

**"If you can't feed a hundred people,
then feed just one."**

Mother Teresa

Spring 2010

VOLUME ONE

A Room of Their Own

This past winter, over 200 generous volunteers came together in Brighton to make over 19 bedrooms and common spaces at Bridge's Transitional Living Program, which provides supportive housing, life skills training and support to 31 residents, including single mothers and their children. This project, aptly named 'Welcome Home,' was more successful than anyone dreamed possible and for many of our remarkable clients, this was the first time that anyone had created a place of comfort and beauty just for them.

Bridge's Transitional Living Program (TLP), which opened its doors in 1982, is the hallmark of Bridge Over Troubled Waters. For our residents who have experienced and overcome lives filled with unthinkable pain, TLP provides services designed to promote self-sufficiency and reduce the risk of future homelessness. Through TLP, young people get the chance to live among their peers while they learn the life-skills needed to successfully manage and sustain their own households. In this safe and supportive environment, young people get the chance to identify personal goals and receive the assistance they need to reach them.

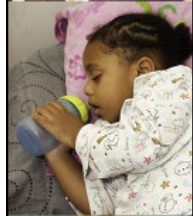
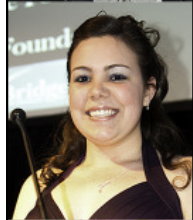
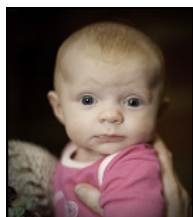
From November 14th through January 30th, volunteers gathered from all walks of life. There were plumbers, carpet layers and 125 volunteers from City Year. There were 17 donor groups, each of which adopted a room to make over. The results were astonishing. Each room was personalized to meet the needs and wishes of the client. A desk was filled with art supplies for a mother who loves to paint; a room was filled with film memorabilia for a young female studying Film at The New England Institute of Art; many residents picked their own color schemes and paints to have the bedroom they've always dreamed of.

Since the initial Welcome Home Project, Bridge has added beds and several clients have moved on to independent living. There are currently 16 new beds that need to be adopted.

Programs like our TLP are important, but they are not enough. Research has found that even a brief period of homelessness can lead to emotional issues, such a depression and other mental illnesses. With the economy the way it is, the number of families that are homeless for months, even years, is sadly increasing. Because of this, Bridge has been working with Boston's Rapid Re-Housing Sub-Committee, as well as other agencies, to develop a shelter program specifically for youth. The Bridge Assessment Center and Emergency Shelter (BACES), which is scheduled to open in October of this year, depending on funding, will close the final gap in the continuum of services to homeless youth.

With an Assessment Center and Emergency Shelter, Bridge will have

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GALA 2010

What if you could positively impact the lives of young adults, be inspired, socialize with others who share your goals and honor two amazing people? What if you could have a wonderfully entertaining evening at the same time?

Over \$950,000 was raised thanks to the hard work of Chair John Fish and the Dinner Committee, the generosity of many sponsors and those present who were spurred to spend maybe just a little bit more by Bob Davis and Mayor Tom Menino, the evening's auctioneers.

And yet, the most moving part of the evening was hearing the stories of the young people who have directly benefited from Bridge. We heard from Hillary, who dreams of being a dental assistant and who grew up in an environment of drug and alcohol abuse; Brahiem, who longs to be a clinical psychologist after being surrounded by mental illness; and Tyquan, who wants to explore becoming a barber, a rap singer or maybe a chef, and who found himself running with the wrong crowd after becoming homeless. All three speakers have endured tremendous hardship and tragedy, but their lives are a testimony to their determination and hope. Their lives are a testimony to Bridge's work and devotion to youth in need.



(Left to Right) Honorees Chuck Clough, Sister Barbara Whelan and Gala Chair John Fish.

For more Gala photos, visit



A Message from the Executive Director...

I love living in New England because of the changing seasons. The transition from winter to spring is by far my favorite. The resurgence of life after a long and difficult winter and the fleeting fragrance of colorful blooms renews my faith in the process and power of transformation.

Organizations go through cycles similar to those of the seasons. At Bridge we are entering an exciting and transformative cycle...spring has arrived at Bridge! We have seen so many of our young people experience transformation this year: moving into permanent housing, graduating from our GED program, obtaining a first job, overcoming the pain of past traumas. The programs at Bridge are creating a context for young people to launch into their own new lives...to truly transform.

Yet, there is one missing piece to our continuum of services that we work so hard to provide. I was reminded of it many times this past winter when I walked through Downtown Boston. Too often I saw our young people preparing for the cold nights with no safe place to lay their heads.

Yes, we have 31 beds for kids transitioning from the streets to independence, but we do not have a place for emergency overnights for our most needy and vulnerable young people. Winter is long enough in a warm house with family and friends...how long must it feel when you have no one to care for you and no place to go at night?

This summer and fall we will be preparing to open a new 12 bed assessment center and emergency shelter at our downtown facility. We will create a welcoming, safe and secure place for young people to start the transition from winter to spring...from despair to hope, from the streets to permanent homes.

If you want to help, contact me at rzarges@bridgeotw.org.

Enjoy the spring!

Robb Zarges

2009, Bridge By The Numbers:

19

Different colors of paint were used to paint 19 client bedrooms in our residences last December.

100

Percent of residents in Bridge's Transitional Living Program are in school and/or employed.

210

Youth participated in Bridge GED classes.

511

Volunteers helped keep our programs strong.

1,040

Hours of free medical services were provided last year through the Bridge medical van, making a total of 2,157 contacts.

2080

Sandwiches were made by our "Sandwich Lady" Charlotte, a Bridge volunteer, and were distributed to Boston's homeless through the Bridge medical van.

3,074

Hours of counseling were provided to homeless youth.

Mission

To see the lives of runaway, homeless and high-risk youth transformed through safe, supportive and encouraging relationships.

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* Bridge welcomes our new Board members

Staff List

Robb Zarges, Executive Director

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Mark Evans, Director of Clinical Operations

Karin Wilcox Cassel, Director of Development

Rebecca Summers, Grant Manager

Newsletter Editors

Kerry Glennon, GED Teacher

Mark Kalb, Marketing

Volunteer Contributors

Robin Enright, Writing

Janet Wolbarst, Photography

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the resources to take homeless youth directly off the streets where they are abused and exploited, and provide them with a safe and supportive path to independent living.

Because of the success of the Welcome Home project and the efforts of our many generous donors and volunteers, clients can now sleep safely in not just any bed, but their bed. Resident Peterson put it beautifully when he said: "From here - I will launch." When our remarkable clients are provided with a stable place to live and stand - the possibilities are endless.

We Invite You to See Our Clients

See Mimi - age 20

Who Did You Dislike That You Like Now?

The person I disliked in the past and like now is myself. In the past I didn't have many goals, with not much support. I expected to get support from certain people in my life and didn't. So I found my own support within myself; now I can say I do have goals and feel good about it. Soon I'm going to have a career that I will absolutely cherish. The one word that I can use best to describe myself is AMBITIOUS.

In the past I didn't have any goals set for my future; it seems as though when it came to my own life I didn't care too much. That was an issue for me, and I didn't address it until now. I was worried about others' opinions, and didn't pay attention to my own. I was busy helping others rather than myself. I also procrastinated too much on what I really needed to do, as in going for my GED and getting a stable job. Not trying to make a change in my life for the better made me dislike my choices in life, such as putting my education on hold and not handling my responsibilities.

I have goals now to finish my GED, get to college, and have a stable job. That's what made me have a different perspective about myself. Having goals is what helps me build confidence in myself. It leads me to a good path, a path that I would want to continue on and never step back. Moving forward in a good way gives you a feeling that you accomplished something. That is a definite lovable feeling you can have about yourself.

As I started thinking of my future, I became more anxious to complete my current goals and start a career. My ideal career is one where I can take care of others. I hope one day to become a registered nurse and start a foundation supporting young adolescents who have gone through similar situations as me. When I reach my career I'm going to look back on my life and say there shouldn't have been a reason I disliked myself. Life is all about ups and downs. There are going to be times where you feel like your life is going down hill. That's why you need that inner love for yourself. If you do, your life is going to be great in the end. Some people wouldn't understand, but you have to experience it to know what I'm talking about.

All in all the person I disliked in the past is me, but I do love myself now and always will. Before I didn't have any goals; I do now, with that a career set in mind. Just love yourself for the better and it will all work out.

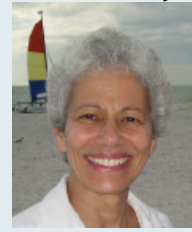
See Frankie - age 21



Frankie worries his art isn't good enough to be shared, but eventually Frankie shows his pictures. They are in a binder, inside sheet protectors. Someday he wants to be a professional artist and be needed for his art. Right now he tightens his grip around the pillow in his lap as he worries about his current artist's block. He knows the environment and atmosphere play a big part in this creative block. "It's killing me."



Volunteer Profile: Cathy Schneider



Bridge wouldn't be a success without the help of our many volunteers such as Cathy Schneider. Cathy, along with her husband, Bob, has been donating to Bridge for 25 years. Recently retired, Cathy wanted to do more with her time than just donate money. While speaking with parish members about doing some Christian service, she received the flyer about Welcome Home in the mail. "It's as if it just fell into my lap," Cathy recalls. She gathered members from her parish to raise money and adopt a room in the single parent house. When they finished the room for the new mom, Cathy realized they still had some money left. She is now working on fixing up a landing in the house to provide some extra sitting room for the moms. We offer a world of thanks to Cathy and our many generous volunteers for all they do to help our youth.

Bridge Thanks its Top Corporate Donor



For the past two years, Bridge has been the beneficiary of BNY Mellon's innovative Community Partnership Program. Under this program, employees are encouraged to give their philanthropic dollars and their volunteer time to agencies that fall into the company's new global philanthropic focus, called Powering Potential, which focuses on the areas of Basic Needs and Workforce Development. The company then matches employee giving and volunteer time with corporate donations. Combined with their regional grant making, this program leverages BNY Mellon's philanthropic dollars and human resources for the greatest community impact.

Each fall, BNY Mellon holds a Community Partnership Campaign, which gives employees the option of donating to a Powering Potential fund comprised of agencies focused on moving individuals out of poverty and into self sufficiency. Bridge was, obviously, a perfect match – and for that we are very grateful.



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Ways to Give the Gift of Hope...

- * Make a gift online @ www.bridgeotw.org
- * Return the enclosed envelope with a gift
- * Transfer appreciated securities
- * Provide goods and services



Items Needed to "Support" the Bridge

- * Vacuum cleaners for the Residential Program
- * New pillows, sheets sets (twin size), bath and hand towels
- * Back packs to hold "street survival" items and for GED students
- * Survival items:
 - New canteens, flexible insulated lunch bags, cooler packs, Tupperware
 - New socks and undergarments (men's and women's in larger sizes)
- * Sports equipment:
 - Basketballs
 - Baseball equipment (bats, gloves, balls and bases)
 - Flag football set
- * Chess set
- * Children's swing set
- * Art supplies: paper, colored pencils
- * TV and DVD player
- * Greeting cards, stationery and stamps
- * Gift cards (for client birthdays and special occasions)
 - Target, Old Navy, CVS, Dunkin Donuts, Shaw's, Marshalls



GED Graduation Ceremony Announcement

Join Bridge and 40 of our
remarkable youth who will be
receiving their GED Diploma
on June 8th @ 6:00pm
St. Paul's Cathedral
138 Tremont Street, Boston