



JEFFERSON COUNTY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

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OhioRISE's De Matteis named Professional of the Year in Stark County

CANTON – Jefferson County Educational Services Center (JCESC) OhioRISE care coordinator Lauren De Matteis has been part of the program almost since its inception two years ago and reaching out to connect services with children in need of them. On May 3 she was recognized by her peers.

For her work with OhioRISE, De Matteis was named Professional of the Year by the Stark Mental Health and Addiction Recovery board (Stark MHAR) and the National Association for Mental Illness in Stark County during their yearly Notable Names in Behavioral Health breakfast. OhioRISE (Resilience through Integrated Systems and Excellence) is a Medicaid managed care program for children and youth with complex behavioral health and multisystem needs in Jefferson, Monroe, Stark, Tuscarawas, Harrison, Columbiana, Belmont and Carroll Counties and operated by the Jefferson County Educational Service Center. OhioRISE was formed to coordinate resources and put families in touch with what is available.

De Matteis said there were several awards given that morning. She was nominated by Ashley Covey, a local therapist who currently operates an intensive outpatient program for behavioral health at Sunrise Vista Behavioral Hospital. This nomination related the effort De Matteis puts into her cases to ensure clients are linked to the resources they need, as well as her diligence in staying in contact with providers to ensure quality care.

De Matteis said two of her clients had gone through Covey's program.

"We coordinated their care," she said. "She nominated me because of the work that we did on those cases."

In the nomination, Covey said De Matteis considers her clients' biological, psychological, social and spiritual needs.

"It was really great to be acknowledged in front of my peers for the hard work that I've done. Having a fellow professional feel the need to nominate me and that she felt I was deserving about that felt really good," De Matteis said.

According to Allyson Rey, director of marketing and community relations with Stark MHAR, 40 professionals were recognized this year.

"We honor all who received nominations for their work. Other categories are Advocate, Innovation, and Peer," Rey said.

De Matteis began her career in the mental health field in 2015 and has worked at agencies such as the Domestic Violence Project, Inc. in Canton and Massillon, Stark County Children Services, Jobs for Ohio's Graduates in Summit County, and COMPASS Rape Crisis resource in Canton. She has provided support for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, and she has taught General Education Degree classes for young people and assisted them in finding jobs. De Matteis now works with youth and young adults in Tuscarawas and Stark Counties.

De Matteis began work at JCESC September of 2022, shortly after OhioRISE's inception. She said she saw the potential of the program to fill a valuable coordinating niche.

"This is where behavioral health is going in Ohio," she said.

She applies the "wraparound" approach of wrapping a young client with needed services. She noted the importance of coordinating those services to make certain everyone's duties mesh for the best results.

"When someone needs something, I like to help people find things. That's one of the things that made me want to do this type of a job."

She recalled the early days of contributing to the formation of OhioRISE procedures through JCESC.

"It was a lot of being able to adapt to change," she said, adding the administrators proved open to new ideas. De Matteis saw that JCESC's OhioRISE was responsible for serving a large area, and services are less available in smaller counties. She helped to hold resource meetings to learn about what options are out there.

"So that everyone that works for us has the same information, so we know who does counseling where. Where to go to get homeless shelters. That type of thing," she said. "That was something many of my coworkers were really thankful we implemented, because if you don't live in a particular county, you don't know what there is that exists there or how to help your family get services."

In her work as care coordinator, De Matteis takes an empathic approach.

"I prefer to work with teenagers and young adults," she said. "It's a lot of rapport building and meeting people where they are. I really connect well with teenagers and young adults just from my own lived experience."

De Matteis tries to share her clients' perspective, adding that it is easy to make youthful mistakes and important to have access to supports. She said young people can be shocked by the adult expectations and consequences they can experience once they turn 18.

She currently works with 12 individuals. Her caseload is often intensive care coordination, with weekly face-to-face appointments.

De Matteis has enrolled in a master's degree program in social work so she might expand her qualifications to serve others.

Anyone interested in becoming a Care Coordinator, please apply at <https://jcescvla.bamboohr.com/careers/23>.

To learn more about OhioRISE, call 740-792-4011, email ohiorise.info@jcesc.org or visit OhioRISE online at <https://www.jcesc.k12.oh.us/CareManagementEntity.aspx>

Photo Cutline: OhioRISE care coordinator Lauren De Matteis was recognized May 3 as Professional of the Year by the Stark Mental Health and Addiction Recovery board and the National Association for Mental Illness in Stark County during their yearly Notable Names in Behavioral Health breakfast. She is dedicated to OhioRISE's mission of connecting children and youth with the services they need.

