**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry transcript**

**Lisa MacVittie** 00:00

I'm the last survivor of the Holocaust in our family.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:04

Behind the words, pictures and artifacts in the museum are people whose stories of survival and hope come alive to inspire new generations of upstanders. One by one these stories stir the soul.

**Al Miller** 00:18

Can there really be hope for us?

**Bella Ouziel** 00:21

Mine was 40018. My sister was 40017

**Jackie Congedo** 00:28

Holocaust survivors, their descendants, liberators, champions of justice and courageous upstanders ask only this, hear my story, so that the lessons they teach will echo for generations.

**Elisha Wiesel** 00:41

I will never meet someone else like my father. But there are many of us who if we come together, can keep his voice alive.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:48

These stories will change you, they will move you to action, inspiring the best of humanity every day. I'm Jackie Congedo. And today we're sharing our conversation with Rosemary Oglesby-Henry. We honored Rosemary's decades of work with teenage parents by awarding her the Rochel Boymel award for love at the 2024 upstander awards. Rochel Boymel lived in what is now Ukraine with her four children, including her son Sam. In 1942, the Boymels and thousands of their neighbors were rounded up and taken to be murdered by Nazi collaborators. Even as she faced imminent death Rochel urged her son Sam to run, as it was his last hope to survive. Sam became a partisan and miraculously survived the war. Although he lost his entire family, and eventually built a new life in Cincinnati, he never forgot his mother and her final act of love and sacrifice, and his story is shared in our museum in Union Terminal. Continuing in that theme of love, upstander Rosemary Oglesby-Henry joined us in this episode, to discuss how showing love and support to people facing pregnancy who are young can make all the difference. Rosemary, it is so, so exciting. It's such an honor to be here in our museum, talking with you today about your own journey as an upstander, about the awards and this big win that you had on June 2. And about, about how you're thinking about what this award means to you, and this concept of being an upstander moving forward, how you're thinking about continuing in that upstander journey. So first of all, welcome.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 02:31

Thank you. Thank you, I'm excited to be here. And I am humbled by the honor, and just the opportunity to be able to share my story. And I pray that people appreciate my thoughts and you know, just the road it took and journey to get here. But no more than, you know, sitting in this museum and seeing the journey that so many others the walk before me had to go through. So yeah,

**Jackie Congedo** 03:00

yeah. Yeah. So let's start there. I mean, we're sitting right now in our museum in Union Terminal. Behind us is our installation called Mosaic, which is all about humanity. It's, it's, it's was really important when we design the museum that the first thing people saw when they came out of the orientation, film, and theater was not death, but life. And so this is actually we're sort of sitting in the living room of what Jewish life was like before the war, and you know, people's everyday humanity. And I think it's the perfect place to have this conversation, because because of your work in the space of in the space of lifting up the best of humanity. So tell me, I mean, coming down to the museum, walking through you, you mentioned, you know, giving a giving perspective for you around the journeys, of so many people who've been through hardship, tell me a little bit more of your reflection on being in this space. And, you know, thinking about your own story in the context of that.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 04:11

Just being in the space. It reminds you of how people don't show empathy, how society doesn't activate in kindness about how people sometimes believe that they are doing good, but if the greater good and poses pain, how is it good? And so being here, and this moment is very powerful. It is a reminder of not just what the people who are on these walls walk through, but people like my grandmother, you know, who came from the south as a young parent and what she had to go through in order to To be this great grandmother and great powerhouse, and you know what these tan parents will have to face as young mothers in a society where it lacks compassion. And so as I'm just sitting in here, I'm just thinking of resilience and power and feeling that there is so much more that I can do and offer, because I stand on the shoulders of giants.

**Jackie Congedo** 05:29

Wow. So I want to take us back to the second to the upstander awards. 800 people was a big, big moment as you were honored with the Sam Boymel and Rochel Boymel award for love... Sam's mother. And we'll talk a little bit more about the history behind the award later in the conversation. But just take me back to like, that moment, you didn't know it was coming?

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 05:57

No, it wasn't like you all never tell people that they're gonna win, which we did exciting and scary all at the same time. And I am never like really shocked and without words. And so there was some really great people that were finalists, and that were being honored and recognize. And, you know, I'm looking at the thing, and I'm like, what my strengths are this. So you know, I just felt really great being able to be in the room. And in that moment with my daughter, who was there, and how proud she was of me just for being able to be in that room. I think it has something to do with Debra Messing too. But

**Jackie Congedo** 06:43

That's right. Your daughter is a big Debra Messing fan.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 06:45

Yes, yes, yes, we we used to watch movies together. Yes, I would fall asleep because I worked two jobs. But we watched the her movies together. And so to be able to give her that moment. So when they call my name. And I looked up and saw Debra Messing smiling and the people on the stage smiling, and I just didn't, I just couldn't breathe in that moment. And, you know, to have my daughter, I have to call her up. And she walked on stage with me not because I was tripping over my dress, which I was. But just because I couldn't see from the tears, and just from the over whelming moment that people don't recognize you for love for emotions, because people oftentimes say there's no emotion in business, there's no emotion that you can have when you're dealing with a certain population that you have to separate it. So to be recognized for love. I felt that it was again, just so humbling. And it was God in that moment. And there is no greater award or recognition that I've received us for that can top this for love.

**Jackie Congedo** 07:59

Wow. And that moment with your daughter up there with you. I think you've probably grabbed her to come up on stage with you. Or maybe she was helping you up. I don't know, the two of you, it was hard to tell who was leading who. But you were, we were talking earlier that, you know, she she said, on stage, that's my mom. You know, and that you didn't even

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 08:26

No, because the person that was giving me an honor was talking to me, I got tears all over the place. I'm never disheveled or anything. And in this moment, like you all had me completely spent. And so when I watched the video afterwards, again, it was a reminder, you know, as parents, sometimes not sometimes all the times, we base our success and base, you know how successful we are on life on our children. And as a young mother, it wasn't enough for me to get degrees and everything else, I had to make sure that I was a good mother for her. So in that moment, for her to declare in front of everybody, like I'm proud of her. You know, I've done that so many times for my daughter. So for her to do within that moment. Again, for an award for love. It represented everything that she and I are together. And everything that I put into my children so that when they set out into the world, that's what they can show. First and foremost, loving kindness.

**Jackie Congedo** 09:37

Wow. Oh, if we need tissues, we know right? I have no doubt we may and for the rest of the conversation but but thank you for, for telling us about what that meant to you. So, now that we've given everybody sort of a taste of what's to come, I want to take it all the way back to the beginning of your journey, your upstander journey and you know It's interesting. We say upstanders, you know, aren't aren't built or, you know, they're they're not made, they're built, right. This is, this is not something that you just wake up one day and but in your case, you know, your journey started, as many do from from a moment of challenge.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 10:18

Yes.

**Jackie Congedo** 10:19

And it was, it was actually the choice that you made, how you were going to respond to the challenge that dictated the rest of your journey. And that has guided you. Take me all the way back to the very beginning. You're a you're a teenager, and you find out you're pregnant.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 10:36

Yeah, I think that it actually started before I read the background story of Mr. Boymel. And I found myself stuck on the word "ghetto." We were kind of talking about that earlier. And we are alike in so many ways, because what I learned was a ghetto really, is this place that they use for minorities and Jews in order to ostracize them? Because they want to keep them locked in. They want people to know, these people are not worthy, and dehumanize, yes, and dehumanize. And I started there too. And again, oh, and you know, what we now call the hood or whatever. And so, you know, my journey started there, you know, a father that was on drugs, being in a community that we you know, that I saw a lot of violence, and going into schools, that basically didn't think that you will be more than a nurse, or more you, but most of us wouldn't even graduate from high school. And for our brown boys, they wouldn't even see the age of 18. And so, again, we are so alike in those ways. So before we ever get to me becoming a teen parent, it started from the womb and started from childhood, where people will this community took life out of you. They didn't breathe it into you. So by the time I got pregnant at the age of 16, and my dad's on drugs mother didn't really know what to do. I'm a fourth generation to parent, you know, I believe that education was power. And though I was destroyed a student, I made a choice. And from that choice, I became a mother. And it was very difficult to have someone else take control of, you know, your situation saying, Hey, you're pregnant. Your your option is this, you know, you have to finish school, you know, to keep that motivation to want to finish to walk through hallways, where people have labeled you. Can you imagine being a straight A student in honors you got I had scholarships for college. And now I'm being labeled by a one time choice that I made in one of my darkest hours. And overnight, I was expected to be an adult, I was expected to know how to be a mother. I was expected to know what it was to make decisions that, you know, no one had ever taught me. I was expected to know how to get through. And so when I had this baby, well, actually, before I had her, I didn't even know if I wanted to be a mom. I had no true example, from the environment that I was living in. Who's the example? You know, the Cosby Shows and what is a mom? What is a good dad? And further, her, her dad, I knew was just as young as me. So how do I do this? And so my example was the Cosby Show, like, Okay, this is the example.

**Jackie Congedo** 14:08

Yeah.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 14:08

Okay. Let me read up what it means to be a good mother, you know, and so when I had her, from the moment that I looked at her, I named her Jaliah, which means "God lives within you." And I was like, I promise you, I will be everything that I needed somebody to be to me. I promise you that I will not fail you. And every step that I took, I would remind her, it's just me and you just a su and so working and forging towards getting my bachelor's degree, getting married because society said that you had to have two parents in the home, especially if you are a black person. You know, this is what's the says looks like this is the American dream. And I wanted that, not for me, but so that she never felt like a statistic so that she never felt different. That is a pressure on a kid that nobody would ever understand. And in the mindset overnight, I had to transition from child to adult, Child's a parent. So my childhood was null and void at 16. These are the choices that these teens have to make. And society showed me no empathy. It was blow after blow. And with those blows came strength, came power, came a faith that surpassed our understanding, but never any peace. So I could understand on your journey, how you're striving, and you're moving, and you don't even have time to look back and celebrate any of the successes or what you've overcome, because you're too busy trying to get there. So here I am, I finish bachelor's degree, and that was for her, no matter what you go through, you know, you finished a goal, no matter how that road swerves and turns, you stay focused. And then she actually talked me into going into my master's degree, oh, my God, because I was like, you know, I'm not like them, you know, I'm going to Mount St. Joseph University to people don't look like me. Socio- economically they're like, way up here. I'm a postal worker, you know? Because I spent 17 years there. And I'm like, I don't talk like them. I don't look like them. And she's like, "Mom, I'll help you."

**Jackie Congedo** 16:35

How old was she?

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 16:37

She was walking into her her first year in college. So she was 18. And it's in those moments, again, that you say, you look deep inside of yourself. And you say you did good. Yeah, yeah, you did good. And she and she did, she helped me. And she helped me also to understand that different is good. I didn't have to talk like the people at Mount St. Joseph. Because I was like, man, if I get a master's, I got to talk like a dictionary. And I was like, I want to be, I want to always be able to relate to people. Yeah, I don't want to get a master's degree and feel like I'm above anybody, I just want to be Rose, you know. And so I built a program while I was in my masters, at Mount St. Joseph had some really great teachers, who held my hand at times, who, you know, walked me through this program and reminded me that I deserve to be there, that I will succeed. And I built this program so that teen parents can master the concepts of self leadership, to leave a legacy. And for me, being a grandma's girl, Legacy wasn't about money, but it's how you live and what you leave behind. And legacy - legacy can be a story, like what we're reading here, it can be impact. It can be, of course, it could be money, but it's your name, and how people remember you. And so I opened Rosemary's babies company, almost a year after graduating from our St. Joseph. That was how many years ago that was in 2016. And I guess, eight years ago. And where we are now is, we still have a society that doesn't show empathy towards the young mother or the young father, we still have a society that is blaming and doesn't understand that prior to obtain laying down with somebody, there was trauma, there was something else there. And we need to offer them kindness, we need to activate them love, we need to educate them. Because if we don't, we will cripple the next generations. And that just can't happen. Yeah.

**Jackie Congedo** 19:02

Incredible. I mean, it's really a remarkable story and achievement. And you know, now I'm thinking about just the meaning of you sharing how meaningful this award was, and thinking about how many steps along the way, and how far you've come? How incredible that of all the things you've been through that this was such a shining moment for you just to be able to actually take the pause and look back and celebrate just live in the moment of like your daughter said, That's my mom, you deserve this. Really, it was really special was awesome. To be there and witness it was really palpable. So thanks for sharing, sharing more about your story. Can you tell us a little bit about the advocacy work that you do? We'll talk more more in a moment about sort of the the service support of these moms. But from an advocacy standpoint, you know, there are parts policies, right, that are in place that are either helpful or harmful. As you know, people are on their own journeys in motherhood. And can you tell us a little bit about what you're what you're working on in your advocacy?

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 20:14

Yeah, so right now, they're very limited policy policies and legislation related to teen parents. During the height of teenage parenting, which was in the 90s, there were over a million teens that became pregnant. And the focus was prevention, you know. To support a teen parent was like, Oh, my God, you can't do that. That was Oh, my God, you, you know, you're supporting pregnancy and teens having, you know, where you can't even say the word, are so conservative. So when I actually started Rosemary's Babies Company, people thought by supporting the team parent, I was promoting teen teen sex, and you know, and that wasn't the case, the babies were here, and who is supposed to help them transition from child to parent? Who's supposed to help them transition from child to adult, because again, they're having to make choices, because they are the parental, they're the parent over the child, you know. So for advocacy, it began with just helping people to understand that by supporting a teen parent, you are not promoting promiscuity, you're not promoting that teens should go out and have babies because they'll get support. So just the limited amount of knowledge that people didn't even want to register was difficult. So a part of my advocacy is education. So in May, they it's actually Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. And so we actually change try to change that into youth, pregnancy and parenthood awareness, to say, we are all for prevention, I tell all these girls, okay, you had one, stop, until it's your time, you know, until you are ready for a family. But then we wanted to make sure that people understood and supported those that have made the choice to parent. Because what people fail to understand is, when a young girl or even a woman determines that they're going to conceive. And we will say more than 80% of pregnancies are unplanned in the US. So when a woman makes the decision to conceive, or when a woman gets pregnant, we'll start there, there's only three options, abortion adoption, or you're gonna have, you're gonna have the baby, all three of those options are hard, especially when they don't have support from the Father, family, community, or even the government. So when a team determines that they want to, they want to actually have their baby and raise their baby, there is no legislation on the books that protects them from a mother, who they might live with that tortures them while you know, they attempt to raise this baby. Sure, baby, take care of it. And you're like, how am I supposed to I'm 14, I can't work. There's no legislation that allows them to go get a birth certificate for their baby, so that they are able to enroll them in a daycare, because guess what, they can't enroll them in daycare, because they're minors. The teen parent is caught in a gray area. And I smile because today I got a yellow at the words I did. So yellow represents light, it represents God. But the gray in our colors represents the gray areas that teams are stuck in. But what they also have to move through the gray that follows them around. It's an overcast over their life that constantly tries to block out their light. And so that's what we're doing when we're trying to change the trajectory and the outlook for teen parents. And so my advocacy work begins with having informed conversations like the one we're having now. It begins to with educating our teen parents on their rights, not just with their parents, but in schools, and office spaces, and even when they have their babies in hospitals, because they are not always treated well. There's so many different ways to advocate. But the first and foremost is always, always share a message. And when you see a teen parent, don't apologize because she had her baby late advocate for her life and tell her she's doing good that she matters, that her baby matters, and then everything's gonna be okay.

**Jackie Congedo** 25:03

Wow. I think also about just, you know, the work of education, like you said, you know, there's there's lots of policy and advocacy to do but this, this critical education gap, right? And what is what is effective education? You know, we think about this all the time in our work and Holocaust education, it's actually it's actually just forcing someone or an audience to confront the humanity in the story. So just by living who you are, and having these conversations, it forces people to say, this idea that I have of, of a teen mom, now I have to reconcile that with this woman who's sitting in front of me, yes, and the humanity of this person. And the fact that, you know, I might have put in a box what that journey looks like, or what that situation looks like. But I'm hearing and I'm listening, and I'm being educated on what it actually was from a lived experience from from a human being. And that is, I think, what transforms people. I think that kind of education grounded in human humanity, and humanizing does. It shifts perspective, it breaks down the stereotypes that we have, that we built.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 26:18

Even sitting in this room, like you start with light. When I inform people about the team parent again, when I started, nobody wanted to - as soon as I said, Teen Parent Pregnancy. They were like, Oh, no. So I started saying teen parents. And I started by showcasing their light. Yeah. And I refuse to tell their story of pain and their trauma. Because I wanted people to focus on what it is like 14, when she supersedes all odds. And so even on our board, I made sure that I went and recruited those that were teen parents, that or engineers, and VPs, and doctors, because they're all there. But they don't share their own personal story. Because the pain that's attached to it. And by me sharing my story, and me advocating for them to share theirs. It gives life's life to it, it gives light to it, and it gives you permission to tell yourself you did good. And for some of us, we did more than just just good. We did great.

**Jackie Congedo** 27:33

Yeah. Yeah. I'm wondering, too, you know, when we think about upstanders, there's something that makes? Well, that's the question we ask, right? It's like, what is it about these people who stand up throughout history in our world today? What makes them different? Is it just that they're special? Or they have something unique? Or is it that actually we all have the potential in us to activate through a character strength, in your case, love or any number of others that you so beautifully carry with you? But I'm curious, like, you're living this life, that so many other people have lived? That came before you, like you said four generations of teen parents. Before you, your peers and others in your orbit? You cited the statistics. What changed? What was I mean, what was that moment of activating for you? In your, in your strength, that actually changed your trajectory that shifted for you on to this path of upstanding, like, what, what was it?

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 28:41

The actual shift came when me and my daughter were housing insecure. To... there was a family that took us in. And this family's kindness meant everything to me. They didn't want to charge us to stay there. They didn't want to be paid for watching my daughter. This woman and her family loved me. And it was because of their love. That I literally said to myself, and I always made these declarations. It didn't have to be this hard, but I'm going to make sure that it's not this hard for anybody else. So at 17 I made this declaration in my life, not only am I going to make sure that my daughter is good, and I'm going to be the best for her. I'm gonna make sure that I change this for anybody else. Because a teen parent shouldn't have should be out there on their, on their own. When we have community, when we have family, the pain of your blood, turning their back on you, and times, not necessarily to punish you, but because they feel like that it will force you to be resilient. And people don't always understand. That doesn't help everybody. For some, it pushes you but for others, it can take you in the wrong direction. And at that pivotal moment, you have to decide when somebody is imposing pain and pressure on you, which way will you go. And if you are strong enough, we understand that pressure makes diamonds. And for me, you can't break me in in that moment, you might bend me, but I don't break. And so at 17, I had to take that moment, and I kept that. And in moments of darkness and sadness, I used it. I did and to push myself forward. No one can beat you down lower than you but no one can lift you up higher than you. And I willed myself to so many situations, whether it was times where I was sick and couldn't get out the bed times where I had to work two jobs times that my daughter who everybody believes is so nice and kind will write these I hate mommy poems and letters. And withstand that emotion to say, I will love you to this pain, I will love you. While I don't love myself, I will love you once society has turned their back on me. And then rose, you will love yourself more than anybody else in the way that God loves you with that agape love. And you will push through. And you continue to to let that ring in your head and your heart. Where do you got to put it on a refrigerator or put it in your car? Or just put it anywhere? Barriers don't break you move forward? Look up.

**Jackie Congedo** 32:29

Wow. So this is this is this is what you're telling teen mothers today. And and I can just I mean, the beautiful balance that you have of that grit, and resilience and fortitude. And the love and compassion is so it's really a magic sauce, you can tell. And I mean, the data, what you've been able to do speaks for itself to tell us a little bit about what you're working on now. Maybe you're smelling and I think you're going to talk about the scalability. Yes, I want to hear about I want to hear about this amazing new space, which I need to come visit. Yes. But I also want to hear just like anecdotally share a couple of anecdotes of, of a women of girls who you have helped along the way and sort of take me to moments of transformation for them that were really meaningful for you.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 33:29

What was the transformation?

**Jackie Congedo** 33:32

You have any that's like standout? I'm sure there's like, four a day? Yeah, knowing you.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 33:37

And the thing about it is like, when I when I have these moments where they call like these girls calling, they're excited and everything. I want to make sure that they don't that they take ownership of what they did. It's not me, I just maybe set a good word or whatever. But so they're so exciting. And the first person that comes to mind is like Thai. And like Thai. When I met her she was pregnant. She was walking everywhere like miles to work, and didn't even believe that she would graduate high school. She was living with her child's father's family because her mother didn't necessarily have enough room for her. So to see her now, she is working at I believe Children's Hospital. She now has a second child engage. She's, you know, working on becoming an RN. And she just moved in like a house or something like that. And so follow her on social media and see her joy. Her little boy is like talking and develop developmentally on target, which is so great. Because we understand again, the educational barriers, the odds are stacked. Yeah. Then I can think of another girl who, you know, just graduated from college, and is getting married. So to see these girls like getting married, or getting engaged is so dope. And, you know, just even the little wins. You know, I just had a girl graduate from high school, and I'm seeing girls get their first jobs that are above minimum wage. And so really looking into alternative avenues for work, you know, because when you're a teen, everybody says, go to McDonald's go here. But we advocate, there are so many other choices that can start off a great career path. While I did not care for working at the post office, it did financially set me up to become a home owner, and led the charge for my entire family to be your sisters and brothers to be homeowners and things like that. And so to have teams working in the hospitals, working at the Cincinnati Zoo, working, you know, for at the Kroger Company and things like that are remarkable. And so I'm excited to hear those stories to to help a young father because we help fathers as well see their vision to open their own daycare. And so again, excited about everything that they're doing. And I don't care if it's just a small win that Miss Rosemary I paid all my bills on time this year, or I Miss Rosemary, I started a bank account. So just so many different things that they don't know and didn't understand. And I think they the best one for me is when babies come in and my see moms with bellies to see those babies take their first steps. And so but I guess the one that's a tear jerker was when kids can't say rosemary, of course. So I have the kids call me, Wosie. And so when the first kid called me, Wosie, I about lost it. And so I'm just grateful that they, they allow me an opportunity to see and be a part of their world just a little, even if it's just a moment.

**Jackie Congedo** 37:20

So you're building this facility, which hopefully I would imagine will allow you to be maybe part of their worlds for a little bit more than a moment. Tell me about where the vision for this came from, what the plans are, where you are in building it. And what you hope it will mean for for the folks you serve?

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 37:38

Yes. So in 2021, with COVID hit, they shut down everybody's life, right, put everybody on lockdown. And what we found was that 35% of our team, mothers and fathers were homeless, and there was nowhere for them to go. If they actually were parenting. If they were pregnant. They had somewhere to go, but once they delivered their babies, they will be homeless. And I was upset. Like I was super upset because I'm like, Wait, my daughter is late, you know, in her 20s. Now, you mean to tell me you still haven't resolved this problem is nowhere. 40 years ago, this was made, like, two decades shouldn't still be happening.

**Jackie Congedo** 38:21

Yeah, right. Yeah.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 38:22

And so I went to all of the big people, you know, I went to the city. I went here, I went there. And they're like, and what we found was one, there was no legislation on the books, to even be able to open a facility like what we're opening. And to nobody had even thought about it. Because you know what they told me, it was too hard. I hadn't met you. Yeah, imagine is too hard. And so, around this same time, my grandmother Rose, who was either 93 or 96. She came from Tennessee. So her name was written on a Bible with a date. And there was two different dates. So she was either 93 or 96. She passed away. And she lived in Edison on a street, Holloway. And she took in all of these people. She had, like a three bedroom house if that. And she just would feed people and she would take them in. And even though she had seven kids of her own. And when she passed away, I sat by her side. And in that moment, I'm like Grandma, thank you, you know, because she also would be my safe place when I was a teen. And so I remember waking up every night and hearing the name Holloway house. And what I learned is, God will discipline you when you don't listen. And so I'm like I am not opening no building. You know, we're three years old, you know We don't even have any money, I'm still not taking a salary. You know, my husband is about the on the brink of like putting me out if I take on one more charge, but God charged me with this assignment. And so Holloway house became this. This goal, I wouldn't even say it a vision, because it wasn't my vision, I didn't even want to do it. And so we actually began this plight to purchase this property through the port authority in the community where I grew up. And so I want it teams to be able to see this light in a place that can be so dark, and they can pull you in. And so I wanted to build there. And so the community didn't want it, though. So we were in this like, battle with the community where, you know, questions of my competence, you know, questions regarding finances, just so many things. And the pain that came with that, where you're like, I've got all these degrees. I've got these, you know, awards, I've got this plan. I've got the best people around me. But people are still questioning me. Can you imagine that pain sitting there? Where you're like, I did all of this to surpass why I would no longer have to explain who I am to prove who I am. I thought glass ceilings were breaking and broken. You know. So again, it wasn't just that I was Black. It wasn't just that I was a woman, it wasn't just that I was a teen mother, it was all of these things. And people were questioning that. But what's one thing about me, I'm gonna fight. And I'm gonna prove you wrong. And that is what we did when we convinced the entire city to get behind this project. And we did after almost two years, acquired a 7000 square foot facility that we are in the process of renovating, where every fixture, every wall color, every painting on the wall is a it has meaning. And I wanted kids to know that even when I'm not there, that I'm there, and the person that built this love them. And so I named the house Holloway House for my grandmother, who was a teen parent, forged her way from Tennessee at the age of 15 supported all these people. And I wanted to give acknowledgement for her. Because it is her strength that runs through my veins, and is her name that I carry on. And so the house will be able to house seven moms and their babies, and it will provide resources for teen parents, mothers and fathers will be able to increase our capacity. And it is the model for the states because there is nothing like it. It is the first of its kind in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. And I'm very proud of that work. However, we attach advocacy with it. Because we are only one. And we need so much more when there are over 3000 babies born just in Hamilton County alone every year. But I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish.

**Jackie Congedo** 43:46

And when does it open?

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 43:48

We hope to open in fall. Like everything else, I'm learning about development. I'm learning so many skills that I just never even learn it all is so I'm just glad I'm a little bit of a nerd. Okay, I'm a lot of a nerd. And so I'm learning about development, I'm learning, I've learned so much on this journey. And, and I'm and I'm giving it all back and teaching others everything, all of the tools that I've learned and connecting people with the resources as well. So...

**Jackie Congedo** 44:20

So special, I'm really excited to see it and to see it in action and what a difference. You know, think about the ripple effect, and the multiplier of that right. And it's like you say there's only room for seven. And I completely hear that this is a much bigger problem that we can solve with one person opening one home but but think about one that one person and their baby and what happens yes, yes. If if they meet the person who can cover them in love. You know, and the multipliers of that. I mean, you know, you were one and now they're seven every year or whatever. And then there's seven more and so you know This is a, this is a really powerful ripple that you're starting.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 45:03

Yeah. And I think it takes it back to your, your statement of we all have it in us to do. And some don't do it because of fear. Some don't do it because they feel like, wow, I don't have the ability to build this house or I don't have the, but people fail to understand it starts with you. You don't have to build this house. You don't have to have millions, it starts again, which is one, one, you just help one person. It changes everything. Yes. You know, and so for those that are out there, seeking purpose, purpose doesn't have to be this huge thing like, Oh, I gotta be like, No, my purpose started long before there was ever a Holloway House before there was ever Rosemary's Babies. It started just as young girl who was a mother saying, You know what, I got to do this for my baby. But along the way, I'm going to help others I want to volunteer in church, I'm going to educate my brother and sister who were teen parents, I'm going to educate now my nieces and nephews who are all adults that I call my faves, but educate them too, so that they are giving. I'm gonna set the example. So a lot of times change starts with that, too. But change starts with just being kind.

**Jackie Congedo** 46:22

Yeah, yeah, one step at a time, and really is one choice one step at a time. So I want to sort of end where we began. And, you know, revisit the the award, but also, I was hearing you talk about your grandmother's legacy, you are her legacy, right, and so many others who she helped generations later and still to come, you know, your daughter will be and I'm thinking about the legacy of the the woman who, who the award was named after Rochel Boymel. You know, for those who, who don't know, the story of Sam Boymel and his mother Rochel. You know, Sam was, was as a child at the time in, in Eastern Europe, where his family was living. And as the war came to his town, and the Nazis came to his town, he and his mother and their family, were in one of these episodes of mass killing, where they didn't realize it. But they were being basically rounded up and marched to the edge of town and, and murdered bullet by bullet. And Sam's mother, Rochel, another mom, who had love in her heart for her child, knew what was coming, she saw when she realized what was happening. And her immediate instinct, as I think we all as mothers can relate to was to say, I'm going to cover my child run, she said, "Run my child, run." And she, and he ran, and he was pushed back by someone who was there. And she said, "Run, run again." And he ran again, and he made it into the woods. And as you've read, you know, heard the bullets flying by his ears and heard the screams behind him and knew, unfortunately, came to find out later that his whole family had been killed. And that second time, what always always gets me is before she sent him to go, she took her scarf off, and she covered him in her scarf, because it was cold. And she, you know, just one last act, I can't care. I know, I'm not gonna be to care for you anymore. And so I think about the ripple of what happened on June 2, which was generations of that impact, that act of love, which saved her son. And then her grandson, Steve, who is a member of our... Steve Boymel, a member of our Board of Trustees, and so active in all of our work, and in the community, you know, was here, because of that one act of love to be there on stage with you to say, "In honor of my grandmother," who by the way, I was talking to Steve, they don't even have any pictures of her to lift up this legacy of love, and to say, "You are a ripple of love in your time. And you deserve a moment to celebrate that." Can you just share a little bit about meeting Steve, understanding more about his story and his family story? And what you're filled with as you as you think more about that.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 49:46

So while I was on stage, like I said, I didn't hear my daughter's comment, because he was talking to me and I didn't realize that I had met him before. through a mutual friend. And, you know, and in that moment, again, I just felt so honored. Because my strength-based test was always in it, I took their strength thing... Yeah, it was in leadership and spirituality. And it was Jake, who actually - you interviewed him, I watched it. Yes, it was Jake, that said, it took leadership and strength to do with you what you do, but you do it in love. And in the moment to be on stage with Steve, and when he hugged me, and in that moment of love, I could just feel it all around me. And again, to know that it was God's light. Because I had been going through so much, to build this house, to know what it took to get here to know what it took to take my daughter through college, to know what it took to continue to have love in your heart, when the world has been so unkind to you, so to see that these people that, you know, are on these walls, are still able to activate in that, again, it's powerful, it's humbling to know that he had a grandmother too. That the person that honored me, we are so alike, in more ways than one. And I am grateful and I am appreciative. Truly. And of all the accolades that I've received. This one I know truly is of God. And I will continue my work, because there's just so much more to do. And I have people looking at me, and they're watching, and I don't want to fail them. Not at all, not even a little bit.

**Jackie Congedo** 52:08

Well, now you have a whole family of people here at the Holocaust & Humanity Center, and, and all of our friends who are listening and watching, who are cheering you on too, and part of your crew, and grateful for all that you're doing in the world, to answer the call of history, through that strength of love, and leadership and spirituality, and the wonderful constellation of strengths that you bring to the world and to our community into your work. And to all of these babies, who are gonna go on to do amazing things just like you did, because you stepped in and helped with some love. So it's such a privilege to have you here. I know you're gonna join us for the 5k Yeah, we're gonna have to like, I don't know how we'll do it. But folks need to see a picture of the 5k shirt, which says upstander...

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 53:03

Be an upstander. Activate in kindness and love.

**Jackie Congedo** 53:07

Oh my gosh.

**Rosemary Oglesby-Henry** 53:08

like, again, I feel so honored. And they're bright yellow, because everybody at the awards show was like, she's not wearing yellow. And I was like, I'm not like a yellow brand. You know, it's just my favorite color. But yeah, we wanted to do something really special. And let people know, like, you know, this is great what you are doing. And it's more than just an award it's against, you're embedded in a history. And once you know better, you need to do better. You know? And it doesn't necessarily have to relate to you, you know, race, socioeconomics. It's just when you learn of something that you have the ability to participate in the change, be the change. Don't wait for somebody else to do it.

**Jackie Congedo** 53:57

Yeah. Well, I think that's a good way to end our conversation. And it's a good thing for people to take with them today as they're listening. Thank you so much for everything you're doing for coming and just going on this journey with me over the last hour and I know we're all better off for having been part of part of your journey. So to make sure you don't miss an episode, subscribe to our channel on YouTube. Let us know your thoughts on this episode. Our email is in the show notes. You can also connect with us on Instagram and Tiktok @holocaust&humanity. X and Facebook @cincyhhc. Hear My Story is a production of the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center. The center's mission is to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust inspire action today. This series is part of the Cynthia & Harold Guttman Family Center for Storytelling, and is generously supported by Margaret & Michael Valentine. Visit us in person at historic Union Terminal in Cincinnati, Ohio, or online at Holocaustandhumanity.org Executive Producers are David Wise and Jackie Congedo. Managing producer is Anne Thompson. Consulting Producer is Joyce Kamen. Technical Producer is Robert Mills. Technical Director is Josh Emerson. Select music is by Kick Lee. This is recorded at the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.