

Bridges Outreach, Inc.
2008-09 Annual Report of Programs and Administration

Bridges began humbly on a Friday night in 1988 when Ginger and Geoff Worden reached out to a group of New York City Homeless with sandwiches and thermoses of soup and coffee. Since that night, Bridges has never missed a Friday outreach visit (Run) to New York City. Today, volunteers reach out to 500 to 700 homeless friends each week in New York City, Newark and Irvington, NJ. In this fiscal year, we estimate that 100,000 brown bag lunches and 40,000 breakfast bags were made and distributed by volunteers.

Bridges continually faces challenges and opportunities as we strive to accommodate the increasing populations of homeless and near homeless in the three geographic areas of our outreach as we fulfill our mission to “bring the housed and the homeless together in community.

The Bridges Board of Trustees is pleased to share with you our accomplishments in the fiscal year ending May 31, 2009.

The Bridges’ Run

The Bridges’ Run, or outreach visit, is at the heart of our mission. In 2008-09, Bridges made 163 Runs – that averages more than 3 per week. For every Run, volunteers of high school age and older, meet at Bridges after having assembled 300-400 brown bag lunches, collected seasonal clothing and toiletry items. They meet the Bridges’ Run Coordinator who will oversee the Run and prepare to caravan with Bridges’ distinctive yellow ten foot box truck that has been fully loaded earlier in the day. The Run stops at Battery Park, Centre Street, and in addition, this year, also makes a stop under the Brooklyn Bridge.

New York City: 69 Runs were made to New York City. In over 20 years, Bridges has never missed a Friday night Run into New York City. This year was no exception. On two particularly snowy nights, staff and a few willing volunteers took the train into Penn Station and a subway to lower Manhattan to distribute food to the small number of homeless still waiting regardless of the weather. On July 4th, 2008, a group of volunteers brought hot dogs, watermelon and cupcakes to the streets of lower Manhattan. In addition to 52 Friday Runs, another 17 mid-week or special holiday Runs were made to New York City. Beyond our large street Runs, one board member and a volunteer go out late at night, mid-week, to find small groups of homeless in need.

Newark: 53 Runs were made to various locations in Newark. Monthly Runs were made to the Body of Christ Ministry in the South 10th Street neighborhood where Bridges has partnered with ministers in that area for more than two years. This year, we returned to Penn Station, where as many as 75 homeless friends were staying warm on very cold winter days. Warmer days, we met many homeless and near homeless at Lincoln Park. Our shelter programs for children at the Emergency Residence Shelter at the Newark YMCA continue to be well received by both the children and the volunteers. Monthly

birthday parties are organized for all children having a birthday that month and monthly activity days keep the children busy and looking forward to a Bridges' visit.

Irvington: 41 Runs were made to Irvington. During the academic year, Runs were made with only a few exceptions to the Irvington Neighborhood Improvement Corporation.

Move to Oakes Center

After more than 20 years, Bridges moved from Christ Church in Summit to Oakes Center also in Summit. The new location allows for easier drop off of donated items, two large storage rooms that serve as our operations headquarters and an administrative office in close proximity to the storage and operations room. The new space provides ample area for volunteers to sort clothing and prepare for Bridges' Runs. With the new space and additional help, we have reorganized our Run preparation which has benefited the coordinators and volunteers when they reach the Run destination.

Volunteers

Volunteers are at the core of Bridges. More than 1,500 volunteers participate in a Bridges' Run each year delivering over 100,000 brown bag lunches, 40,000 breakfast bags, toiletry items and literally tons of clothing, blankets and other necessities with dignity and respect. Hundreds more contribute lunches, clothing and other necessary items, school supplies, holiday gifts, and camp supplies for sheltered children as well as financial assistance that helped us to make 163 Runs this year. Many of our volunteers are high school students – but we are also blessed with support from the very young to the very old. Our homeless friends meet our volunteers each week with diverse needs and warm hearts. What is shared on a Bridges' Run goes far beyond simply the distribution of material goods. On a Bridges' Run, stereotypes fade, understanding develops, caring overcomes indifference, a sense of purpose prevails, and real friendships are formed, based on mutual respect.

Volunteer Run Groups 2008-09

All4Peace, Sparta
Baxter Health Care, New Providence
Blessed Kateri Church, New Providence
Bonnie Brae, Liberty Corner
Brookside Community Church, Brookside
Carpet et cetera, Morristown
Christ Church, Summit
Christ the King, New Vernon
Central Presbyterian Church, Summit
Community Congregational Church of Short Hills
Corpus Christi Church, Chatham
Denville Community Church, Denville
First Baptist Church of Westfield
First Congregational Church, Westfield
Fountain Baptist Church, Summit
Gill St. Bernard School, Gladstone
God is First Youth Ministry, East Orange

Holmdel Community Church
Jewish Congregational Church of Kinnelon
Kent Place School, Summit
Lake Hopatcong United Methodist Church
Morristown Beard School, Morristown
Morrow Memorial United Methodist Church, Maplewood
Mount Tabor United Methodist Church, Mount Tabor
New Jersey Nest, New Providence
Northern NJ Greek Orthodox Youth, Northern NJ
Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child, Summit
Oratory Preparatory, Summit
Our Lady of Lourdes, Mountainside
Our Lady of Peace, New Providence
Outpost in the 'burbs, Montclair
Paramus Catholic High School, Paramus
PEP (Pride and Educational Pursuits) Program, Summit
Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township
R & R Marketing, Caldwell
Roselle Catholic High School, Roselle
Salesian Gospel Roads, South Orange
Seton Hall Law School, Newark
St. Bernard and St. Stanislaus' Church, Fanwood
St. Elizabeth Church, Linden
St. Joseph's Church, Mendham
St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, East Brunswick
St. Mary's Church, Pompton Plains
St. Rose of Lima, Short Hills
St. Teresa of Avila Church, Summit
St. Thomas More Society, Newark
St. Vincent de Paul, Stirling
Stanley Congregational Church, Chatham
Stifel Nicolaus and Company, Livingston
Summit High School, Summit
Temple B'nai Jeshurun, Short Hills
Temple Beth Or, Washington Township
Temple Sha'arey Shalom, Springfield
Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel, South Orange
The Delbarton School, Morristown
The Pingry School, Martinsville
Westfield High School Community Club, Westfield

Collaborations

Bridges is pleased to collaborate with the following organizations that help us fulfill our mission to bring the housed and homeless together in community and provide valuable services to our homeless friends in abundant ways.

Body of Christ Ministry, Newark
Church Women United Food Pantry, Irvington
Emergency Residence Program, Newark
Friendly Fuld Neighborhood Centers, Newark
Goddard Riverside, New York City
Harmony House, Newark
Irvington Neighborhood Improvement Corporation
Irvington Public Library, Irvington
Newark Public Schools, Newark
Office of Mayor Corey Booker, Newark
Office of Mayor Wayne Smith, Irvington
Reeves Reed Arboretum, Summit
St. Rocco's Men's Shelter, Newark
St. Rocco's Women's Shelter, Newark
Summit Helping Its People (SHIP), Summit
The Connection for Women and Families, Summit

Soup Makers

All Bridges Runs have containers of soup and hot chocolate in the winter or lemonade in the summer. A small band of 10 soup makers coordinated by one volunteer cover all the soup and beverages for every Run.

Fill the Truck

In the second year of this program, "Fill the Truck" has provided an opportunity to bring Bridges' distinctive yellow truck to schools, corporations and houses of worship. Community members are asked to "fill the truck" with specific seasonal items. This year eight civic, school or neighborhood groups hosted a "fill the truck" on their premises.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

About 200 volunteers of all ages participated in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service at Bridges. The pre-K to Kindergarten volunteers decorated lunch bags, while 1st to 3rd graders wrapped handmade pillows and made cards for sheltered children. 4th and 5th graders helped to prepare a mailing announcing Bridges' move to Oakes Center. Parent volunteers read The Littlest Volunteer by Danielle Speckhart and Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King by Jean Marzollo. The largest number of volunteers from the middle school made 300 brown bag lunches that were later delivered to St. Rocco's Men's Shelter in Newark. High school and adult volunteers sorted piles of clothing at Christ Church and delivered the clothing to the new location at Oakes where the items

were properly stored.

Ellen Maher Volunteer Award

Recipients for 2009 are: Patti Corbo, Paramus Catholic; Robbie Hendricks, Oratory Prep; Annie Re and Max Sugarman, Westfield High; Georgette Jackson, Summit High; and Nicole Wisler, Gill St. Bernard. This award is given annually in honor of Bridges' past Executive Director Ellen Maher, to high school seniors who have faithfully and effectively engaged with fellow students to support the work of Bridges and who have also proved themselves to be a friend to the homeless.

Holiday Gifts

1,600 holiday gifts including new blue jeans, sweatpants and sweatshirts, tee shirts, boots, coats, and care packages were distributed on a special Run to New York City on December 17, 2008.

Over 300 toys were delivered to the Irvington Neighborhood Improvement Corporation; 30 pairs of pajamas to St. Rocco's Women's Shelter and 100 pairs to the Emergency Residence Program at the Newark YMCA. We fulfilled special requests for four families around the South 10th St. area in Newark. Bridges partnered with the Franklin St. John's United Methodist Church on Maple Ave in Newark who organized a holiday party with seniors and families in need in Newark. Bridges provided hats, gloves and pajamas for the event.

Summer Camp at Reeves Reed Arboretum

In the summer of 2008, Reeves Reed provided scholarships for nine children ages 5 and 6 to attend the Elephant Tree Day Camp during the week of July 14. Bridges arranged for nine children from the Emergency Residence Program (Y in Newark) to attend this camp. Bridges provided transportation and snacks through a grant from Sarah Ward Foundation, the Community Congregational Church of Short Hills, and the Lena Willis Mission Fund.

Camp Supplies

The Emergency Residence Program requested new bathing suits and flip flops for 50 children going to overnight camp from the ERP. Volunteers made the purchases and either donated the items or were reimbursed through the Sara Ward or Community Congregational Church of Short Hills grants.

School Supplies

Bridges purchased over 500 backpacks plus another 75 were donated. The 575 backpacks and donated supplies for over 1,000 children were distributed through the Emergency Residence Program at the Newark YMCA, two South 10th Street ministries, Esther Toney and Alicia Gorman for children in Summit, the Irvington Neighborhood Improvement Corporation and the Irvington Public Library, and in New York City.

Administration, Staff & Board

Bridges operates with a full-time Executive Director, a part-time Senior Run Coordinator with over 15 years experience at Bridges. This year, a part-time Run Coordinator for with roots in Irvington was hired to oversee the Newark and Irvington Runs. Additionally, one assistant was hired specifically to assist with the Friday Run operations.

Bridges makes every effort to hire from areas in which we serve. When possible, Bridges hires those who have personally experienced homelessness. The Bridges Board of Trustees is comprised of both housed and homeless individuals.

Funding Sources

Bridges does not seek or receive federal or state funding. In 2008-09, our income was received from one annual appeal, a biennial fundraising event, foundation grants, and individual donors.

We are pleased to have received grant awards from the following foundations:

- Ann Earle Talcott Fund
- Central Presbyterian Church, Summit
- Christ Church Board of World Fellowship, Summit
- Community Congregational Church of Short Hills
- Lena Willis Mission Fund
- Lydia Collins deForest Charitable Trust
- Sarah Ward Foundation
- William G. and Helen C. Hoffman Foundation
- A family foundation wishing to remain anonymous