

With book signings and all, common sense lessons still true

*Local author
looks back
on the year*

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As one local author spent the last year with signings and appearances at special events, she's learned one lesson contained within her own book.

That bit of wisdom is to "stay focused on what's in your heart and what makes you happy," said Mary Anne Brown, whose motivational work, "Rise Above," has been on store shelves for about year.

"Rise Above: Down-to-earth thinking from Wisconsin," is meant to inspire readers to improve their lives. It offers common sense tips for overcoming obstacles to happiness and success.

Brown, a Waunakee native, said her focus recently turned to book sales and marketing.

"My business slowed down," she said. "I took a step back and realized that



MARY ANNE BROWN

wasn't making me feel as thrilled every day."

Instead, she was more successful when she turned her focus to how the book has helped others.

That's why she wrote it in the first place, she said, and since it landed on store shelves in September 2010, she has donated \$1 from every sale - \$2 for every audio book sale - to charity. Retailers have chosen the receiving charities.

After a little over a year, the book is nearing the \$5,000 mark in charitable funds raised. Locally, "Rise Above" has raised funds for Waunakee Neighborhood Connection through retail sales at Ooh La La Resale Boutique, M-N-M's Coffee

House, Walgreens and Piggy Wiggly. More than 20 other charitable organizations have also benefited from sales, including Lake Melvin Yacht Club in Dane, Dane County United Way and area food pantries.

In the year's time, Brown, who also works as a technical project manager, has traveled throughout the Dane County area making appearances. She now plans to expand that area and to include motivational speaking to her lineup.

Asked if Brown has plans for future books, she said definitely.

"I have a long way to go," she said about her next book, adding that she has an idea for it.

"I'm working on some projects to help teens, to give teens some tools," she said. "I think it's a shame that it took me this long to focus on the things that could turn your life around."

Brown said she is also working to become less shy. Next week, Nov. 23, she will appear on the Today Morning Show in Green Bay on NBC Channel 26 at about 6:50 a.m.

Do you know someone who should be