Rosie's Place Strives to Meet Guests' Growing Legal Needs

An ever-changing political environment can cause our guests’ lives to become even more uncertain. Access to care and other benefits has become more complicated, immigration policies have changed and deportation looms for women we serve from Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Sudan. Locally, the threat of eviction due to rising rents and utility bills is a constant reality for our guests. As a result of this growing need for a legal approach to these issues and more, Rosie’s Place continues to refine the mission and expand the scope of our Legal Program.

“Our Legal Program is a critical component of the advocacy and direct services we offer poor and homeless women,” says Rosie’s Place President Sue Marsh. “On urgent issues like housing, immigration and child custody, poor women need the special expertise and skills of our team. As a community center, we want to be sure that our guests can get help with a range of needs, and legal help is one of the most important.”

Our Legal Program staff (see Q & A on this page) oversees the services of well-known community agencies and pro bono providers and provides direct assistance, as well. They direct a program that has grown to now offer two different clinics addressing issues that are of primary concern to our guests: housing, immigration, criminal offender record information (CORI), debt and family law. A general advice and referral clinic, conducted by our staff, is held twice weekly. According to Legal Program Manager Jennifer Howard, this clinic provides a safe, confidential space for a guest to express her needs, and is a good first step to help her determine if she has an actual legal issue, get some initial advice and then plan what to do next.

“We are seeing a bit of panic from women, who have been feeling that they can’t trust that the government resources they’ve come to rely on will still be there for them,” Jen says. "Housing, immigration, CORI and debt clinics run on a set day every week. The family law clinic is held once a month, as is the CORI clinic conducted by Ropes & Gray. The consistency of the schedule makes it easier for guests to access help at reliable times.

A spectrum of services

The Legal Program has for many years brought top legal practitioners on-site to provide the best possible help to guests. Greater Boston Legal Services offers direct legal assistance on housing and family law matters, including evictions, divorces and child custody issues. Rosie’s Place has recently doubled the Irish International Immigrant Center's hours so they can provide more guests with a range of services on immigration matters, from applying for citizenship to gaining legal status in the U.S. In the Ropes & Gray debt clinic, a team of volunteer attorneys work with women to help them get a handle on what they owe and to develop strategies for payment. The CORI clinic helps guests obtain and access CORI reports and petition to administratively seal applicable records.

Finally, volunteer attorney Liz Baum assists staff in the general advice and referral clinic.

The Legal Program also serves residents who utilize our satellite location at Franklin Field (a housing development in Dorchester), offering weekly general advice and referral clinics and Know Your Rights presentations on topics such as leases and family law. They also host talks outlining their services from various local legal service providers, such as Casa Myrna and Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee.

In an effort to provide vital information to the community, the Legal Program recently developed and distributed to local organizations a series of three 30-40 second animated vignettes that convey important messages and questions for guests and others concerned about their rights as immigrants.

Using minimal words to convey the message, the videos cover “Right to not open the door without a warrant,” “Right to remain silent” and “Make a safety plan.” You can view the videos on the Rosie’s Place YouTube channel.

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* Rosie’s Place President Sue Marsh

Susan first came to Rosie’s Place looking for a home about 10 years ago, and we’ve seen her frequently ever since. Over the years, she’s visited our food pantry, taken classes in the iPad lab, received care from the Wellness Center, and attended weekly domestic violence and self-esteem groups offered by our Advocacy department. “Women don’t realize how much help they can get,” she says, “It’s been so important to me.”

About three years ago, Susan, who emigrated to the United States as a student from Zimbabwe, went to a local lawyer for help with her green card. She had never received renewal paperwork and wanted to make sure she was still eligible to work. That attorney started reinstatement proceedings and Susan received a work permit while her application was pending. Then the Department of Homeland Security discovered the South African lawyer was not licensed to practice in the U.S. and sealed her and confiscated her client files.

Confused and afraid, Susan turned to the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIIC) attorney who was on-site each week at Rosie’s Place. She first told Susan where she could retrieve her confiscated documents, which was a great relief. The lawyer was able to learn that Susan hadn’t received her renewal forms because she had moved without a forwarding address, and that reasonable explanation moved the slow process forward. For more than two years, the IIIC worked with Susan to keep her application on track.

Now, with her active green card in hand, Susan is looking toward citizenship. She says, once again, Rosie’s Place was there for her through this ordeal. “It wasn’t for Rosie’s Place, I would have been in a lot of trouble. I couldn’t afford any more legal help, and it was such a blessing to find the services here. I wish I had gone to the IIIC first!”

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*[Jennifer Howard, Legal Program Manager]*
Dear Friends:

When people first learn about Rosie’s Place, there are usually these takeways: we serve only women, we are heavily dependent on volunteer help and, perhaps most distinctively, we do not accept government money. Ever since our beginning, we have gone without federal, state or city funding, preferring to depend upon the generosity of private donors. As Ruth McCambridge noted in the Nonprofit Quarterly about our founder, Kip Tiernan:

“It was the Catholic Workers movement and Dorothy Day in New York City who influenced her to simply ‘be there’ for homeless people. Respect, listening, and building a community of mutuality became mantras as she went on to found Rosie’s Place in an abandoned supermarket in 1974. She also took another lesson from Dorothy Day—do not take money from ‘the man’. As a result, a critical philosophical principle of Rosie’s Place, to this day, is to refuse all city, state, and government funding.”

Despite the many changes Rosie’s Place has embraced and endured over its 44-year history, we have kept to those three major tenets: serving women, depending upon volunteers and rejecting government funding.

As you come to learn about the services we offer and the women we serve, it becomes clear why we refuse to take government funding as a source of support.

This choice enables us to take on efforts/actions/stands without concern or constraint imposed by a funding source. Rosie’s Place has always preferred to chart its own courses, with no strings attached. This translates to how we serve our guests. We look to our Board of volunteer leaders to fulfill a mission that stays true to our philosophy and core values.

This freedom enables us to serve women who do not disclose information that government funders require, namely: identity, citizenship status, social security numbers. In these panicky times, that is more important than ever. For guests who view such disclosures as threats to their carefully guarded privacy, it enables us to continue to serve, no matter what.

It enables us to provide services without requiring a particular outcome or within a specific time frame. This means that one of our advocates can talk with a guest as long as the guest wants—whether it’s ten minutes or two hours. It means that a student in our Women’s Education Center can attend classes for as many semesters as she needs to learn English. It means a guest can visit Rosie’s Place anytime—and as frequently as she wants.

We have been fortunate that there are so many in our community who understand and support our mission—and who help us put out guests first. They are supporters who value our expertise, familiarity and compassion and do not presume to skewer their judgment over the lived experience of the women we serve.

In the same way that we continue to serve women who have nowhere else to turn, and count on the goodness of ordinary people to share the hard work in creating a place which offers healthy food and safe shelter, we continue to find our financial support at the hands of our loyal community. Neil Donovon, the former head of the National Coalition for the Homeless, said of Kip:

“She really had no stomach for people plying the homeless without some type of fellow-through that would improve the condition of the unhoused. She railed against politicians and bureaucrats for making empty promises; or unfunded mandates and against homeless advocates who put their own organization or agenda first.”

“We’re proud to be the same type of place that Kip founded in 1974, and proud we’ve won your help and care. Thank you for your commitment to us — just the way we are.

With love,

Sue Marcel

Tiernan Memorial a Reality

Kip Tiernan left an indelible mark on her adopted city through her unflinching vision and unwavering commitment to social justice. This fall a memorial in Back Bay will recognize our founder’s contributions toward creating better lives for Boston’s poor and forgotten. Situated near Kip’s office at Old South Church on Dartmouth Street, the Kip Tiernan Memorial joins only four other Boston memorials that honor women. Kip will take her place among sister trailblazers Abigail Adams, Mary Dyer, Anne Hutchinson, Lucy Stone, Harriet Tubman and Phyllis Wheatley. Notably, this is the only memorial in Boston dedicated to an advocate of homeless people.

The installation in mid-September is the culmination of more than six years of planning. The work was designed by Boston architects Ceruzzi & Murphy Projects, fabricated by Whelstone Workshop, East Providence, and will be installed by Chapman Construction Design. The memorial was funded entirely through private donations.

The sculpture is comprised of three stainless steel arches that people can pass under as they walk on Dartmouth Street between Boylston and Newbury Streets. Passages from Kip’s writings are engraved on the columns holding up the arches, making her voice still heard to all who pass by.

We are dedicating the memorial with a family-friendly community event on Saturday, October 6, from 1.00-4.00 pm. Please join us as we celebrate this auspicious day with an afternoon of food, jazz and Rosie’s Place friends—just as Kip would have done! Please contact Michele Chausse at mchausse@rosiesplace.org or 617.318.0210 for more information.

QUOTABLE

Karen Febo A.

“I want to do something with my life. At one time I lost myself. When I say I lost myself, it was because I didn’t know what I wanted or where I was going. It took me time to come back but I am here and I want to do everything that I have to do for me, for myself...I love to be me, I love myself. I know what I want and where I am going. Life can be hard and unjust, but we are alive so that is enough to say thank God for everything and for another day. It’s never too late to follow your dream.”

Excerpted from the piece, “My Journey In This Life... So Far,” by Karen Febo A. ( pictured above reading at our spring celebration), one of 97 ELL students in our Women’s Education Center who contributed to our third book of student writing, Celebrating Ourselves.

Nadja Yananka

“Because of Ms. Kip Tiernan there is a Rosie’s Place. The first of its kind in the United States and the kind of place that should exist. She got it right in life, being unconventional and her kindness was her strength. An incredible legacy... When I walked up to the (WEC) mural I felt like it was saying, ‘Help where you can and make this place your legacy as well.’ So that’s my plan, to simply help and do more. There’s a Kip in almost every woman I know and our little things together make life good for those around us.”

Nadja Yananka: of lifetime supporters Bain Capital, on a recent visit to Rosie’s Place.

PUBLIC POLICY ALERT

Massachusetts General Election Day is Tuesday, November 6, 2018

Please vote! Polls are open from 7am to 8pm! Find your polling location at www.wheredolovote.com
At the end of the academic year, Boston College Dining Services provided students with an opportunity to donate some of their annual meal-plan money and to vote on which of five charities would receive the donation of food purchased with the raised funds. Rosie’s Place was fortunate to have been selected, and a delivery of 370 cases with more than 17,000 individual non-perishable items was made in June. Trucks were loaded by Corcoran Commons staff members and BC students, pictured above with Rosie’s Place staff.

Rosie’s Place has been awarded $25,000 a year for ten years from the Cummings Foundation. We are one of 33 local nonprofits selected by the foundation through its new Sustaining Grants program. The grant will support Food Programs at Rosie’s Place. “With an increasing number of women and their children facing food insecurity, the meals we serve are more essential than ever,” said Rosie’s Place President Sue Marsh, who received the news from Cummings Foundation volunteer Ric Bush, above. “This grant will help us to provide upwards of more than 100,000 nutritionally balanced breakfasts, lunches and dinners this year and in the years to come to women who rely on our help.”

We greatly appreciate everyone who made this year’s Safe and Sound gala another record-breaker, raising $738,000 to fund our work with thousands of poor and homeless women each year. We are thrilled to have exceeded our goal by more than $100,000! Held May 2 at The Cyclorama at Boston Center for the Arts, the special event featured Susan Womick and WBUR’s Bill Littlefield as co-emcees, chef tastings and live and silent auctions. We are grateful to our event chairs Bank of America, Brightsphere, Christina Gordon (bottom right in photo above) and Michael Gordon, Anne Kubik and Michael Krupka, Marriott Daughters Foundation, Michelle May and David Walt, Deb and Mark Pascualano and Winston Flowers.

Send holiday greetings to your family, friends and clients, and give the gift of hope to poor and homeless women. The holiday cards you purchase from Rosie’s Place for business or personal use will help fund new beginnings for 12,000 women a year. With our newest card, Newbury Street Snowfall, we renew our relationship with acclaimed New England artist Sam Vokey. This charming image features a shopper and her dog amidst the warm glow of Newbury Street. We now offer a choice of 9 classic Boston scenes and whimsical winter illustrations in 10-packs ($18) and variety 15-packs ($24). Custom printing is available as well.

You can remember Rosie’s Place at holiday time in two ways:

- Purchase packs of cards
  - 9 winter scenes to choose from
  - 10-packs of 1 design: $18
  - 15-packs with 3 designs: $24
  - Comes with envelopes and classic greeting inside: “Warm wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season”

- Personalize your greeting with custom-printed cards
  - Available on orders of 50+ cards
  - Print a unique message in color or B+W
  - Add logos, photo or signatures for a special touch
  - Envelopes are included and can be customized
  - Our online ordering system makes ordering quick and easy

Order your special holiday greetings while supporting the work of Rosie’s Place today!

**Please support Rosie’s Place by making a donation online at www.rosiesplace.org/fallnews18 or by sending a gift in the enclosed envelope. We thank you!**
It’s never too early to start working to make the holiday season happier for 850 guests, our largest-ever giving list. We strive to provide a special gift which, for many women, may be the only present they will receive. With your help, we can create a warm holiday experience that—like everything else at Rosie’s Place—will be wrapped in unconditional love and respect.

Support Rosie’s Place with a Holiday Event!

Here’s another way you can contribute to our holiday giving: When planning a community event or holiday party at home or work, please consider making Rosie’s Place the beneficiary. Monetary donations are most welcome, as they allow us to purchase gift cards and items we will not already have received. For a step-by-step Event Toolkit, visit www_rosiesplace.org/give/other_ways_to_give/fundraising_events.

Your generosity will help brighten the season for our guests and their families. Please contact Michael Oliver at 617.318.0291 or moliver@rosiesplace.org for more information and to arrange a drop-off time. We hope to receive all holiday donations by December 7, 2018. Thank you for your support!

WISH LIST

Holiday Gift Sets
- Bath and body gift sets with lotion, body wash and body spray (from stores such as Bath & Body Works)
- Sets of hats, scarves and gloves
- Pajamas and sleeping gowns
- Slippers
- Perfume (individual bottles and gift sets)
- Throws and blankets
- New hoodies

Children’s Toys
- We have a limited need for children’s toys. Please contact us if you are interested in organizing a toy drive.

Holiday Gift Sets
- CVS
- Walgreens
- Target
- Payless
- Old Navy

$25 Gift Cards
- CVS
- Walgreens
- Target
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