The doctors removed most of the tumor but had to leave a very small section. She had many complications during and after the surgery including a brain stem stroke and was in a coma on a ventilator and feeding tube for nine days. Deedra remained in rehab at Emory for six weeks. Her youngest son who was only 18-months old at the time actually forgot who she was during her long hospital stay but Deedra says that her 4-year old son showed a true example of unconditional love. She could not swallow or talk for months and suffered loss of hearing in her left ear, vocal cord paralysis and facial paralysis on the left side. Several months of physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy followed. In early 2008 Deedra went through six weeks of radiation in addition to eye surgery to repair cornea damage which was due to the facial paralysis. Deedra was finally able to return to work as a teacher in August 2008.

Fifteen months ago, Deedra's family was told by her neuro-surgeon that she may never walk again. One of her goals was to participate in the Atlanta 2-Day Walk for Breast Cancer with her friends this year. Her friend Amy Swafford says that Deedra needed to know that she could do it. Amy actually registered Deedra for this year's walk in September 2007 - just three months after the surgery to remove her brain tumor! Her latest MRI three weeks ago showed no re-growth of the tumor and actually some shrinkage had taken place.

In her own words, Deedra says:

*The doctor says he's not sure HOW the tumor had shrunk but I know! My God is an awesome God!!!*

*I would just like to thank my "Circle of Friends" team for believing in me and supporting me throughout the walk. Although I was only able to complete 8 of the 30 miles, you all helped me prove to myself that I am able! Thank God for what He has done for me and for what I believe He is still going to do!!! Of course, I could not stop without saying thank you so much to my dear husband, mom and dad and family. They have helped me through so much during this long journey - I could never tell you what it means to me to have you all "on my side". Last, but not least, thank you to my roomies, Amy Swafford and Jennifer Walls who walked beside me the whole time I walked. You both encouraged me and wouldn't let me give up. Thanks girls!!!*

