



Solas Awards Celebration 2020



Dear Friend,

September 1, 2020

I hope you are staying well and enjoying the end of summer.

The Rian Immigrant Center (formerly the Irish International Immigrant Center) is Boston's Welcome Center for over 3,500 immigrant and refugee families annually. Rian empowers immigrants and refugees from more than 120 countries by providing the legal, wellness and educational support they need to build successful lives. Building on our Irish roots of welcoming others and striving for social justice, we help newcomers find community, and we stand up for immigration policies that are humane and just. America is a nation of immigrants, and despite the current political climate, we are proud to continue the tradition of welcoming immigrants to this country and working together to create a better future for all.

Each year, the Center hosts our Solas Awards Celebration, and we are writing to ask you to support our work by donating and sponsoring this year's **global** and virtual event on October 15. We are delighted to be honoring:

Iuventa 10, the 10-person crew of the rescue ship Iuventa – honored for their extraordinary efforts to rescue migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. At a time when the human rights of those seeking refuge are so often violated, Rian stands in solidarity with the crew, recognizing our common mission.

Des Mac Intyre, Chair and CEO of Mellon – honored for his longstanding support of our Center and other philanthropic causes, and for his journey as an Irish immigrant.

Ngozi Okoye, Teacher, mother and Nigerian immigrant – honored for her tremendous courage overcoming personal challenges and fiercely advocating for her sick child. Rian helped Ngozi to obtain a green card and work permit and begin a new life in the US (see below for Ngozi's story).

Atsuko and Larry Fish, honored for supporting thousands of people along the path to citizenship, and for providing emergency relief to immigrant families most impacted by COVID-19.

And the brilliant Irish duo Saint Sister will be performing at Solas this year. Saint Sister has been voted “Best Irish Act” by the readers of The Irish Times. We are so pleased they will be joining us.

The current health crisis is affecting all of us, and the immigrant families with whom we work are particularly impacted. We remain fully committed to providing legal, education and wellness services to immigrant and refugee families. Our attorneys are providing legal support via phone and video calls, prioritizing those who are at most risk of negative legal, health, and economic repercussions stemming from COVID-19. Our social workers are providing emotional and practical support, and our teachers are leading English classes and career coaching sessions by video and phone.

Rian has taken a lead role in founding the Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative, a diverse group of 15 immigrant support organizations, which is disbursing emergency relief to immigrant families experiencing economic hardship. Since March 2020, we have assisted thousands of immigrant families. Additionally, Rian recently received national attention in stopping the federal administration from deporting immigrant children with cancer by filing a lawsuit with the help of Goodwin and ACLU. Our work is vitally important.

We ask you to consider making a gift as soon as possible given the extraordinary needs of immigrant families at this time. Please find attached sponsorship information. Gifts can be made online at www.riancenter.org, or by calling Ronnie at 617-710-4668, or by e-mailing rmillar@riancenter.org.

Thank you for your consideration, and stay well and safe.



Ronnie Millar
Executive Director



Kevin Mawe
President, Board of Directors



Saint Sister
Morgan Mac Intyre and Gemma Doherty



Ngozi Okoye, Rian Courage Award

In 2015 Ngozi Okoye stepped out of Beijing, China's terminal onto the plane to America. She took with her a Master's in information and communication engineering. Soon she would marry a naturalized American, her friend from their hometown in Nigeria. She could not believe how far she had traveled.

One year later, she had no phone, no car, no job. Post fibroid surgery, she was in deep pain. Worse, her fiancé, now husband, was enraged that her surgery had delayed his plan: babies right away. He berated and isolated her, and became violent. Her family back home was not supportive. "Don't shame us," her mother said.

Ngozi tried to get pregnant so her husband would be happy. When she did, he was furious. One night she nearly miscarried and her husband choked her. "Nobody will know what happened to you," he said. Miraculously, she did not miscarry, but her husband abandoned her taking their furniture and their savings. She slept on the floor. She worried about rent, groceries and her visa status.

Through it all, Ngozi persevered. She got a job at a school for children with special needs and earned a raise and a promotion. Ngozi went into labor four months early. The day her son, Kamzi, was born was the best day of her life. He had sickle cell anemia, but he was alive and delicious. Still, their lives were precarious.

She went to the Rian Immigrant Center and met with attorney Jacqueline (Jackie) Kelley. When the receptionist kindly asked, "Do you want a cup of tea?" Ngozi felt welcomed. If Kamzi cried, Jackie held him. "Anytime I go to Rian Immigrant Center, I get my energy back," says Ngozi.

In just over a year, Jackie helped Ngozi file her permanent resident application. She coordinated with Okoye's family law attorney to both get a divorce and gain custody of her son. She coordinated legal appointments around Kamzi's medical care. And just as importantly, together Jackie and Okoye culled through her worst experiences to craft a powerful narrative of Okoye's survival. And strength. That narrative supported her legal case, but it also restored Okoye's sense of self. When Ngozi first came to Rian, Jackie remembers, she was frantic, desperate. Now when they talk, Ngozi's voice is hopeful. "She is strong and independent," says Jackie.

Five years after her plane touched down at Logan Airport, Ngozi is studying to become a teacher. She has enrolled Kamzi in preschool. She has her own phone, car, home and a green card. Next year, with Rian's support, she will become an American citizen.



SPONSOR SOLAS

PRESENTING SPONSOR | \$50,000

- Video included in event program
- Full-page advertisement in program book
- Recognition from emcee during event
- Prominent visibility during event and in media
- Name and logo on Rian website
- Other benefits to be discussed

PATHWAY SPONSOR | \$30,000

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- Recognition from emcee during event
- Visibility during event
- Name and logo on Rian website
- Name and logo included in event promotion

EMPOWERING SPONSOR | \$15,000

- Full -page advertisement in program book
- Visibility during event
- Name and logo on Rian website
- Name and logo included in event promotion

OPPORTUNITY SPONSOR | \$10,000

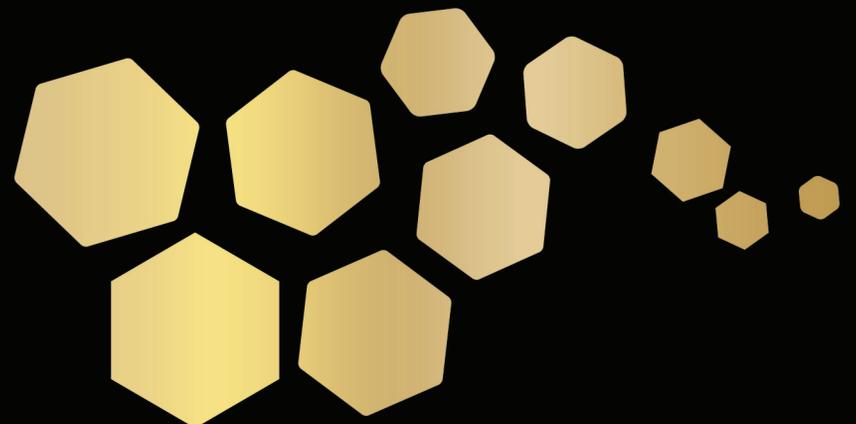
- Half-page advertisement in program book
- Visibility during event
- Name on Rian website
- Name and logo included in event promotion

WELCOMING SPONSOR | \$5,000

- Quarter-page advertisement in program book
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- Name on Rian website
- Name included in event promotion

PARTNER | \$3,000

- Visibility during event
- Name on Rian website



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We would like to sponsor the 2020 Solas Awards Celebration at the following level:

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- * Pathway | \$30,000
- * Empowering | \$15,000
- * Opportunity | \$10,000
- * Welcoming | \$5,000
- * Partner | \$3,000
- * We are unable to participate, but please accept our contribution of \$ _____

PLEASE LIST US AS (for sponsor recognition) _____

*I would like my gift to remain anonymous

Contact Name _____

Title _____

Company _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

- * Check (payable to the Rian Immigrant Center)
- * Card number: _____
Expiration Date: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

* Please send me an invoice

FOR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT
Sari Foundas | 617-542-7654 x47 | sfoundas@riancenter.org

