



Press Release

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ATTENTION: Reporters, Assignment desks

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Rodine Honored at National Conference

Sharon Rodine was honored for her three decades of advocacy on youth issues at a national gathering of advocates this week. Rodine, Director of Youth Initiatives at the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA), is the first recipient of a national award bearing her name.

The "Sharon Rodine Pioneer Award" was presented during the national Healthy Teen Network Conference this month in recognition of Rodine's leadership on behalf of youth development and teen pregnancy prevention for the past three decades.

Former Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack was the keynote speaker.

"Sharon is a true pioneer for her work supporting youth," said Pat Paluzzi, President/CEO of the Healthy Teen Network. "As the first director of our organization and now throughout three decades, she has focused her talents and energy on making a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of America's youth."

The award was presented during the organization's 30th Anniversary Celebration on October 22-24, 2009, in Tampa, Florida. Rodine was the first executive director of the Healthy Teen Network in the mid 1980s when it was called the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention (NOAPPP). During her tenure as director, she moved the organization from Texas to Washington, DC, increased its visibility at the national level, expanded partnerships with national and state coalitions, and co-authored two books on teen pregnancy prevention.

Rodine is an Iowa State University alumna, the daughter of Ames and Green Hills residents, the late Virgil Miller and his wife Cheryl and the daughter-in-law of long time Des Moines residents, the late Earl and Alice Rodine. Her work on youth, health and prevention issues has included directing 4-H/Youth Development programs with the Iowa State Extension Service; the Downtown Branch YWCA in Houston, TX; the statewide teen pregnancy and parenting organization in Texas; and serving as a teen pregnancy prevention consultant with the Oklahoma State Department of Health. For the past 15 years, she has served as the Youth Initiatives Director with the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, where she has created numerous youth development and teen pregnancy prevention initiatives, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) projects focused on promoting effective, evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs and innovative youth development strategies.

She coordinated the CDC-funded HEART of OKC Project, which designed the Youth Asset Study research project, now conducted by the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Last year, she was one of the national leaders invited to participate in CDC's Expert Panel on Youth Development.

Rodine was a member of the initial State and Local Action Committee of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and, most recently, was a panelist for their May event at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. She was instrumental in expanding the Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT national data collection effort to include data on births to older teens (18-19), to more accurately reflect the scope

of the issue. Currently, she directs one of nine state projects that are part of a national CDC-funded initiative to promote science-based approaches to teen pregnancy prevention.

“This award is a tremendous honor,” said Rodine, “but the work continues. The sad fact is that way too many young people are having babies before they are prepared to handle the financial, physical, and emotional responsibilities of parenting and supporting a family. We need a lot more adults encouraging young people to complete their education and finish growing up themselves, before they become parents. I thank the Healthy Teen Network for this award and for its national leadership on this important issue.”

About Healthy Teen Network

Healthy Teen Network is a national membership organization founded on the belief that youth can make responsible decisions about their reproductive health when they have complete, accurate, culturally relevant information, skills, resources and support. Healthy Teen Network makes a difference in the lives of teens and young families by providing leadership and serving as a comprehensive educational resource to professionals and organizations working in all areas of adolescent reproductive health at the national and grass roots levels. Healthy Teen Network is also among the leading advocates for public policy protecting the reproductive rights of teens. More information can be found at www.healthyteennetwork.org.

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