



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2015

Contact: Cara Rotschafer, Rosie's Place, 617.318.0238: o, 402.947.1465: c;
crotschafer@rosiesplace.org

Rosie's Place Names Recipient of 2015 Kip Tiernan Social Justice Fellowship

"LEGIT.yoga" Will Bring Healing to Homeless and Low-Income Women Through Yoga

BOSTON—[Rosie's Place](#) has awarded the 2015 Kip Tiernan Social Justice Fellowship to Theresa Okokon of Roslindale for a program she has developed to empower women survivors of trauma by providing Trauma-Informed Yoga classes in the Boston community.

The \$40,000 fellowship, which honors Rosie's Place founder Kip Tiernan, is given annually to a woman to develop and carry out a special project that will further the mission of Rosie's Place in New England. Founded in 1974 as the first women-only shelter in the country, Rosie's Place provides a safe and nurturing environment to help poor and homeless women maintain their dignity, seek opportunity and find security in their lives.

Okokon is a Registered Yoga Teacher and a Licensed Facilitator of Trauma Informed Mind Body (TIMBo), a Trauma-Informed Yoga curriculum. Through her project, Okokon will plan and facilitate weekly Trauma-Informed Yoga classes and TIMBo groups in area shelters, public housing developments and community programs. According to Okokon, Trauma-Informed Yoga is a yoga practice that is rooted in an understanding of how memories, trauma and stress are carried and stored in the body and is designed to help survivors reclaim their bodies, their emotions and a sense of control and power over their lives.

The primary goal of Okokon's project is to provide these classes and groups to "non-traditional" communities, making yoga a healing, transformative and standard part of the lives of marginalized people who have experienced trauma.

"Across America and in the Greater Boston area, yoga generally is seen as a practice that is not available to everyone," Okokon said. "LEGIT.yoga aims to bridge this gap: to make the empowering practice of yoga accessible to people who are not part of the population more easily reached by yoga teachers, studios and gyms."

Okokon has worked with homeless and low-income populations for more than a decade and has practiced yoga for more than seven years. She possesses a bachelor's degree in Social

Work, served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador and has focused her career around working with homeless and at-risk women, youth and families.

“Through this Fellowship, we hope to provide a woman with the resources to realize a vision—just as Kip was able to do, some 41 years ago,” said Rosie’s Place Executive Director Sue Marsh. “This Fellowship embodies the same spirit and commitment that was the basis of Rosie’s Place’s founding.”

Okokon added, “With the help of Rosie’s Place funding, LEGIT.yoga will make yoga a seed that grows within homeless and low-income women in the Greater Boston area, and that seed will grow into a community that is stronger—physically, mentally and in its sense of connectedness.”

More than four decades after its founding, Rosie’s Place not only provides meals and shelter but also creates answers for 12,000 women a year through wide-ranging support, housing and education services. Rosie’s Place relies solely on the generous support of individuals, foundations and corporations and does not accept any city, state or federal funding.

###