

Rising

Foundation Place Provides Respite & Relief

In the *Harry Potter* series of books and movies, Hogwarts Castle features a “Room of Requirement,” a magical room that appears whenever a person urgently needs it and providing whatever is required at that moment.

Rising Ground’s newly opened Foundation Place has a similar mandate, in a more permanent Brooklyn location, offering respite for parents and caregivers during emergencies and times of crisis by providing short-term care for their children in a safe and nurturing space.

The new facility — currently New York City’s only center-based respite program contracted to Rising Ground by New York City’s Administration for Children’s Services — fills a gap in family stabilization services by allowing parents and caregivers to find temporary care for their children without having them enter the child welfare system.

Top photo - Foundation Place team, Jasmine Ramsey; Getmary Perez, Andrea Carter, and Christina Galletti. Bottom photos: The vibrant play area and one of the children’s bedrooms.

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Rising to the Challenge

Rising Ground was proud to be selected as one of nine nonprofits in the New York metro area to participate in Morgan Stanley’s 2024 Strategy Challenge this spring, the firm’s annual signature pro bono initiative...

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Pictured, L-r: Jennifer Westpfahl, Morgan Stanley MD Advisor; Alan Mucatel, Rising Ground CEO; Angie Molina, Morgan Stanley Inclusive Ventures Group; Stephanie Serino, Morgan Stanley Legal & Compliance; Dr. Robyn Jacobson, Rising Ground Vice President, Behavioral Health Services; Christina Tam, Morgan Stanley Operations; Susan Sampogna, Rising Ground Executive Vice President/Chief Program Officer; Joanna Barberii-Rosario, Rising Ground Assistant Vice President, Mental Health Services; and James Reid, Morgan Stanley Fixed Income Division. Photo taken by Robert Curtis.

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Foundation Place

Families who are supported by this service may be experiencing a medical or psychiatric emergency where the parent or caregiver is hospitalized, an emergency move, or the parent's admission into a short-term substance abuse treatment program, among other situations. Foundation Place provides care for up to 10 children aged from birth to 14 for up to 21 days. In addition to meeting immediate needs, Foundation Place staff can also assist families in identifying family and community-based support beyond the short term. Referrals to Foundation Place can come from hospitals, human services organizations (including within Rising Ground), or direct calls to the 24/7 help line (1-888-435-7553) from the parent or caregiver.

For Fatima, a single mother of four including a newborn daughter, Foundation Place met an urgent need when she experienced post-partum complications and had to return to the hospital. Fatima, who currently lives in a shelter, was referred to Foundation Place by a hospital social worker. Initially reluctant, especially about being separated from her newborn, her health situation became life-threatening, and she was admitted. Her social worker encouraged her to call the help line and Rising Ground's Foundation Place staff came to the hospital to pick up the baby and two of Fatima's other daughters aged six and 11.

"They were very quick. They came and picked up my daughters and at the time they picked them up I was able to speak to them. They gave me everyone's phone number, from the director to every staff member, so I could get in touch with my daughters. Even at the wee hours of the night, I was able to FaceTime to make sure everything was okay and to make sure I felt at ease with my baby daughter being away from me."

Foundation Place staff took Fatima's older daughters to and from school, something else she had been concerned about.

"They listened to every detail that I had to tell them about my daughters — what time they had to be picked up, and what time they had to be dropped off. With my newborn, they listened to everything with her as far as her feeding and when I went to pick her up, she was clean and she looked fine. My daughters

didn't have any complaints. My six-year-old didn't want to leave! When the kids don't want to leave, that's a good thing."

Foundation Place Director, Jasmine Ramsey, says Fatima's situation illustrates why center-based respite is so needed.



"We know that there are many parents or guardians who do not have robust support systems. Not being able to find someone to look after their children can sometimes mean they don't want to keep medical appointments or seek care for themselves. With Foundation Place, we strive to reassure them that their children will be safe and well cared for and we work closely with the parent or guardian to find out what their children's specific needs are so they can take the time to care for themselves."

Located in a two-level house in Brooklyn, Foundation Place staff have created a warm and welcoming space, with the bedrooms colorfully decorated for the children and the living spaces bright and cheerful. The basement includes a vibrant play area, and the house has a backyard space allowing for outdoor play.

Fatima is enthusiastically spreading the word about Foundation Place to other single mothers and would not hesitate to use the services again: "I give you guys five out of five." ★