For women who find themselves without a place to live, the Overnight program at Rosie’s Place not only provides shelter for three weeks but also sanctions. Guests arrive feeling fearful and weary but soon find the security of a safe bed, a welcoming staff and support for what they may do next. With unconditional love and understanding, we offer a range of services that can help women focus on long-term solutions, rather than stop-gap measures. Last year, 300 women were guests in our shelter for a total of 520 stays. Shalia is one such guest.

As Shalia recalls, she was living the life of a typical 20-something–working, taking classes, spending time with friends. But when a fire broke out in the Brighton apartment she shared with her mother, everything changed. Her mother, whose name was on the lease, moved away from the area and Shalia was left with nothing. All at once, she was faced with rebuilding a life on her own.

Things looked up when she took her friends’ advice to come to Rosie’s Place. Through our daily lottery, she was given a place in our shelter soon after and began working with us to complete a number of housing applications. We also assisted her in finding a job. During her most recent stay, Shalia took part in a newly-offered workshop on meditation. “It has been wonderful for me,” she says. “I have learned how to focus on breathing and calm my mind. It helps me sleep, too.”

Shalia recently received news from the Boston Housing Authority that her application for housing is nearing the top of the list. Because of the widespread shutdown due to the COVID-19 crisis, she must wait a bit longer. To keep her safe, her time in our shelter has been extended for the length of our stay-at-home advisory and possibly longer. She remains hopeful for the day when she has a permanent home. Until then she is comforted in knowing she can turn to Rosie’s Place.

“I have fought and fought and I continue to fight,” she says. “Homelessness wears you out, but being at Rosie’s Place helps me stay steady.”

Food Programs

At Rosie’s Place, we strive to minimize food insecurity by providing steady access to food for our guests. In our Dining Room, we serve breakfast, lunch and dinner five days a week and brunch and dinner on weekends, for an annual total of 104,000 meals. Our Dining Room program brings volunteers, guests and staff together, fostering a sense of security and community among our guests. Women look to our Food Pantry to stretch modest food budgets and supplement SNAP benefits. Last year alone, approximately 2,000 women per month took home 20 to 40 pounds of fresh and non-perishable groceries. Rosie’s Place has adapted to continue its Food Programs during the COVID-19 outbreak. We are providing more than 200 much-needed lunches and dinners and also more than 200 bags of groceries for guests to bring home each day. Nina often visits Rosie’s Place for meals and groceries.

Nilda (or Nelly as she prefers) came to Rosie’s Place after fleeing a dangerous situation in Florida. She’d spent years in an abusive relationship, with the responsibility of caring for her young son. There were many times she wanted to leave her husband, but was too afraid to do so. She also had no financial independence, as he withheld her earnings from her. But eventually, Nelly worked up her courage and left, ending up in Boston, her first call was to Rosie’s Place.

We immediately helped her connect with resources in the area. She ended up spending most nights at the city shelter and her days with us. She took advantage of meals, Food Pantry, housing search services and group workshops. She obtained a locker and took showers here, too.

“Once I arrived at Rosie’s Place, I felt I could breathe,” Nelly says. “They gave me hope.”

After more than two years of homelessness, she received a Section 8 voucher. She had her eye on an apartment across the street from our location at 889 Harrison Avenue, and when the opportunity to move there presented itself, she jumped at it. It was important to her that she maintain the support network she’d created here. Nelly is at Rosie’s Place at least two days every week—and often more—for meals and activities. As she shelter-in-place now, hoping to get by over the coming weeks on a very limited income, she feels more secure knowing fresh groceries and staples are close at hand.

Nelly now has a circle of friends at Rosie’s Place and the freedom to live her life as she chooses. She says, “When I feel lonely, I can just cross the street and feel the love.”

Advocacy

While certainly a great number of women come to Rosie’s Place when they are homeless, there are many more who seek out our services because they are poor. Multi-lingual Advocacy staff provides guests with one-on-one assistance with housing search, wellness care, transportation, funds for back rent and utility arrearage bills and makes referrals for other services. Advocacy at Rosie’s Place also offers guests the services of a job specialist and a mental health clinician. Overall, Advocacy staff accommodated 15,400 appointments last year. Our Advocacy services helped Norma stabilize her life.

As a teenager, family conflicts forced Norma to move in with her grandmother. Unfortunately, when she was 15 years old that living arrangement was no longer tenable. The lack of structure in Norma’s life led her to drug use, dropping out of school and unhealthy relationships. “My mother was involved with many abusive men and I didn’t know that it wasn’t ok,” she says.

Norma married young and started a family right away. She was caring for her 9-month-old son and pregnant when her husband left her. She stayed with her in-laws for a while, but by the time she had her daughter she had nowhere to go. She found her way to Rosie’s Place with both infants, needing “clothes, a meal, just about everything,” she says.

“They showed me that they cared about my kids,” she says about her early days here. “They gave me love that my mother never showed me.” An Advocate helped out with clothing and supplies for her children. At Rosie’s Place, Norma was able to take showers and do her laundry. A turning point came when Advocates secured a place for Norma and her family in a residential treatment program for women recovering from addiction. From there, she has been able to rebuild her life, maintaining an apartment, working when she can, and raising her children—now almost teenagers—even in the face of very limited resources and illness. We have stayed connected to her over the years, always ready to help when times get tough. During this outbreak, our Advocacy Phone Line is fielding close to 100 calls a day providing vital assistance to Norma and other women at home with support referrals and resources. We will be there for her in the days ahead, checking in often to assure that she is not alone. Says Norma, “Rosie’s Place will always be my family. If I wasn’t for them, I wouldn’t be the person I am today.”

Housing Stabilization

At Rosie’s Place, we go beyond helping a homeless guest attain housing—we help her maintain it. Housing Stabilization workers make monthly visits to and in women’s homes to offer support with landlord issues, oversee budgeting for rent and utilities and provide important resources to women who are homeless and alone. Through this innovative program, 98% of guests receiving in-home supports are able to stay housed and break the cycle of homelessness.

Lupita is a longtime guest in our Housing Stabilization program. When Lupita first came to Rosie’s Place, she was pregnant and about to lose her apartment after a breakup with her boyfriend. We helped to identify and secure housing while she stayed with her two sons in a family shelter. Six months later, she found a subsidized, cheap apartment where she still lives today.

Lupita was eager to return to work. Our employment specialist assisted in her job search and we brightened the holiday season with gifts for her children. With no family nearby and no child support, Lupita continued to balance work, a growing number of bills and caring for her sons the best she could.

We reconnected with Lupita a few years later when her housing management company reached out to Rosie’s Place to help her with unpaid rent. She had fallen behind when she lost her son’s daycare placement and had to pay hourly babysitters. We got her up to date with payments and also helped settle her electricity arrears. And we paired Lupita with one of our Housing Stabilization Workers, who started visiting her each month. We worked with her to set up monthly rent and utility payment plans and to create a budget.

It’s been eight years since we first met Lupita and our Housing Stabilization workers still check in with her and her landlord to be sure her housing is secure. She is working full-time while studying to obtain her GED. As this health crisis forces drastic changes to every aspect of our lives, we are staying in close touch with Lupita and the other women in this program. She says her greatest wish is to be independent, and we will continue to support her in that goal, especially through the challenging times ahead.

“For me, Rosie’s Place is my angel. I’m so glad and thankful they are there when I need them but, in the end, it’s up to me. They make me believe I can do it.”
Dear Friends:

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones healthy and well as we all grapple to find our footing in the midst of this global health crisis.

Today at Rosie’s Place we’ll meet hundreds of homeless women—anxious and afraid—forced to confront the unknown and unimaginable on their own. For these women, now more than ever, our support and our sanctuary are vital.

And today, as we have every day since our founding, we will welcome our guests wholeheartedly with our most essential emergency services: to-go meals in our Dining Room, a week’s supply of groceries from our Food Pantry, and both daytime and overnight shelter—all offered with kindness and dignity. At times like these, when it’s easy to feel discouraged and disconnected, I find hope and connection in their purest forms in the people who make Rosie’s Place extraordinary.

I’m inspired by our homeless guests, who have nowhere to go yet face each day with the hope that they will find what they need to make it to tomorrow.

And by the women who have a safe and stable place to stay. I find solace in knowing that we’re doing all we can to keep them there. We at Rosie’s Place know that asking poor and homeless women to remain where they are—when they need so much help to get by—as asking them to sacrifice and struggle even more. Their strength and resiliency motivates us, and their ability to find joy in small victories and gratitude in simple acts of kindness humbles us.

I’m buoyed by my colleagues who are constantly being asked to problem-solve, adjust their schedules and change how and what they are doing on any given day. As more has been asked and needed of them, they have never lost sight of what our guests need from us. They have personified grace under pressure and I’m so proud to be part of this team that pitches in and pulls ahead together.

And I’m heartened by friends like you. When so many are stepping back, you are stepping in—to help and stand alongside us as you always have—through times of hardship and times of triumph. Compassion is the compass that directs all that we do at Rosie’s Place.

We are a lifeline to the guests whose stories we share in this newsletter—and you are ours. Thank you for the continued support that keeps our doors open and our help constant.

In solidarity,

Leemarie Mosca
President/Executive Director

Please support Rosie’s Place by making a donation online at www.rosiesplace.org/springnews20.

We value your support now, more than ever. Thank you.

The Rosie's Place Community's Mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment to help poor and homeless women to maintain and enhance their dignity, seek opportunity, and find security in their lives. At Rosie’s Place, our doors remain open as we continue to serve the women who turn to us when there is nowhere else to go. COVID-19 has required us to limit much of what we do with our community of supporters, but there still are creative and meaningful ways you can help. Thank you!

**Support a guest's stay in our Overnight Shelter**

Providing the sanctuary of a safe, clean bed and support services is critical to the health of homeless women at this time. A donation of $50 will fund a one-night stay for one woman and allow us the time to work closely with her to meet her needs.

**Become a monthly donor**

By making a sustaining gift through our *Friends for All Seasons* monthly giving program, you will provide steady, dependable funding we can count on, in times both good and difficult.

**Volunteer virtually**

Social distancing means a hiatus for our valued volunteers, but you can still contribute. Please consider making a gift equal to the value of 1 hour of volunteer service—$26.83, or even multiple hours, to support our work.

**Sponsor a catered meal**

We have come to rely on our volunteer groups, who underwrite the $350 cost of the meal they prepare and serve. Replacing that lost *catering fee* will be critical to helping us sustain all of our vital food programs.

**Coordinate a digital fundraiser**

With social gatherings put on hold and events to benefit Rosie’s Place suspended for the time being, a Facebook Fundraiser is an easy way to connect with your community to raise funds on our behalf. Simply go to facebook.com/fund/rosiesplace to launch your own fundraiser or join in on our *Steps to Support* campaign. And if you’re looking for theme ideas, please check out our website under Other Ways to Give.

**Donate our most needed items**

Right now, disposable surgical masks or *homemade masks*, as well as disinfectant cleaning and sanitizing products, are our most sought-after items. If you are able, please mail or drop them off to us at 889 Harrison Avenue, Boston. Your donation will help us keep Rosie’s Place safe and healthy for our guests.

**Give to Support Our Work**

At Rosie’s Place, our doors remain open as we continue to serve the women who turn to us when there is nowhere else to go. COVID-19 has required us to limit much of what we do with our community of supporters, but there still are creative and meaningful ways you can help. Thank you!

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**QUOTABLE**

*I have believed in Rosie's Place ever since I walked through the door many years ago to film a news story there which was shown on the CBS broadcast Sunday Morning. Never will forget the care, respect and love shown for the women who were given food and shelter there.*

—Irene C.

We are stepping back, but you are stepping in—to help and stand alongside us as you always have—through times of hardship and times of triumph. Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment to help poor and homeless women to maintain and enhance their dignity, seek opportunity, and find security in their lives.

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*One of the reasons I love Rosie’s Place so much is that it’s an organization that starts with people. And that’s just critically important...I feel like I have a connection with that because my background is actually in social work. When you meet a guest where she’s at, there’s a lot more potential for her growth. That’s what this organization does and I think that’s why you see so many women blossom.*

—Excerpted from remarks by Stacy Madison (left in photo) in an interview with Susan Womack at the Rosie’s Place Leadership Council’s Appreciation Reception at the Four Seasons Hotel Boston on February 27.
During this time of uncertainty and need, Rosie’s Place is exceptionally grateful for everyone who comprises our wonderful community of friends: volunteers, partners, donors, supporters. Your investment in our work and compassion for our guests will carry us through the challenging days ahead. Thank you for standing with us, today and tomorrow.

We are so grateful to our wonderful supporters whose generosity helped make the holidays brighter for the women we serve. Many thanks to the 76 individuals and community groups who made it possible for us to provide nearly 1,000 women with holiday gifts. Hundreds of guests were able to choose items for themselves or others in our special “holiday store.” In addition, our Friendly Visitor Program delivered gifts to 90 socially-isolated women, and guests staying in our Overnight Shelter received special gift bags and stockings. Left: Boston Bruins captain Zdeno Chara made his second annual visit to Rosie’s Place in December, stopping by our holiday store to donate socks for our guests, which were generously provided by New Balance. Right: Students at Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School collected toiletries and put kits together for our guests at holiday time.

It was another special night for WBUR’s 17th annual reading of A Christmas Carol at the Omni Parker House in December. Continuing this beloved tradition were WBUR on-air personalities (from left) Amory Sivertson, Jack Lepiarz, Bob Oakes, Meghna Chakrabarti, Tiziana Dearing and Robin Young. The sold-out program raised a record $28,000 to benefit Rosie’s Place.

More than 100 guests recently attended our annual “Day to Love Yourself” event, an afternoon that offers women a chance to pamper themselves—mind, body and spirit. This is a special day for our guests, whose daily struggles with poverty and homelessness leave little time for themselves. Continuing the tradition begun by his mother, and now held in her honor, volunteer Andrew Maggiore, along with his friends and family, recruits generous local vendors who provide a variety of wellness and beauty services to guests, including massages, manicures, makeovers, journaling, photos to take home and more.

This year, three great friends of ours, (from left) Emily Helenius, Jessica Huang, and Patty Katsaros, are running the Boston Marathon to benefit Rosie’s Place! Together they hope to raise over $40,000 by race day, September 14, to fund our important work. Find out what motivates them at www.rosiesplace.org/2020marathon and help them cross the finish line!

We are overwhelmed by the generosity of Bombas, a company fulfilling its pledge to give back by donating 5,000 pairs of their socks, received by Development Associate Alyssa Schoppee, to our guests.

Rosie’s Place is honored to be the recipient of the 2020 Advocate of the Year Award from the National Association of Social Workers, Massachusetts Chapter, for its commitment to the mission of social work and to social, racial, and economic justice through programming and advocacy.

The 2020 Census is the first U.S. Census to be conducted primarily online. Have you received and responded to your 2020 Census invitation? It is critical to have an accurate census count in order for our community to access resources for health care, affordable housing and other services.
Rosie’s Place note cards are perfect now or for any occasion! You can give Mom our springtime favorite, *First Light on the River* (pictured), or cards featuring three other scenes, each depicting a different New England season. With artwork donated by noted artist Sam Vokey, we offer a pack of 10 for $18 or a variety pack with four cards of each image for $24. View all the images and order at www.rosiesplace.org/notecards or contact Mikayla Mercado at 617.318.0238.

**Mother's Day Ways to Give**

To celebrate Mother’s Day, the Rosie’s Place Women’s Craft Cooperative (WCC) is offering a special, limited-edition necklace. For a donation of $65 or more, this one-of-a-kind statement necklace, crafted by six guests employed by the WCC, can be yours. It’s the perfect gift for your mother, wife, special someone or even yourself. By honoring the women who are important to you, you will help us continue to provide emergency services to Boston’s poor and homeless women in these uncertain times.

This year we have created a birthstone necklace that you can customize in countless ways! Twelve Swarovski crystals are fashioned into clusters in gemstone colors corresponding to each month. The clusters are separated by a small metal ball and sit on a chain 18” in length with a 3” extension. You can select the birthstones of Mom’s children, or even add clusters representing the parents’ birth months as well. The clusters are arranged on your choice of sterling silver chain with silver plate balls or 24K gold-filled chain with gold plate balls.

The shades and sparkle of these crystals are so brilliant you may want to create your own necklace combinations with your favorite colors, regardless of your birth month!

We have also created silver plate tube bracelets—perfect for stacking—that feature the same variety of colored Swarovski crystals available in our necklace. The bracelet is $20 alone or paired with the necklace for a special price of $80.

Gift wrap and a card informing the honoree of your thoughtful generosity will accompany your purchase; please be sure to get your orders in by noon on May 4. To order or view these and other jewelry and gift items, visit www.rosiesplace.org/shop or contact Lori Shoyer at lshoyer@rosiesplace.org or 617.318.0272.

In order to keep our friends safe during the coronavirus outbreak, we have had to cancel our annual Safe & Sound gala, originally scheduled for May 6 at the Cyclorama at Boston Center for the Arts. While we cannot be together in person, we hope you will join us for our virtual campaign launching now and help us raise vital funds to ensure that we continue to meet the emergency needs of our guests. If you would like to receive these communications and learn how you can support our work during this time, please email Kristen Leonard at kleonard@rosiesplace.org.