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Press Release

Rosecrance executive Mary Ann Abate named 'Woman of the Year' by Rockford magazine

Judges call Abate "dedicated," "tireless," "creative"

ROCKFORD – Mary Ann Abate, vice president and chief operating officer for mental health services for Rosecrance Health Network, was named "Woman of the Year" for 2012 by Rockford Woman magazine for her outstanding work in the mental health field.

In selecting Abate from among 40 nominees and five finalists for the award, the judges noted several programs Abate led or influenced that changed the lives of people with mental illness.

- She helped to create and supervised Winnebago County's mental health court, which has been recognized as one of the most successful programs of its type in the country. She has been on the leadership team for a similar court to serve juveniles involved in the justice system. That special courtroom will begin serving families this spring.
- She developed the contract between what is now the Rosecrance Ware Center (formerly Janet Wattles Center) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for Winnebago and Boone counties.
- She helped to create and implement crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers in Winnebago County who deal with individuals in mental health crisis. Almost 300 officers have been trained.
- In her role at Rosecrance, Abate is helping to create new programming to serve individuals with dual diagnoses of mental health and substance use disorders, as well as new programs for women who have suffered trauma.

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Announcing the honor in the March/April issue of Rockford Woman, the judges wrote: “Mary Ann Abate has dedicated herself to bringing mental health issues to the forefront of our community for more than 40 years . . . She wholeheartedly understands what is needed to provide and support mental health workers for the future. We applaud her for her tireless efforts and thank her for reminding all of us why mental health is important to our community.”

Abate is a licensed social worker with a master’s degree in community mental health. She is involved in numerous local and state boards and commissions on issues related to mental health, including the Mental Health Advisory Board for Illinois.

The magazine quoted Rosecrance President/CEO Philip W. Eaton, who said of Abate: “Mary Ann has compassion and cares deeply for the people we serve, and she treats everyone – from co-workers to clients – with the same kindness, respect and unconditional regard.”

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About Rosecrance

Rosecrance is a private not-for-profit organization offering behavioral health services for more than 14,000 children, adolescents, adults and families each year. Rosecrance provides addiction treatment through inpatient and outpatient programs in Rockford, IL, and services at six satellite offices in the Chicago area. Rosecrance offers community mental health services in Rockford and Belvidere, IL. The organization was founded in 1916. (More information at rosecrance.org.)

