Unlocking the door to hope
Justice is not three hots and a cot. Justice is having your own key.

-Kip Tiernan, Rosie’s Place Founder
A simple key can have so many different associations. Literally, it is the means of preventing access to something worth protecting, something precious. For homeless guests at Rosie’s Place, a key may hold their belongings in a locker or in a suitcase; for our newly housed guests, it can open the door to their first home. But the symbolic meaning is what captures the imagination: a key signifies entry to a new tomorrow, an untraveled path, a series of small victories, hopefulness.

At Rosie's Place, our committed staff works every day to help our guests reclaim the best parts of themselves and unlock the door to a life of healing and promise. Through long and bitter winter nights, the soft rain of early spring, overheated city streets of summer and the chill of late fall, we are here for thousands of forgotten women—always, in every season. We believe the unique combination of effective programs, free basic services and unconditional love and acceptance is our key to success, one that has allowed us to carry on our vital mission for 41 years.

The image of a key deeply resonates with the women we serve and, throughout this report, as you read about events and accomplishments of the past year, you will see key-based artwork created by our guests to symbolize their hopes, dreams and values. Because of your sustained and generous support of our work, the women we serve can dream. They can hold in their hands a key to a better life, and you have helped make that possible.
Dear Friends,

Often, it’s the little things that conspire to pull our guests down into hunger and homelessness. Higher gas prices? For some of our women, that means the end of their ability to commute to a job beyond the reach of public transportation. Higher food prices? A weekly visit to the grocery store becomes a monthly one. School vacation? Without school lunch and breakfast, the kids are home and hungry. A welcome growth spurt for a teenager means shoes that no longer fit and a coat whose sleeves are three inches short of his wrists. A wedding or a funeral means scrounging for a gift or decent clothes.

In the best of times, our guests work hard to make ends meet; in the meander times, they count on Rosie’s Place even more. From food programs like our Dining Room and Food Pantry to material assistance and advice provided through our Overnight, Advocacy and Outreach programs, we aim to help women meet their biggest needs, right now. Our Women’s Education Center, Self-Advocacy and Legal programs work with women around longer-term needs, to escape the constant deprivation many of our guests face.

Rosie’s Place knows that we must continue providing services our guests depend on, as well as expand and adapt these services to meet our guests’ needs. In the midst of an ambitious strategic plan, we’ve sent teams of skilled advocates, lawyers, and housing and job search workers to assist women living in public housing or whose children attend public school. We’ve expanded our Outreach team to include a staffer who solely focuses on our guests with serious chronic medical conditions. Our new offices in Dudley Square provide us with the room to grow in our Legal and Arts programs. We’ve truly begun to realize our vision that Rosie’s Place services are available to any poor or homeless woman—whether she crosses our threshold on Harrison Avenue or not. Kip’s vision of a world where all our sisters could find respite and refuge has gotten a little clearer—and we hope a little closer.

Much of this annual report speaks about the metaphorical keychain that Rosie’s Place holds: keys to hope, keys to opportunity, keys to love. And you have in your hand one of the most important keys of all—the key to our future. We are able to undertake these efforts because of your generous support. You have our great thanks for being an important part of our family. You are truly the key!

Sincerely,

Isabelle Stilger
Board Chair

Sue Marsh
Executive Director
All year long, talented advocates assist guests looking to make a change in their lives. We offer one-on-one help with the most pressing issues, which may include finding a place to live, a job, health care or drug treatment. The advocates look forward to the summer when they can offer guests a short respite from their complex issues at the annual summer beach trip. Hosted by St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Hanover, the outing to Humarock Beach is a favorite day for many women. Before they arrived at the beach, guests were treated to a breakfast at the church and provided with bathing suits and towels. The women enjoyed an afternoon of swimming, relaxing and soaking up the sun and then returned to the church for a BBQ dinner, the perfect end to a special day.

The hot months bring people out to the street, increasing the number of women who meet us via our Outreach Van. Monday through Friday, we visit underserved neighborhoods in Dorchester and Roxbury and offer women vital resources and referral information as well as necessary items such as socks, toiletries, blankets, sandwiches and water. By the end of summer, the van staff was connecting with more than 500 women a month. Outreach efforts continued at the newly-established Rosie’s Place satellite office at the Franklin Field public housing development in Dorchester, where we are bringing services to women who aren't able to come to us at 889 Harrison Avenue. The tenants at Franklin Field are predominantly single moms, unemployed or underemployed and very poor. We offer on-site advocacy assistance, long-term in-home support to maintain their housing, family law services and a career counselor.

In July, Rosie’s Place hosted its first-ever Self-Advocacy Retreat at the Connors Center in Dover, MA. The retreat allowed 18 women to rest, enjoy the outdoors and make new friends and connections. Over the two days, guests took part in activities that included crafts, flower design, fitness and outdoor recreation and personal growth and development. For many women, it was the first time they had ever stayed in a country setting, where they were surrounded by the new experience of chirping crickets and bright stars in the night sky. Throughout the year, the Self-Advocacy department focuses on other activities that foster growth in guests whose lives have become more stable, including self-defense/de-escalation classes, skill-building workshops, a walking group and a community garden at Rosie’s Place.
A key to new beginnings
A key to opportunity
As we have done in previous election cycles, Rosie’s Place invited candidates for statewide office to meet with guests prior to the 2014 elections. The candidates, including Governor Charlie Baker, Attorney General Maura Healey and Treasurer Suzanne Bump, spoke on topics important to our guests, who then asked questions, in many cases revealing a strong command of issues relating to housing, job creation and health care. In addition, the Public Policy department created a guide with information on more than 22 candidates’ campaign priorities affecting poor and low-income women, registered to vote more than 150 women, and successfully supported ballot question #4, which mandated earned sick time for certain employees in Massachusetts. The Public Policy program works to represent the interests of Rosie’s Place guests at the State House and empowers guests to be actively involved in advocacy.

In September we welcomed students of all ages back to the classrooms of our Women’s Education Center (WEC). They found a full slate of pre-ESOL/literacy, literacy and ESOL classes offered five days a week during mornings, afternoons and evenings. Women who have never received schooling can attend classes that prepare them with the basics to start learning a new language and opening the door to opportunity in the United States. Tutors are available to improve conversation skills and enhance classroom learning. Students now come from all over the world: Haiti, Dominican Republic, Guatemala and other Spanish-speaking countries, China, Cape Verde and other African countries. Rosie’s Place would not be able to make these free classes available for 375 women each semester without the dedication of a corps of as many as 100 volunteer teachers and tutors.

For our guests, the holiday season can be especially difficult. There is extra pressure to provide gifts and big meals for family, and those not connected to family can find themselves quite lonely. With this in mind, we make holiday celebrations special at Rosie’s Place. Thanks to our generous donors, we have gifts for just about every woman we come in contact with. And meals are an event on both Thanksgiving and Christmas. We open the Dining Room early for a hot breakfast and there are festive decorations—especially at Christmas—as well as tablecloths and flowers on each table. A local jazz singer, who performs every year, keeps the fun going all afternoon. We usually have around 150 women join us at midday. At dinnertime we serve a traditional holiday meal—turkey at Thanksgiving and ham at Christmas. We strive to create an upbeat atmosphere of good company, food and music. We also offer guests a range of items well-suited for holiday meals at our Rosie’s Place Groceries food pantry, and many women take advantage during this season.
A highlight of Rosie's Place 40th anniversary celebration was a mural dedication in December. Rosie's Place collaborated with the students of the Mayor's Mural Crew to create this public art to honor four local women notable for their social justice work: Melnea Cass, a civil rights activist and force for positive change in Roxbury in the 1930s; Frieda Garcia, a longtime community activist in the South End and Roxbury and 20-year director of United South End Settlements; Judy Norsigian, an original member of the collective that authored Our Bodies, Ourselves; and Kip Tiernan, Rosie's Place founder and social justice advocate. The 12’ x 24’ mural is affixed to the exterior back wall of Rosie's Place's auxiliary office space at 47 Thorndike Street facing Melnea Cass Boulevard. At the same time, a quilt and other art created by guests within the arts@rosiesplace program were displayed at the Dudley branch of the Boston Public Library and all around Rosie's Place.

The winter months bring new challenges for homeless women. It is not safe to spend hours outside when the temperatures drop. Beds become even more scarce, making finding shelter every night a full-time job. In response, in our Overnight Program we extend our guests’ stays beyond the usual 21 days, allowing for 20 women to be with us from Thanksgiving through the New Year. We enhance the already homelike atmosphere of the Overnight living area with decorations and a tree, and we offer special foods, distribute holiday gifts and plan festive activities to create a sense of community and positive holiday experiences. On every day of the year, the Overnight Program is open to give a woman a warm, safe bed; three meals a day; and enough time to get her footing so she can best make a plan for what comes next.

Beauty was in full bloom at Rosie's Place on an afternoon in February when more than 100 guests attended “A Day to Love Yourself” held in the Dining Room. Designed to pamper the mind, body and spirit, activities included massage, aromatherapy, makeovers, hair styling, glamour photos, journaling and expressive arts, made possible through the donated services of beauty and health practitioners. This annual event is a favorite of the guests of Rosie's Place, whose daily struggles with poverty and homelessness leave little time to focus on themselves. “Rosie’s Place guests don’t only need food and shelter—they should also be able to nurture their bodies and souls,” said organizer Andrew Maggiore.
A key to security
A key to success
In its growing efforts to connect with underserved women in the community, Rosie’s Place has built relationships with elementary and middle schools in underserved areas of Roxbury and Dorchester. Our Community Collaborative provides outreach, housing assistance, support and advocacy services to women whose children attend the Orchard Gardens, Holmes and Shaw schools, with another school to be added in the coming months. We have also made groceries from our food pantry available for parents picking up their students. With this on-site presence at the schools, we are better able to connect families to assistance and to our services and those of other community agencies.

Every April, Rosie’s Place welcomes the occasion of National Volunteer Month to acknowledge the more than 2,400 individuals who give of their time and talents each year. Annually, volunteers contribute more than 60,000 hours of service, the equivalent of 29 paid employees. They contribute by teaching English, preparing and serving meals, bringing a group to cater a meal and leading arts workshops. We would not be Rosie’s Place without our volunteers. One of our longtime volunteers—Ginny “Dolly” Gibson, who is visually impaired—was honored for her more than five-year commitment to playing the piano and singing in the Dining Room every Friday.

Over time, the stabilization workers who offer in-home services to previously homeless women recognized that many of these guests also suffered serious or chronic health conditions.

The Community Health Worker (CHW) Program began this year to address this. Many of our guests are outside the health care system—because they feel they have been previously mistreated, or they don’t speak English, or they don’t have the ability to meet the demands of the medical establishment. Our health worker connects guests with health insurance and explains coverage; helps them find a provider and treatment program; accompanies guests to medical appointments, advocating for them and interpreting information; provides translation services and access to transportation to appointments; and, generally, offers consistent support for follow through of medical recommendations. We have already found that the health results are better when our guests are supported and encouraged to stay in touch with their providers.
**Programs and Expenditures**

**Food Programs:** $2,355,464
Dining Room serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and the Groceries program allows guests to “shop” for fresh and non-perishable items themselves.

**Development:** $1,065,281

**Finance/Administration:** $326,228

**Public Policy:** $206,404
Education and training to involve our guests in the legislative process.

**Advocacy:** $3,800,006
One-on-one housing and employment assistance, legal counsel, wellness care, and homelessness prevention and other community outreach services. Self-Advocacy services engage and empower guests to become their own best advocates.

**Women’s Education:** $849,440
Free ESOL, literacy and computer courses taught by volunteer teachers and tutors within a familiar and supportive environment.

**Women’s Craft Cooperative:** $360,831
Social enterprise providing guests with income, work skills and self-confidence.

**Emergency Shelter:** $725,635
Twenty-bed shelter where women find respite from the streets while they work with advocates to identify more permanent solutions.
Rosie’s Place relies solely on private support and does not accept any city, state or federal government funding. In fiscal year 2015, $7,720,240 in operating support was raised. In addition, $2,105,863 was received through in-kind contributions of clothing, food, toiletries and volunteer hours.

Net assets of property, equipment and cash were equal to $19,330,224 at fiscal year end.

Please call the Development Office at 617.442.9322 to request a complete audited financial statement.
The Year at a Glance

In FY2015, Rosie’s Place, with the help of generous donors, made an impact in the lives of 12,000 women in the following ways:

100,500
We served 100,500 nutritionally-balanced breakfasts, lunches and dinners to guests and their children, an increase of 9% over FY2014.

21,000
Women shopping at Rosie’s Place Groceries made more than 21,000 visits.

1,100
Rosie’s Place’s Advocacy staff accommodated almost 1,100 appointments with guests each month.

304
We provided stays for 304 women in our Overnight shelter.

97%
Through our Outreach activities, 97% of guests receiving monthly in-home supports were able to stay housed and break the cycle of homelessness.

500
Our Outreach Van provided services and support to an average of 500 women per month on the streets of Boston.

1,082
At Franklin Field, 1,082 residents participated in Rosie’s Place-led activities.

375
The Women’s Education Center provided 375 women each semester with free classes and tutoring.

1,500
Close to 1,500 women, 281 of whom had not participated before, took part in 289 on- and off-site arts workshops.

650
The Legal Program provided more than 650 consultations and 110 guests received full representation.

2,400
Approximately 2,400 volunteers provided nearly 60,000 hours of service, the equivalent of 30 full-time employees.

Rosie’s Place relies solely on the generous support of individuals, foundations and corporations and does not accept any city, state or federal funding. We are proud to ensure that 86 cents of every dollar raised goes directly to essential services for poor and homeless women.
Founders Circle

Named in honor of Rosie’s Place founder Kip Tiernan, members of the Founder’s Circle contributed $1,000 or more during the fiscal year. Just as Kip depended on a small group of volunteers and their $250 contribution to open Rosie’s Place in 1974, so do we depend on the consistent generosity and involvement of these individuals to provide help and hope to thousands of women each year. We are very grateful for their support and dedication to our mission.

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Designates donors whose support has spanned 10 consecutive fiscal or calendar years at the Founder’s Circle level.
Rosie’s Place accepts no funding from the city, state or federal government, therefore we depend on the support of our many generous corporations, foundations and civic groups. Our organizational supporters range from religious organizations to corporate employee giving programs to foundation grants. All are vital to our ability to provide a comprehensive range of services to poor and homeless women. The following list represents those who contributed $1,000 or more this past fiscal year. We appreciate their continued generosity and support.
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MFI Engineered Components, Inc.
MFS Investment Management
Microsoft
The Middlemead Foundation
Mistral Bistro
MLS Property Information Network, Inc.
John C. Morrison & Eunice B. Morrison Charitable Foundation
Morse Brothers, Inc.
Murphy & King, P.C.
Mutual of America
Nardella & Taylor, LLP
National Grid Service
Nazareth Literary & Benevolent Institution
NECN
Neighborhood Health Plan
New Balance Foundation
New England Coffee Company
The New England School of English
New England School of Law
Newport Creative Communications
Newton Highlands Congregational Church
Noble and Greenough School
Nolan Sheehan Patten LLP
Northeastern University
Novack Family Foundation
Curtis O’Hara Foundation
OMAM
The OutReach Foundation
Oxford Fund, Inc.
Packard Design
The Robert Treat Paine Association
Parish of the Epiphany
Patients Like Me, Inc.
Pearson Education
The Pennygael Foundation, Inc.
Joseph Perini Memorial Foundation
The Perpetual Trust For Charitable Giving, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program
Albert E. Pillsbury Trust
Pinkham Busny LLP
Pinnacle Financial Group
Pioneer Investments
Pixability, Inc.
Trust U/W Fannie B. Pratt
PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP
Project Bread
Morris M. Rand Memorial Foundation
Reading Rotary Club
Regis College
Robert Reiser & Co., Inc.
Retail Therapy
Rickard Family Foundation
Rinet Co., LLC
Rodman & Rodman P.C.
Retirement
Ropes & Gray, LLP
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Rosie’s Place is pleased to have the following individuals serving on its Board of Directors for FY2016

Christina Gordon
Lynn Kaplan
Michele May
Deborah Pasculano
Diana Pisciotta
Kelly Race
Peter Rosenberg
Isabelle Stillger
Ann Marie Viglione
Michelle Wu

Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that helps poor and homeless women maintain their dignity, seek opportunity and find security in their lives.