



SPECIAL EDITION

COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN MENTAL HEALTH

Chairman's Dinner Celebrating Our Past, Present, and Future



Mark T. Williams, BSN, RN-BC
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Welcome to our 1st Annual Chairman's Dinner. We are honored that you have chosen to spend your evening with us. Our goal is to host an evening of joy as we bring together old friends and new, for socializing and gratitude, and telling Bridgeway's story. The voices of the professionals who help make magical transformations happen in the lives of the most vulnerable members of our communities are presented in this special edition newsletter. Many of them are also among the guests in the Donald R. Conklin Conference Center at Kean University. Strike up a conversation. You will encounter the most passionate and dedicated staff in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation.

In 2010, after devoting literally half of my adult life in the service of folks diagnosed with mental health issues, I retired from my profession as a psychiatric nurse. I began to search for ways to give back to the profession that I loved and that had given me so much. My search ended when I found Bridgeway. By the time I found Bridgeway, this organization already enjoyed a solid foundation in the mental health community for several decades. Even though Bridgeway and I have taken different paths, we have arrived at 2016 embracing the same vision.

Serving as the Chairman of Bridgeway's Board of Trustees has given me the opportunity to lead the board into a season of flux and transition. The fact is, as extraordinarily successful as Bridgeway's programs are, we are operating in a very competitive environment. We must be ready to pivot in an ever-changing healthcare landscape where fiscal efficiency seems to be the overarching goal of our traditional funding sources. As we work to meet the challenges before us, Bridgeway is committed to achieving our mission of helping New Jerseyans who are experiencing mental illness return to valued social roles in their communities. We are proving every day, that you can recover from mental illness. In July of 2016 I will begin my 4th year as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. It is my strong belief that with the addition of several new trustees, a renewed sense of purpose, and a continued commitment to our mission, this will be a pivotal year in the transformation of Bridgeway as we strive to exceed the expectations of the people and community we serve, and achieve our vision that all people experiencing mental illness will overcome their challenges, and lead satisfying, hopeful and independent lives, free from prejudice and discrimination.

13th Annual Golf Classic to Benefit Bridgeway Programs

Monday, June 6, 2016

Echo Lake Country Club, Westfield, NJ

Registration fee includes: Locker room - Patio lunch - Greens fees - Golf Cart
Cocktail reception - Golf Cart - Awards dinner

"It is a joy to play Echo Lake Country Club in support of Bridgeway. The work they do and help they give people fighting mental illness is unparalleled in New Jersey. Echo Lake being a Donald Ross design remains a true test of golf for every level of golfer. My guests and I are always inspired to do more for this great organization."

- Peter Pogany, Owner, Rapps Pharmacy, Major Sponsor since 2005

Playing and non-playing sponsorships available
Dinner only tickets

Call Lisa Giannascoli 908-355-7886 ext.108
lisa.giannascoli@bridgewayrehab.org

Sally Robinson

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Chairman's Dinner

April 20, 2016

6:00 pm

Hors d'oeuvres on the Terrace
Music by Frank Villafane and 3 to Clave

7:15 pm

Dinner
Buffet Dinner by Encore Caterers

Welcome and Remarks

Mark T. Williams, Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Cory Storch, President & CEO
Amy Spagnolo, Vice Chairperson of the Board of Trustees
Video Presentation

8:45 pm

Dessert on the Terrace
Music, Passed Desserts on the Terrace, Coffee Station, Conversation

Bridgeway Board of Trustees

Mark T. Williams, Chairman
Amy Spagnolo, Vice Chairperson
Mark Rellinger, Treasurer
Alice DeVoe, Secretary
Cory Storch, President & CEO

George H. Brice, Jr., Trustee
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Special thanks to: Sylvia Chiu, Jessica Hawkins, Jeannine Arlotta, Ainka Watson
Phil Monte, Chris Hudak, Dara's, Lilly Herdman, Bob Edes, Bill Burton, Johnny B Catering

www.bridgewayrehab.org Please join our online community
Please send photos to feedback@bridgewayrehab.org



Buddy Garfinkle, Chief Operating Officer



As the mental health system experiences a change in funding and services provision, Bridgeway's services continue to expand in our reach to new recipients and innovative practices. This year we will deepen our commitment to the practices and principles of psychiatric rehabilitation, expand the depth of integrated mental and physical health, and incorporate new wellness and clinical initiatives. In our efforts to provide the most current, best practices to the people we serve we strive to learn and implement the most effective service available in the mental health system. This year's Wellness Initiatives include smoking cessation for staff and people served alike, health literacy for supervisors, health fairs, and the use of data and technology to help inform services. Our Bridge to Wellness program which provides primary care embedded in our offices has helped individuals served to gain access to high quality primary care and has opened avenues for prevention and treatment for individuals in our programs. This initiative has also helped us to develop new collaborative opportunities with other community partners.

This year we will be looking for more opportunities to help people currently residing in New Jersey's State Hospitals return to community through the Olmstead Settlement. Bridgeway has successfully partnered with the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services to place individuals in the communities of their choice as they move toward full community integration. Bridgeway has some of the best trained staff in New Jersey. This year we have a number of training initiatives from which people served will benefit. As the pre-eminent psychiatric rehabilitation organization in the state we will train all clinical staff in the most current practices in our field. We also will embark upon a transformational trauma informed initiative where we foster an environment that creates a safe space for people having experienced trauma.

We are honored by the recognition that we receive from persons served, their families, and stakeholders. Recently, a clinical social worker "retiring" from her position at a psychiatric hospital stated, "the only community agency where I would consider working is Bridgeway". Many of us share that sentiment.

Please Join Us!

Bridgeway will be back at the STEM Building on June 21, 2016, when we will host the Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration in the auditorium, followed by dinner in the Atrium. All are welcome! Please write to feedback@bridgewayrehab.org, or call Sylvia 908-355-7886 ext.101 to RSVP.



Stephanie Simon, Director, Crisis Intervention Services



Two years ago, on February 21st 2014, having moved into our new office and having achieved the necessary licensure to begin, Bridgeway Crisis Intervention Services, located at 152 Central Avenue in Jersey City, opened its doors to Hudson County and provided services to our first person served.

Anyone can experience a mental health crisis. A crisis can be the sudden death of a parent; a break-up of a relationship; a loss of a job; running out of medication; a worsening of a pre-existing mental illness; losing a home; or experiencing a traumatic event. Because anyone can experience a crisis, BCIS truly sees anyone: We see people who have never in their entire life sought mental health treatment, and have no pre-existing mental health diagnosis- people like "you and me"- working people with insurance who are going through a very rough time. We see people with long histories of mental illness, and multiple ER visits and hospitalizations who have run out of medication and are actively psychotic or suicidal. We see people whose mental health crisis is exacerbated by substance use, homelessness, domestic violence, sexual assault, job instability, financial issues, and everything in between. We truly see everyone. If we assess that someone is an active

danger to themselves or others, we make certain that they get to the hospital for possible admission- but most people are able to be stabilized in our program, and to remain in the community- which is the goal.

Whether you've been treated for mental illness, or are experiencing an unexpected emotional crisis, you do not need to face this alone. Bridgeway Crisis Intervention Services helps people to stabilize and take back control of their lives. Before a program like BCIS existed, people in crisis had 2 options: Going to the ER and waiting for hours and usually not being admitted; or trying to get an appointment in an Outpatient Clinic and being told that the wait time was 6 weeks. Someone who is feeling very depressed cannot wait 6 weeks to see someone; but they also don't need to go to the ER. They just need to talk to someone, or receive medication quickly. Having worked in hospitals for 30 years before coming to Bridgeway, and seeing people use the ER as the "default option" because they had no where else to turn, I am honored to be part of a program that helps people to remain in the community, and to begin to turn their lives around. BCIS makes me think that anything is possible.

Amy Spagnolo, Vice Chairperson, Board of Trustees

For the past four years, I have been witness to the tremendous efforts, tireless planning and critical evaluation of one of the premiere mental health provider agencies in our state, Bridgeway. I came to serve on the Bridgeway Board in 2012, but I have been a member of the Bridgeway family for far longer. I first met Cory Storch in the late 90's as a student in the psychiatric rehabilitation program at Rutgers (formerly UMDNJ). Cory was my adjunct instructor for a class in Independent Living. Through his lectures, focused on the capabilities and capacities of persons with mental illness living in the community, I was exposed to Bridgeway and very quickly decided it was a place I would like to work. I was hired at Bridgeway's partial care program in the early 2000's as a Masters level clinician providing supports and services to people with psychiatric disabilities. As the child of a person with a psychiatric disability, I knew first hand just how critical those services were. The environment of hope and recovery was palpable at Bridgeway. The members of the program were empowered to make changes in their lives and the staff was there to celebrate successes, encourage motivation, and assist with barriers to the achievement of meaningful and personally valuable goals for each person served. I left Bridgeway to pursue a career in higher education, preparing the community mental health workforce and conducting research that examines the effect of services like those offered by Bridgeway for people with mental illness. I returned nearly ten years later in the role of Board trustee, but in many ways, I feel like I never left. Once you become involved with Bridgeway, its staff, and the people it serves, you are forever connected.



Recently, during discussions of the changing landscape in community mental health, Cory told our board, "Community based mental health providers are merging into the 55 mile per hour lane from the 25 mile per hour lane" (Cory Storch, 2016). I think it is important to share with you a snapshot of the changes that will affect the way we provide services, the system NJ has recently transitioned to, and our response as an organization.

Since 1970, Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services has been at the forefront of change in responding to the needs of those who have serious mental illness. The organization has grown considerably over the years in terms of the number of communities and individuals we serve as well as the financial resources we have to achieve our mission. As we look forward to providing evidence based and promising practices to those with mental illness in our state, it is more critical than ever for us to anticipate what the evolving community mental health environment will look and feel like. We are committed to supporting individuals who are among the very most underserved population in our state and country: people living with psychiatric illnesses, co-occurring substance abuse disorders, co-morbid medical conditions, and living below the poverty line. We are committed to delivering high quality, cutting edge, recovery oriented, and evidence based practices. We are committed to ensuring the employment of creative, dedicated, and highly skilled staff who are supported in their efforts to deliver quality services. We are also committed to ensuring we remain a premiere mental health agency in our state, with over 40 years of experience and recognition as a leader in service provision.

What changes are on the horizon?

Changes to the requirements for providing and billing for mental health services are on the immediate horizon. New Jersey is changing the way that it pays for Medicaid mental-health and addiction treatment. The goal is to make payments more efficient, consistent, and outcomes based. The new fee for service reimbursement system is a major shift from the current contract based payment system, but does not come as a surprise to Bridgeway leadership.

What has Bridgeway done to prepare?

In anticipation of the aforementioned changes, and in order to ensure the evidence based and promising practices offered by Bridgeway remain available, the Bridgeway leadership team and its Board has embarked on several initiatives to track units of service, engage new populations of persons in need of service, facilitate the development of an updated strategic plan for the agency, consider multiple sources to diversify revenue, and incentivize staff to continue to meet and exceed productivity targets.

In 2014, OPEN MINDS, a consulting firm specializing in providing services to the health and human services industry was enlisted to review and analyze information as part of the strategic planning process. Detailed financial, demographic, and quality information about Bridgeway's services, supports, and the individuals we serve was evaluated. Reviews of national, New Jersey, and local environmental issues impacting Bridgeway, the New Jersey behavioral health market, and the individuals and communities we serve were conducted. The result was a strategic plan that detailed Bridgeway's capacity for success in this changing fee for service environment. Bridgeway's leadership team and Board truly understand the unique costs to deliver each service and have developed methods to evaluate profit/loss for each of our business segments.

In 2015, Bridgeway leadership began discussions with other community based mental health provider agencies. Once again, our team recognized that based on the changes in which agencies will be reimbursed for service provision, we needed to explore and understand the many options available to keep Bridgeway as a premiere provider in our state. With the awareness that consolidation and competition is increasing among behavioral health service organizations, partnership and merger opportunities among mental health provider executives have become commonplace. Bridgeway is at the forefront of these discussions and will continue to consult with the leadership team, experts, and its Board to make prudent but difficult decisions as more information on the landscape of this industry becomes apparent.

Continued . . .

Dai Phan, Director of Quality Improvement

Taking a deep breath, I walked into the building on 567 Morris Avenue in Elizabeth. At once, I was met with a warm smile and a friendly “Hello”! I told the front desk person that I was there for an interview with a “Mr. D’Antonio”. As the person was calling up to Mr. D’Antonio, I was able to glance around and noticed that something was different....good different. There was plenty of natural light from the sun rather than the harsh fluorescent lighting found in so many places I had worked before. The open, airy waiting room with high ceilings and wooden beams, and the curious, yet very friendly glances from the people as I walked in the door all reinforced to me that something different was going on here. I was greeted by a person served who then gave me a tour around the facility. Everywhere I went, people smiled, waved or said “Hi, you’re gonna work here”? I was then taken to the office of “Dave, not Mr. D’Antonio, we don’t call him that here”. I walked in and said “Hi, my name is Dai...”



Fourteen years later, I am still struck by how little the really important things have not changed at Bridgeway. During those fourteen years I have had the pleasure of working with so many people. It is difficult if not impossible to select just one person because all have played such a huge role in helping me to be a better counselor and more importantly, a better, more compassionate human being overall.

Instead of doing a single narrative on one particular person, I want to share quick mentions of people who have moved and inspired me. I still remember working with a person served that never wanted to even hear the word “goal” because she hated that word. She said that it put too much pressure on her. She thought that if she never set a goal, she would then never be in a position where she failed. We would only see her once or twice a week for medication. Through the collaboration of a very dedicated team (and oftentimes that is what it takes), we were able to get her to a point where she was doing Illness Management and Recovery (IMR) and went on an interview for the first time in 30 years. I also cannot forget the look of happiness on another person’s face when he was informed that he had gotten a job. After working with him for almost a year, it was the first time that I had seen him smile. A smile that truly lit up his face and made him look ten years younger.

There are other unforgettable moments that have been just as equally rewarding and yet, may seem “smaller” to the unknowing observer. But it is within those quiet spaces, that I have found what it means to be truly rewarded and humbled in doing the work that I do. Those defining moments that truly speak to what it means to connect to another human being....to allow a safe, non-judgmental space for someone to cry so that they do not feel ashamed, embarrassed nor feel that they have to be “talked into feeling better”. Where suffering is shared and hope is offered by others in a group, where I am permitted to bear witness to the true vulnerability when a person feels trust enough in me to voice her biggest fear and ask “Why did God give me this illness, does He not love me” or “What if I fail”? It is within these quieter, yet defining moments that I am reminded of what it means to be a social worker.

In thinking back on my fourteen years and what has not changed about Bridgeway...Ultimately most people just want to know that they matter in this world and that there is hope. And the thing that I love about Bridgeway is that we do convey that people matter – in the way we treat people, the way we provide services and there is always hope – hope for recovery, hope for a better tomorrow. I will sign off with what I tell people served when they may not feel very hopeful. “It’s okay, you may not feel hopeful right now, in this moment. Just know though that I will hold the hope for you right now in my hands. It is yours completely; I am only temporarily holding it for you and I promise to keep it safe and protected and when you are ready, you just let me know and take it back”.

Amy Spagnolo continued . . .

Why is Bridgeway in a unique position for success?

Despite the challenges all NJ based mental health providers will experience in the months and years to come, Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services is well-positioned not only to survive, but also to thrive, in this rapidly changing environment. We’ve significantly expanded our annual revenues over the past five years, along with the number of individuals and communities we serve. We’ve established ourselves as experts in meeting the needs of individuals with serious mental illness with the ability to provide evidence based outcomes and service delivery from a skilled and diverse workforce. We have already embarked on a number of strategic initiatives and operational improvements to support our ability to meet our mission in the “new normal” of the New Jersey human service system. Including our geographic expansion in 11 New Jersey counties, we also have a significant presence in 2 additional counties, a growing presence in several others and are assessing ways to increase our presence in the rest of the state.

How can you support Bridgeway’s efforts?

Your presence at our events is one way to support our efforts. Various fundraising events are planned throughout the year to connect Bridgeway with a network of people who are committed to the mission of our organization.

Your charitable donations support a multitude of services and activities that our service recipients directly benefit from.

Your individual expertise is valuable. Service on committees and advisory boards advance our activities and impact our ability to launch new initiatives.

Your understanding combats stigma. Mental illness touches the lives of many, but few are willing to act as a voice for recovery and change.

Your affiliation demonstrates your belief that all people deserve the right to live meaningful and productive lives regardless of disability.

For all of those reasons, we thank you.

Memories . . .

"Back in the early 90s I was the youngest guy on staff and coaching the softball team. A young member at PC Who I coached requested that I be his counselor because I was into sports and fitness like he was. He suffered from debilitating social anxiety, loneliness and real ly bad shyness. He was an Army veteran who had experienced head trauma in the service. His goal was to overcome his anxiety and shyness so that he could have a girlfriend. Four months I worked with him on this goal helping him to take gradual steps and leading him through his recovery process.

On a Friday night I was out with my friends at a restaurant when he walked in and came up to me with a young woman by his side. He was on a date. He came up and introduced her to me and I introduced him and her to my friends. As they began to walk away he turned back to me and said "how am I doing?" I gave him two thumbs up. I told my friends I love my job."

Dave D'Antonio, Regional Program Director



"It's about Hope. When I first came to work at Bridgeway, I met an individual who was homeless, had both physical and mental health needs and was living in the park. This individual didn't see himself as homeless or having any difficulties. No matter how many times I outreached him, he stated that he was fine and doing well. I helped him with basic needs, warm clothing and food. After a few months, he started coming by the office and getting a cup of coffee every day. He still wasn't ready to find a place to live. It took a year for this individual to finally accept services and housing. While it was up to the individual to make choices on how this individual wanted to live, many other agencies had turned their back on him. Bridgeway was able to continue to provide the hope that he needed to make the changes in his life."

Nancy Schneeloch, Regional Program Director



"When I was with PACT years ago, the Bridgeway PACT Team was the Representative Payee for a person served. This individual was not happy with the fact that someone else was a managing their money. The individual went to the local Municipal Court and filed a complaint against the PACT Team Leader since the Team Leader was responsible for managing the payee funds. A court date was set to hear the complaint and the Team Leader was subpoenaed to appear. On the day of court, the person served came to the PACT office and requested that the same Team Leader accompany him to the court date in order to provide emotional support. The Team Leader accompanied the individual to court and provided support through the process. The complaint was thrown out for lack of merit, but when dropped off at home by the Team Leader, the person served expressed appreciation for being heard."

Craig Cook, Director of RIST and Electronic Health Records

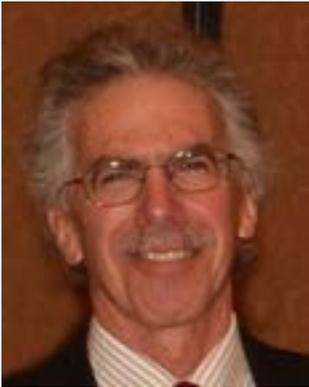


"Five existing mental health services programs in Sussex County were put out to bid and adopted by Bridgeway in January 2010, resulting in the Sussex Teams needing to find a new location. Cory, Buddy and our remaining staff began meeting with local communities to introduce Bridgeway, explain the transition, and familiarize everyone with the continuation of services. The search for a new location resulted in several hearings with area Planning and Use boards. A NIMBY response to one proposed location prompted large numbers of people to attend a hearing to voice emphatic *opposition* to our application. We were deeply moved to see throngs of sympathetic community stakeholders and sister human services agencies come out to *support* us. So many supporters attended that we could not all fit into the building and the fire department had to shut down the meeting. Bridgeway eventually returned to Andover Township with a permanent proposal, and the only testimony offered from the community was in support of our proposal. We've been our new location for over two years now, where we enjoy a wonderful relationship with the community, and a valued membership in the Bridgeway family."

Diane Piagesi-Zett, Director of Sussex Community Support Team



The Dell Raudelunas Spirit of Caring Award



The United Way of Greater Union County will honor Cory Storch in June with the **Dell Raudelunas Spirit of Caring Award**. Cory is proud to accept this honor "This award is very special to me having known Dell and what she stood for." This award is part of United Way of Greater Union County's 2016 Celebration Luncheon. Please join us!

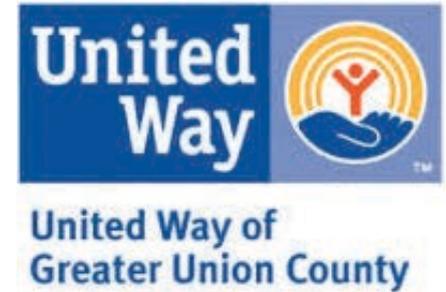
Date: Tuesday, June 14, 2016

Time: 12n - 2pm - Garden Lunch

Place: The Clubhouse at Galloping Hill Golf Course

Contact: Stephen Yellin 908.353.7171 x 138

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President & CEO, Cory Storch

I grew up in New York City, reading the tabloid headlines from time to time. And so, like most Americans, I formed beliefs and attitudes about people with mental illness based on myths and misconceptions. I didn't know anyone with a mental illness or so I thought. But like most American families, mine held some secrets that were made clear to me as I became an adult.

As a child of the sixties, my attitudes became more accepting but my beliefs took more time to change. My understanding of mental illness began to change when I went for my Bridgeway job interview.

By then I had my Masters degree in Rehabilitation Counseling but still I was nervous entering Bridgeway because of who I might find there. I went to 615 North Broad St looking for Gina, who told me to have a seat. So I sat and waited in the livingroom of a day program for people who have a serious mental illness with about 20 service recipients. For 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes. Finally I went to see Gina and asked about my job interview. She said "Oh, I thought you were here for an intake". At the Bridgeway day program, consumers and staff are in a milieu where normalization is taking place. Same dress code, same bathrooms, same lunch, same expectations for behavior.

I got the job and I am still at Bridgeway many years later. I think about how amazed I was back then, not about all the myths and negative thoughts I held concerning people with psychiatric disabilities. Rather, how amazed I was, beginning with 20 minutes in the Bridgeway livingroom, encountering the people using Bridgeway services. Learning that in addition to all the ways they were different from me, they were similar in more ways. They wanted from life just what I wanted – respect, opportunity, a good job, friends, a girl friend, a boyfriend, husband, wife, a family. I began to learn that mental illnesses are manageable, even the most severe forms of them. And that medication was not the only answer. That medications work best when in combination with other interventions. Bridgeway offers many of these evidence based interventions.

As a new employee I saw that most of the people coming to the day program truly wanted the help Bridgeway offered. That also amazed me because as part of my Masters degree program, I interned at a Methadone Maintenance center where I offered help to people who wanted no part of it. I decided working at Bridgeway was a good investment of my time.

Bridgeway quickly became more than a job for me. It became a mission – to bring hope to the people I was assigned to work with. Getting beyond learned hopelessness is the first step in recovery from a mental illness. You need hope in order to want help. That is especially true at Bridgeway where we serve people facing co-occurring challenges: poverty, substance abuse, chronic medication conditions and of course stigma and discrimination.

Mental illnesses can be devastating to a person and his or her family. Such illnesses can be managed and people can lead lives worth living – if they get the help they need. Bridgeway offers that help.

Seeking Qualified Candidates

We're Hiring!

Open House for Job Seekers, Friday, April 22nd. 10am - 1pm. No appointment necessary.

615 N. Broad St. Elizabeth, NJ 07208

For more information: human.resources@bridgewayrehab.org or call 908-355-7886

Fax 908-355-6668

List of current openings on our website: www.bridgewayrehab.org