



rosecrance
life's waiting

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Press Release

17 women graduate from Rosecrance program to treat addiction and improve parenting skills

SAFE program helps women regain or retain custody of children

ROCKFORD -- One by one, graduates from Rosecrance's Project SAFE program took the microphone on Dec. 9 at Court Street United Methodist Church to list the things for which they are grateful.

The graduation took place during the 25th anniversary year for the program, which serves women who have lost custody of their children or are in danger of it because of their substance abuse. Rosecrance has offered the program without interruption since becoming a pilot site in 1986. The program is a collaboration between the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Illinois Department of Human Services/Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. SAFE stands for Substance Abuse Free Environment.

Gratitude abounded among the 17 graduates at the event Dec. 9 at the church, which now hosts the Rosecrance SAFE program and is the daycare location for participants' young children. Most graduates were in tears as they made their remarks.

Kathy: "I am so glad to be sober, right now, today."

Debbie: "I'm thankful for my children being back at home, for recovery and for happiness."

Sara: "I want to thank my mom and my family for never giving up on me."

Janet: "I'm thankful for my kids and that they were taken care of while I went through this. I'm grateful for a second chance."

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Graduate Michelle addressed her counselors and program supervisor Mary Ann Kelly of Rosecrance directly: "In the beginning, it was a love-hate relationship, but you have taught me a lot. You taught me how to live, and I don't know where I'd be without you. I am truly grateful today."

After 25 years and hundreds of graduates, Rosecrance is the largest Project SAFE site in the state. DCFS has hailed the program as one of the most successful of its kind in Illinois.

Treatment involves as many as 12 hours of intensive outpatient services each week and may go on for months. Participants may receive transportation to and from treatment if they need it, and their young children attend daycare at the same location. The women also receive parenting education and case management services from a Rosecrance outreach worker.

The treatment approach is tailored to meet the special needs of mothers who are struggling with addiction. The goal is for the women to get into recovery, regain custody of their children or end DCFS oversight of their families by succeeding in the program. A few women in the program are not DCFS-involved, but they, too, have substance abuse issues that affect their parenting.

Currently, 35 women are in the SAFE program and are working toward graduation, which is held twice a year for those who are successful in treatment.

Kelly and her staff led the 17 graduates through a ceremony that has been used dozens of times through the years for hundreds of women who have completed the program. After a candle-lighting ceremony, expressions of gratitude and family remarks, graduates received gifts and certificates from Kelly, primary counselor Julianna Sliger and outreach worker Sue Stevenson.

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About Rosecrance

Rosecrance is a private not-for-profit organization offering behavioral health services for more than 13,000 children, adolescents, adults and families each year. Rosecrance provides addiction treatment through inpatient and outpatient programs in the Rockford area and services at six satellite offices in Chicagoland. In addition, Rosecrance offers community mental health services in Rockford and Belvidere.