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Photo by Vito Signorile

VISIONS honorees (l-r), Cheryl Simmons-Oliver and Urban Health Plan representatives Paloma Hernandez and Dr. Gregory Rios.

VISIONS honors three workers at luncheon

BY VITO SIGNORILE

Three vital contributors were honored for their continuous work in the Bronx with a company who provides special service to the blind and visually impaired.

VISIONS, a Manhattan based non-profit organization that has been in service for 85 years, specializes in assisting blind individuals of all ages lead independent and active lives and also educate others by helping them understand the needs and capabilities of the visually impaired.

On Friday, March 11 at The Pine Restaurant, 1913 Bronxdale Avenue, VISIONS hosted their Bronx Advisory Board Annual Luncheon and honored three individuals who have contributed to the visually impaired residents of the Bronx through the help of VISIONS.

The luncheon consisted of members and workers of VISIONS, along with Bronx sponsors such as Bronx Chamber of Commerce CEO Lenny Caro, TD Bank, the office of Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and other distinguished guests.

The award recipients, Nelson Braswell, senior vice commander of Disabled American Veterans, Cheryl Simmons-Oliver, senior policy advisor for economic development for Congressman Jose Serrano, and Urban Health Plan, were all recognized by VISIONS executive director Nancy Miller for their outstanding work in the borough.

"We at VISIONS are not only successful because of our leadership, but we owe much of our success to those who help make our company that much better," Miller said. "Vision loss is a horrible issue that people of all ages deal with, but along with our supporters we are able to develop and improve solutions in helping those who are blind."

Followed by a large selection of appetizers, past honorees were welcomed and the 2011 award recipients were acknowledged and brought up to introduce themselves for those who were not familiar with them and explain how they have been able to assist VISIONS.

"It truly is an honor to be recognized like this," said Cheryl Simmons-Oliver. "My father had lost his sight and was without vision for 15 years before he passed away. I have some familiarity with having to go through caring for someone who was not capable of seeing. Loss of vision is very serious and it is my pleasure to work with VISIONS in assisting anyone who has dealt with or is dealing with it."

Urban Health Plan, reached out to thousands of blind patients and a total of over 243,000 patients in 2010.

"It is an unbelievable honor to be able to work with VISIONS," said Paloma Hernandez, president and CEO of Urban Health Plan. "We want to really help people of the Bronx receive the care that they deserve."