



BECAUSE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN NO LONGER BE LOST TO VIOLENCE AND POVERTY.

# TRUTH, TRUST & TRANSFORMATION

Sulai Rosa-young person

My name is Sulai Rosa, I was a ROCA participant at the age of 12, I am now 24 yrs old. I had a very rough life growing up my parents weren't the best and I had very little of everything my mother was addicted to drugs and my father well most of the time was in jail so I didn't really have him around growing up. When I was about 11 yrs old I started hanging around with Blood Gang Members of Allston and East Boston which at the time weren't cool with people in Chelsea. Desperate to leave my home I got pregnant at the age of 14 by another Blood Gang Member everything took a turn for the worst I got more involved in Gangs even after the birth of my child and by the age of 16 I again conceived another child by the same person., throughout all of this I was smoking more and more weed I was drinking and caring less everyday about my responsibilities I started taking ecstasy pills and doing a lot of drugs by the time I turned 17 I had lost both my daughters to the paternal grandmother and that led to a path of complete destruction in my life. I caused a lot of damage doing the things I did and hurt a lot of good people, people that if I now see with all my heart I will ask them for forgiveness my words would never explain how truly sorry I am to have marked such a terrible scar in their lives. When I finally got caught in 2004 going on 2005 I was arrested by Chelsea Police, and sentenced by court to 1 yr w/ 3months to serve it was nothing for all the crimes I had committed, I then learned that at that time there were no friends and that life is what u make of it that it wasn't too late for me to change and when released from custody I again reached out to ROCA for help and again they never said No. I slowly but progressively changed everything from who I hung out with to the way I spoke and carried myself today throughout this change I have witnessed many of my friends doing serious time in jail most with the possibility of never coming back last year in less than 4 months 4 of my friends sadly passed away one of whom I grew up with in the streets It hurt me terribly to the point where I didn't show up to any of their funerals I really only showed up to two of their wakes and from their I wasn't seen again, I received several phone calls from "old friends" asking me why I didn't go calling me fake and telling me that I forgot where I came from but I didn't forget and will never forget who I was and where I came from I just refuse to go back and surround myself with negativity I felt very disrespected and very uncomfortable because I just didn't want to be a part of that life any more I didn't want to hear or see anything I just wanted to know nothing I felt pain to see that no one is taking the time to see how important our lives are people are just taking lives away as if they were giving that right. I apologize in my own way to my deceased friends. May they Rest in peace. Today I am truly grateful for the opportunity I have been giving to start over to be alive to be free to have a son of whom I can spoil and take care of I am happy to have graduated administrations happy because I have a referral letter from one of the best hospitals stating how it was a pleasure to work with me, happy because I have my own apartment that I worked hard for and with a criminal record believe me it was hard. Happy because I have a life a car that I with hard work paid for I have positive people surrounding me every day of my life, I appreciate everything Susan Ulrich did for me it was a lot of hard work for her but she never gave up and when she left she passed me on to another great person that has had a lot of positive influence in my life Dana Betts she too got a piece of me when I was younger and yet she never denied me help or gave up on me she was persistent and had faith that one day her and Susan will see drastic change in my life. I want to also thank Molly, Anisha, and Angie for supporting me throughout this all they have been an incredible part of my life and I Thank you all for your patience here at ROCA and for the opportunity to continue to better my life.