As schools everywhere re-open their doors in September, the Women’s Education Center (WEC) at Rosie’s Place also reads itself for another year. This fall, WEC has expanded its services by adding job placement and arts programming to its existing offerings of free language and computer classes.

“These three service areas are naturally linked,” says WEC Director Sara J. Gentzler. “Our free classes can create the opportunity for guests to pursue a new job or career, and we’re here to assist when they’re ready to move forward. And our range of arts activities offers another outlet for learning and self-expression. We’ve been working on existing new initiatives while investigating the best way to integrate these three areas, to make them more seamless!”

Again this year, we expect to enroll more than 350 women in our English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), pre-literacy, literacy and iPd/computer classes. Once our summer session ends, thoughts turn to preparing for the upcoming year. To this end, WEC staff hosted its second annual retreat in late July to thank our volunteers, share classroom strategies and get suggestions for the semester ahead.

Additional work continues behind the scenes with the formation of a curriculum committee comprised of volunteers who are also professional teachers. The committee will meet regularly to determine benchmarks for different class levels and to help diversify the WEC “faculty.”

WEC is also developing a teacher advisory council (see Q & A on this page for more) and a student advisory council. Students selected for the council will meet monthly to provide input about what goes on in the classroom as well as suggestions for subjects they would like to see added to our curriculum. In addition, participating in the meetings provides learning for our guests—about democracy and the decision-making process,” Sara says.

Outside the Rosie’s Place classroom, we have been invited to provide ESOL classes to women awaiting deportation at the East Bay House of Correction in Boston. Each week, we conduct language assessments and teach two levels of English to about 30 ICE detainees from countries all over the world, including El Salvador, Guatemala, Korea and China. According to Sara, “The women we’ve met are young, all under age 25, and distressed! We have been offering a curriculum focused on ways to recognize and release stress, similar to the content of our summer class sessions held at Rosie’s Place.

By bringing our contract workforce specialist, Aisha Bowler, in, we have made her expertise more readily available to our guests. Plus increasing utilization of her services. “I’m able to introduce myself in the classrooms, so students know I’m a resource for them,” Aisha says. “In addition to working with guests to find a job, I also spend time helping them to clarify their long range goals.” Aisha offers job skills workshops and assists guests in addressing barriers that might prevent them from getting hired, such as finding appropriate clothing for an interview and explaining gaps in their employment history. She’s also placing more emphasis on linking guests with job training programs that will allow for income while they learn. In FY19, close to 30 guests entered training programs and/or found employment with the help of Rosie’s Place.

Developing creative outlets for our guests is also a priority. “We’re looking to spark learning through different learning styles, and what’s why it’s important to integrate arts into our program,” Sara says. With our partner, the ArtLab/Med/Cuban (BMC Medical Community/Boston Medical Center), we are poised to select another artist-in-residence for the 2019-2020 school year. Following last year’s “word artist,” who inspired guests to create self-affirming poetry, we are excited to partner with a new artist who will engage guests as they bring their discipline into the food pantry, sitting room and other areas throughout Rosie’s Place.

Gisett’s Story

Gisett heard about Rosie’s Place from a friend a while back, but it wasn’t until this winter when she came in for the first time to enroll in a free ESOL class in the Women’s Education Center. She emigrated from the Dominican Republic a few years ago, drawn to Boston by the promise of a better life for her family. Although she had been on a low law school track in college back home, she knew her limited English narrowed her opportunities here. Living with her uncle and infant son in Roxbury, Gisett searched to recognize and release stress, similar to the content of our summer class sessions held at Rosie’s Place. “They are here for a lot of people,” she says of Rosie’s Place. “They help anyone who is looking for it. With me, at first it was English.”

While in her English class, she learned of the job placement services also available here. She worked with our specialist to create a resume and then apply for housekeeping jobs in the area. She was thrilled when she was offered a full-time job at the Boston Beet Western in May. She has already received two gift cards Rosie’s Place provided as incentives, for completing 30 days and then 90 days in her new position.

Gisett dreams of getting her own place and reuniting her family here in Boston; in the meantime, she saves what she can after sending money back home to them twice a month. And she will continue her English classes at Rosie’s Place in the fall. “I have a plan and I am working to make it happen” she says, “with the support of Rosie’s Place.”

Pauline Jennett strains over her educations andpension teaching as a student, counselors, counseling and education leadership as the new Teacher Coordinator in our Women’s Education Center (WEC). In this role, Pauline oversees and coordinates the placement of more than 100 volunteer teachers who lead free pre-literacy, literacy and English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classes here.

What brought you to Rosie’s Place? I volunteered for two years as a teacher in one of the pre-literacy classes, and it was great! So when I saw the posting, I knew the job was for me.

I realized I loved teaching adults when I was a chaplain at the University of Pennsylvania Health System, instructing other chaplains in the research methodology of working with people who are hospitalized. I can relate to this group of students, as I’ve been an adult learner myself, studying within different areas of interest well into my 50s.

What is the purpose of a pre-literacy class for English learners? Many of our students are never able to attend school in their home countries, as they need to acquire a foundational understanding of language before they can learn English. You’re at “square one,” and I enjoy that challenge.

What do you find gratifying about your position? I ascribe to Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which outlines different learning styles, and try to show those insights with our teachers. During our teacher retreat this summer, we took a deep dive into what they’re learning this year, what accomplishments they’re most proud of and what new skills and innovations we can integrate into their classrooms this coming fall. Also, I am starting to think about a new teacher advisory council to foster teacher involvement in WEC strategic areas including curriculum development and classroom management. Our teachers’ educational experiences are broad and deep, and we are well positioned to game insight from our valued teaching staff.

What is the focus of your work with the WEC teachers? I am committed to enriching the teacher experience in what is a unique, volunteer-staffed ESOL program. Our volunteers range from individuals with no prior teaching experience to special educators, pre-k and high school teachers to a college linguistics professor. I subscribe to Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which outlines different learning styles, and try to show those insights with our teachers.

What brought you to Rosie’s Place? I was hired by the head teacher of the pre-literacy classes, who lead free pre-literacy, literacy and English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classes here.

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In 1993, while at Regis College accepting an honorary degree, Rosie’s Place founder Kip Tiernan was presented with an inquiring offer by Regis nursing faculty member, Mary Smalea, EDD, RN: Could her nursing students obtain valuable, relevant community-based experiences by providing nursing care to the guests of Rosie’s Place? According to Mary, Kip was reluctant at first, but she soon supported this mutually beneficial arrangement, and the Wellness Center at Rosie’s Place was born.

The program started with one Regis RN student and one faculty advisor finding any corner of our busy dining room to offer blood pressure screenings and wellness-related education on a variety of topics. Five years later, HealthCare Without Walls volunteered their physician and nursing services to the Center, joined in 2009 by providers from Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program. Today, 25 years after its doors first opened, the Wellness Center has grown into a dedicated space for exams, direct care and consultations, providing an average of 4,600 appointments with guests each year.

“We are so grateful to have been able to offer our guests excellent wellness care under our roof for the past quarter century” Rosie’s Place President/Executive Director Leemarie Mosca says, “Because of the generosity of these three organizations, our guests are comforted, knowing they can see a caring clinician for a range of medical needs five days a week. We extend our deep appreciation to everyone who makes the work being done in our Wellness Center possible.”

Regis College faculty Laurel Goulvin, RN,MSN,CPNP, who oversees their nursing students in the Wellness Center, agrees that providing health care access to poor and homeless women is essential. “Over the years it remains surprising that, in a country with great wealth, we continue to witness an unmet need for care for women who have no other option but to seek a dedicated group that does their best to meet these needs, but it is heartbreaking to see that the need never ends.” She adds, “At Regis, we so appreciate the opportunity to partner with Rosie’s Place so that we can extend to students the opportunity to become part of the health care work force that does understand.”

According to founder Roseanna Means, MD, her organization, Health Care Without Walls (known as Women of Means until 2015), was invited to join the nurses from Regis College to expand their programming to include nurse practitioner students and an MO on-site for clinical supervision. “I have been volunteering continuously at the Wellness Center for all 20 years” says Dr. Means. “Over the years, we hosted medical students and medical residents side by side with Regis nursing students. Our emphasis is on safety, autonomy and dignity, and we are gratified that our long and consistent presence has nurtured close relationships that are reflected in improved health and fewer emergency room visits.”

“For the more than a decade that Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program has provided on-site services for the guests of Rosie’s Place, we have seen both an increase in the complexity of the health care needs of people experiencing homelessness and a health care system that is more difficult to navigate,” says Malinda Thomas, BHCHP Assistant Medical Director. “It is essential that we, and all of the organizations that partner with the Wellness Center, continue to work in collaboration with Rosie’s Place to maintain this important access point for guests to receive care that addresses their full scope of health needs in a comprehensive, dignified, and culturally competent way. We are so appreciative of the opportunity to provide services in the Wellness Center and look forward to continuing this work for years to come!”

Rosie’s Place will mark the Wellness Center’s 25th year with a celebration and recognition of its partners on September 19.
Many thanks to our generous friends, who made our annual Safe and Sound gala another record-breaking success, raising $805,000 to benefit the women we serve. Held May 8 at The Cyclorama at Boston Center for the Arts, the special event featured co-emcees Susan Wornick and WBUR’s Jack Lepiarz, pithy verse from Bill Littlefield, chef tastings, and live and silent auctions. We are grateful to our event chairs: Bank of America, Brightsphere, Christina Gordon and Michael Gordon, Anne Kubik and Michael Krupka, Marriott Daughters Foundation, Michele May and David Walt, and Deb and Mark Pasculano as well as close to 200 table hosts, including Suzanne Chapman (standing, second from left) and Jennifer Eckert (standing, second from right).

Send Your Greetings Today
For a Brighter Tomorrow

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.

We are pleased to offer another new image from acclaimed local artist Sam Vokey. Beacon Hill Sledders depicts a scene of nostalgic pleasures—children sledding on the Boston Common— with Beacon Street in the background. Visit our website to view all nine classic Boston scenes and whimsical winter illustrations, available in 10-packs ($20) and variety 15-packs ($26). 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: $20
- 15-packs with 5 designs: $26
- 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 black and white
- Add logo, 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!

- Online: www.rosiesplace.org/holidaycards
- Phone: Mikayla Mercado at 617.318.0238
- Email: mmercado@rosiesplace.org
- Mail: send a check to Rosie’s Place, Attn: Holiday Cards, 889 Harrison Ave., Boston, MA 02118

Did You Know?

In June, 10 guests took part in a semi-annual seminar from the Public Policy program, learning about the branches of government, how our state legislature works, and ways they might make their own impact on policies that affect their lives. The training culminated in a tour of the State House and meetings with elected officials.

Again this year, Rosie’s Place staff, guests, family and friends came together to celebrate community at the Boston Pride Parade. Whether marching or riding in our duck boat, we showed our commitment to equal treatment for all the women we serve. As one of the first organizations in Boston to welcome transgender women to overnight shelter, Rosie’s Place participated in the parade as allies of and advocates for the LGBTQ community.

Our new note cards featuring four scenes representing a different season in New England (Summer featured here) make a great gift while supporting our work. Our holiday card artist Sam Vokey has generously donated his paintings for this series. Cards are blank inside and are sold in packs of 10 and variety sets of 16, or can be printed with a custom message. Shop at www.rosiesplace.org/notecards or contact Mikayla at mmercado@rosiesplace.org or 617.318.0238 for assistance.

Our Rosie’s Place satellite location at the Franklin Field housing development in Dorchester organized a health fair in June attended by more than 125 mothers and children. Representatives from local providers offering health and dental care, insurance and other services met with residents while we hosted refreshments and crafts and face painting for kids.

We celebrated what would have been founder Kip Tierman’s 93rd birthday with a special dinner for guests on June 17 featuring a jazz band and her favorite food – BBQ – prepared and served by our board members, special friends and family.
Save the date for our Fall Night Out! You’ll have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of Lamplighter Brewing favorites, while meeting other young professionals and learning about our critical work. Tickets are $25 and include one drink ticket and light refreshments. For more information about the event or the benefits of joining our Friends of Rosie’s Place group, please contact Kristen Leonard at kleonard@rosiesplace.org.

Funny Women... Serious Business is back on Wednesday, October 16, 2019, from noon to 2 p.m. at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. Our annual luncheon celebrates Rosie’s Place’s unique mission and raises critical funds for our work. We look forward to another sold-out afternoon with 2,000 of our friends and supporters.

This year we are featuring a conversation with Glennon Doyle, author of The New York Times bestselling memoirs Love Warrior (a 2016 Oprah’s Book Club selection) and Carry On, Warrior. She was named among OWN Network’s SuperSouls100 inaugural group as one of 100 “awakened leaders who are using music, voices and talent to elevate humanity.”

Glennon is an activist, speaker and founder of Together Rising, a non-profit organization that has raised more than $20 million for women, families and children in crisis. She is also the creator of Momastery.com, an online community where millions of readers meet to experience her moving and relevant essays about marriage, motherhood, faith, mental health, addiction, recovery and connection. Drawing from her own personal story, Glennon inspires audiences with her authentic, empowering, hopeful, and fresh perspective on a life that is “troubling, brutal and beautiful.” On October 16, Glennon’s unique voice will translate from the page to the stage with wit, candor and heart.

The afternoon will be co-hosted by longtime friends and luncheon emcees Susan Worrink and WCVB’s Karen Holmes Ward. They will be joined by anchowomen from Boston television outlets: Latoya Edwards, Kate Merrill, Amaka Ukate and Vanessa Welch. This event is made possible through the support of Presenting Sponsor Bank of America, Brightosphere Investment Group, Globalization Partners, Christina and Michael Gordon, Jill, Anne Kubik and Michael Krupka, Kristen and John Maxwell, Michele May and David Wall and Deb and Mark Pascalino; Presenting Contyplace Sponsor Neiman Marcus; and Leading Sponsors Arundel Pioneer Asset Management, Elaine Construction Company, Inc., Forest Foundation, The Gibson Family Foundation, Highland Partners Charitable Fund and Jane and Joe Krypton (as of print date).

At the luncheon you’ll have the chance to network with other Rosie’s Place supporters, shop for gorgeous jewelry made by our guest artisans in the Women’s Craft Cooperative, win a fabulous centerpiece from Neiman Marcus and hear the uplifting stories of three women whose lives have been changed by Rosie’s Place. All proceeds from the event help provide food, housing, advocacy, education and employment opportunities—and so much more—for the 12,000 women who visit us each year.

“We look forward to this wonderful day of community each year,” says President/Executive Director Leemarie Mosca. “You can feel the energy and enthusiasm of so many friends together in one place supporting our vital work; it inspires us to do more for every poor and homeless woman who comes to our door. Whether she is seeking meals and a food pantry, shelter and one-on-one assistance, or help in the community at schools and courthouses, we are here with services to meet her needs, all delivered with unconditional love. Because of the generosity and commitment of our luncheon guests, we can continue to be more than a shelter for 12,000 women each year.”

You can support Rosie’s Place by becoming a sponsor or by purchasing tickets today. Tickets are $200, to order, visit www/rosiesplace.org/fwsb. For questions or sponsorship information, please contact Michael Oliver at moliver@rosiesplace.org or 6173180291.

Wbur’s A Christmas Carol

Join Friends of Rosie’s Place for our Fall Night Out! You’ll have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of Lamplighter Brewing favorites, while meeting other young professionals and learning about our critical work. Tickets are $25 and include one drink ticket and light refreshments. For more information about the event or the benefits of joining our Friends of Rosie’s Place group, please contact Kristen Leonard at kleonard@rosiesplace.org.

WBUR’s A Christmas Carol

Save the date for the 17th anniversary of WBUR 90.9 FM’s reading of the Charles Dickens’ classic, A Christmas Carol. You will hear your favorite WBUR personalities bring this timeless tale to life at Boston’s historic Omni Parker House, the site of Dickens’ first reading. Tickets are $60 and all proceeds benefit Rosie’s Place. Tickets will be available in November; check back at www/rosiesplace.org/wbur for more information.