



*Janet Fiore receives Mary E. Switzer Award from PRA President Rick Walters.*

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#### Janet Fiore, CEO of The Sierra Group Wins Mary E. Switzer Award

Harrisburg, PA, April 9, 2005 Janet Fiore, CEO of The Sierra Group, received the Mary E. Switzer award as a woman who has distinguished herself in the field of rehabilitation, and has made significant contributions to that pursuit. "Every few years the awards committee for the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association finds a leader who has proved her worth through the continued demonstration of compassion that reaches beyond the call of duty" said PRA president, Rick Walters as he honored Fiore for her ongoing leadership and commitment to assisting individuals with disabilities in their vocational endeavors.

In her acceptance speech, Fiore, CEO of The Sierra Group, a national disability management consultancy revealed publicly for the first time her own recent rehabilitation after breast cancer and the death of the bones in both of her hips. She cited her own respect for the legendary work of Mary E. Switzer, and thanked her many professional mentors who nominated her for this honor while pointing out in her own humorous style that "winning this award is the only pleasant surprise I've had recently".

As she made her way to the podium with the aid of a walker, Fiore called to her staff at The Sierra Group to join her in celebrating the honor. She credited her team in a moving delivery in which she gave thanks to each of them for "literally carrying me through the past 8 months." Fiore, a well-known keynote presenter delivered a motivating and emotional speech as she accepted the Switzer. She brought her colleagues to tears when she spoke of her recent transitory experience of shifting from service provider to recipient stating that "Two weeks ago I was wheeled in on a stretcher to Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital where I normally arrive carrying a briefcase, ready to help others." She pointed out that "receiving is hard work too."

In closing, Fiore received a standing ovation as she delivered a 'Switzer like' call to action to both

herself and her peers calling for each of us to be 'stronger than ever' as the field of vocational rehabilitation battles for its autonomy in the DC battleground of federal funding. Mary E. Switzer was responsible for changing the legislative framework for the field of rehabilitation in 1954 when she influenced the passage of *Public Law 565*, which increased federal funding for vocational rehabilitation by fifty percent. Switzer is most remembered for her unceasing selflessness and her overarching dedication to all of humanity. Dr. Ralph Pacinelli, of the US Department of Education, a professional friend to both Switzer and Fiore supported Fiore's nomination for the Award stating that "Janet is a quick study of complex issues and she knows how to craft realistic and relevant plans and strategies ... Miss Switzer would be pleased."

Fiore, CEO, consultant, trainer and speaker is often described as 'being a mentor' and 'speaking from a perspective of strength.' She is sought out for her work locally, regionally and nationally. She lives her life's passion through keynote speeches on leadership, diversity and surviving change.

Fiore closed by reminding her beloved colleagues that life is best lived when living in the moment stating that 'there's no where else I'd rather be right now'.

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