



# Press Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Awards *Community Grant* to the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association**

*Charitable grant will enable foster youth to obtain critical advocacy training skills*

**Boston, MA, June 28, 2007** – The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Corp., a nonprofit, tax-exempt entity established by attorneys from Brown Rudnick Berlack Israels LLP, today announced that it has awarded one of its *Community Grants* to the **Rhode Island Foster Parents Association**. Through the grant, Brown Rudnick will support the work of OSSUM (Ocean State Systems Utilization Mediators), a foster youth-led advocacy group operated through the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association in collaboration with the Chafee Skills Center and the Real Connections program. OSSUM will use grant dollars to cover the cost of an advocacy training program for foster youth in care.

OSSUM provides foster youth (ages 14 – 24) with the opportunity to learn important advocacy skills, have their own voices heard on important issues related to their well-being, and engage with peer and adult role models.

According to Julie DiBari, Program Director for the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association, “One of the main challenges for OSSUM is access to training programs. Brown Rudnick’s grant will help us provide specific training, which will arm the members with the skills needed to effectively advocate on their own behalf. Overall, this training program will also help improve the foster care system, because adult decision-makers will hear from articulate, well-prepared youth on important issues that affect all foster children.” The training will be provided by Young Voices, a highly-respected Rhode Island-based youth training organization.

Albert W. Wallis, Executive Director of the Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation Corp., said, “We are pleased to help the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association meet their training needs. OSSUM is a valuable youth advocacy initiative that empowers foster youth with the knowledge, skills and confidence to speak for themselves. We believe this is a powerful tool in helping to effect positive change within the foster care system.”

Created to support front-line educators who often do not have a voice in funding decisions, the *Community Grants* subsidize small, concrete projects, which will improve inner-city education in Boston, Hartford, Providence or New York within the coming year. The Foundation will generally consider grant applications monthly and award grants in an amount totaling not more than \$2000 in any one month. The grant applications and an explanation of the program can be found at <http://www.brownrudnickcenter.com/foundation/communitygrant.asp>.



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The Brown Rudnick Center for the Public Interest is a measure of the Firm's strong commitment to the community and serves as an umbrella entity encompassing the Firm's pro bono legal work, charitable giving, community involvement and public interest efforts. For more information, please visit [www.brownrudnickcenter.com](http://www.brownrudnickcenter.com).

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