



THE BRIDGE *Newsletter*

Compassionate, Evidence-Based Human Services

Spring/Summer 2018

Central Community Health Partnership is Launched



Central Community Health Partnership
Behavioral Health and Human Services

To address a changing landscape for behavioral health and human service providers as the state moves towards coordinated services for MassHealth members, **AdCare, The Bridge of Central Massachusetts, Alternatives, LUK, Inc. and Venture Community Services** have successfully launched the **Central Community Health Partnership (CCHP)**. The CCHP unites five premier organizations into one Community Partner (CP), serving thousands of MassHealth members, according to Ken Bates, President and CEO of The Bridge of Central Mass and a leader in the partnership.

Together, the five agencies have decades of experience and measurable success providing Behavioral Health Services and Long-Term Services & Supports. The partners serve individuals with complex behavioral health challenges, intellectual or developmental disabilities, autism, and brain injury. Each agency currently provides person-centered services to more than 8,000 people.

The Central Community Health Partnership will offer an interdisciplinary team of Nurses, Clinicians, Care Managers, Recovery Coaches, and Care Coordinators to serve individuals living in all settings. According to Bates, “The Partnership team will skillfully coordinate needed treatment and services with members’ primary care providers, and connect them with vital community resources that address the social determinants of health,” he said. “These determinants greatly impact an individual’s ability to achieve improved health — including housing, employment, food security, education, and health literacy,” he added.

“We look forward to working in partnership with individuals and their families, medical providers, and other community organizations to achieve our mutual goal: to connect thousands of MassHealth members with integrated, cost-effective services, leading to the positive health outcomes and quality of life every individual deserves,” said Bates.

Safe Homes Gala and People of Courage Awards

An amazing slate of awardees from the fields of media, medicine, social justice and government gathered for Safe Homes In the City on May 4th – in an equally amazing downtown venue!

The brand-new and beautiful AC Marriott Hotel was the perfect place to honor these outstanding individuals, whose work on behalf of LGBTQ youth is truly inspiring. The Safe Homes Gala included a VIP Reception, dinner, silent auction, and live music. This year’s event drew more than 270 leaders from the local business, civic, and health care communities.



Please take a moment to “meet” the exceptional 2018 Safe Homes People of Courage Awardees on page 6!

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Homeless Services at The Bridge Continue to Grow

Housing First is an evidence-based practice that The Bridge has used for a number of years. The premise is that if you give a homeless person a safe and warm place to live, they can then focus on other needs like mental health or substance use treatment, getting a job or going to school, seeing the doctor, or signing up for benefits like health insurance or accessing healthy food.

The Bridge currently operates three homeless programs – one in South County, and two in Worcester. Together these programs are currently serving close to 65 people, not only helping people obtain housing, but wrapping around them a whole array of supports and services in a caring, person-centered way.

The South County program is called SCHAP (South County Housing Assistance Program) and it has been in existence for close to 20 years. The program receives funding through the Federal HUD (Housing and Urban Development) department and grant funding through the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. SCHAP provides support for homeless families and individuals who have mental health challenges, substance use disorders or HIV/AIDS. The program includes subsidies for rent and wrap around case management supports.

“If it were not for SCHAP, I do not think I would be alive today”

– Elizabeth

“If it were not for SCHAP, I do not think I would be alive today,” says Elizabeth. She lived on the streets for five years, occasionally crashing on a friend’s couch. Two years ago, the friend brought her to the SCHAP program. Today she is working to maintain sobriety and wants to become a Licensed Addictions Counselor to help others.

In Worcester, with funding from the Department of Mental Health and the City of Worcester Emergency Solutions Grant, The Bridge is helping close to 50 people obtain and maintain stable housing as a first step in living the kinds of lives they want to lead. Individuals and families served in Worcester have mental health challenges, substance use disorders and often other complex challenges.

For some, the path to successful housing is not direct or clear. For one individual, it took three attempts before the housing match was right to help him be successful. Housing someone within the same neighborhood where they were living when homeless and addicted is not

usually the best solution. And sometimes people need space that is larger (for family) or smaller than what might be readily available.

A huge challenge today is finding affordable housing within the City. That is not only a difficult task for housing the homeless but also in helping people maintain their

housing to prevent them from becoming homeless. It is a challenge beyond what one agency can solve – but fortunately, there are many agencies currently working with the City to develop strategies to end homelessness in Worcester.

In the meantime, The Bridge will continue to match housing and the wraparound services to what the individual needs and wants and will continue the supports for as long as the individual wants and needs them. Housing First means no strings attached – individuals are not required to undergo treatment or anything else as a condition of housing. But, utilizing motivational interviewing and other evidence-based tools has resulted in the vast majority choosing to engage and pursue the full array of supports and help – including mental health services and addiction treatment.

According to Taylor LaCroix, Licensed Addictions Counselor for the two Worcester homeless programs, the work is very challenging, but incredibly gratifying. “I really find it so rewarding when people are able to turn their lives around and begin to work towards their goals and dreams. No one dreams of living on the street. We help those who unfortunately have landed there to see that there can be a better future for them and their families.”



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– Taylor LaCroix

Staff Spotlight: Nancy Wilson

By Lynn Cummins

Every Saturday, **Nancy Wilson** makes the drive from her home in Fitchburg to visit the Boston-area residential program where her 59-year-old brother lives, usually with coffee and treats in hand for the whole house to enjoy. When Monday morning comes around, Nancy's commute to work is decidedly shorter, but the destination has a very familiar feel.

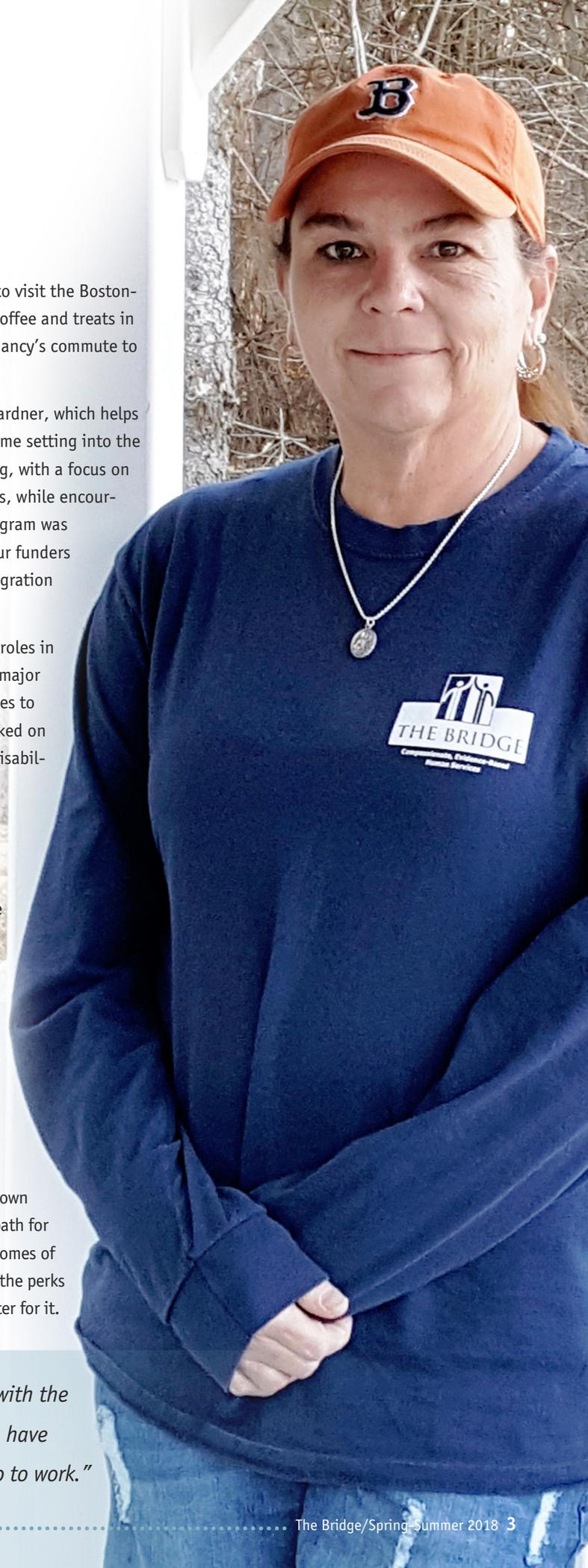
Nancy is a Residential Counselor at The Bridge's **Chapel Street Program** in Gardner, which helps men aged 18 and over with acquired brain injury to move from a nursing home setting into the community. The program provides 24-hour care in a welcoming home setting, with a focus on maintaining strong relationships with family members and significant others, while encouraging meaningful community activities and inclusion. The Chapel Street program was named Program of the Year at The Bridge, and has earned accolades from our funders and other stakeholders for consistency of care and staffing, community integration practices, and health and wellness programming.

After more than 18 years working in various supervisory and administrative roles in the Massachusetts Corrections system, Nancy decided that it was time for a major change, and a new environment. With her unique perspective on what it takes to provide the best possible care for a loved one with disabilities, Nancy embarked on a job change that would bring her first to a Department of Developmental Disabilities program, and eventually to The Bridge.

Nancy knows first-hand how important trust, exceptional care, and a feeling of belonging can be for the physically challenged individual living away from their home, and for their family members. She is dedicated to making sure that "the guys" in the Chapel Street program have opportunities to be included in the community, and participate in activities that engage and interest them. Whether it be attending sporting events in the area, going to church, seeing a movie, or even running routine program-related errands, Nancy is always ready to include and involve the individuals in the program's care. And just as importantly, Nancy is quick to share her feelings about the agency: "I want people to know how lucky I am to work at The Bridge, with the coworkers and the individuals in our program. I feel that both have enriched my life, and I'm so happy to wake up every day and go to work."

With an often-stressful tenure working in the prison system behind her, two grown sons and a busy family life, Nancy could be forgiven if she'd chosen an easier path for her second career. Fortunately, she followed her instinct that the positive outcomes of working with individuals with complex physical challenges would far outweigh the perks of an easy desk job – and the individuals living at Chapel Street are all the better for it.

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HealthFest

2017-18

Several years ago, The Bridge decided to change the annual event called BridgeFest into a multi-event series of activities designed to promote and support health and wellness for people we serve. This cause remains a crucial one, in light of the fact that people with mental health challenges die on average 25 years earlier than the general population due to preventable causes such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and smoking-related illnesses.

This year, the series included the HealthFest HealthFair which was held on April 19, 2018, a Raffle held in the fall, cooking contests, a Race Team to promote participation in regional walks and runs, and major efforts to promote gardening at each of our program sites. Last year, we had close to 20 programs plant gardens and the list continues to grow every year. The Physical Activities team also hosted a fall Chair Volleyball and Basketball event and promoted physical activities through a calendar initiative to help people track their healthy activities over the period of time.

In addition, HealthFest funds employee initiatives, designed to promote healthy behaviors on the part of our staff. Not only do these efforts help our workforce stay healthy, but they also help model healthy behaviors for the people we serve.

Iron Chef



HealthFair



SPONSORS

HealthFest has been made possible by our presenting sponsors Fallon Health and Eastern Bank as well as a number of other sponsors. See below for the full list. To these sponsors, we extend our heartiest thanks for helping people live active, healthy lives.

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CT-R: A New Tool to Help People Achieve What They Want in Life

Several years ago, Stefanie Gregware, Director of Clinical Services and Andrea Wolloff, Director of Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) were at a conference. They heard a presentation on an exciting new treatment for people with symptoms of psychosis that was achieving success in addressing low motivation and negative attitudes about oneself and helping people feel better and more energized. The treatment was called CT-R or “Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy”.

Fast forward to today, and The Bridge is training people across the state on CT-R under the auspices of a SAMHSA grant in collaboration with DMH. As part of this effort, Stefanie and Andrea are helping to lead implementation of CT-R for a standard PACT team, a forensic PACT team, two hospital inpatient units, a first episode of psychosis day program and in a homeless outreach program.

So what happened in between? The Bridge worked closely with researchers from the University of Pennsylvania including Dr. Aaron Beck, Dr. Aaron Brinen, and Dr. Paul Grant to implement this treatment in residential programs at The Bridge.

“From the beginning, we were excited. We could see that having new tools to bring to the programs and staff would be rewarding for them and help them feel better about their ability to guide individuals in their care”, says Gregware. “Within the first six months, we could see that this was really going to make a difference. Not only were individuals becoming engaged and energized, but the staff were reporting higher levels of satisfaction and a greater confidence in their ability to be helpful for individuals.”

“The entire recovery focus of our treatment is bringing out the individual’s strengths and building on these to restore a sense of hope, adequacy and belonging”

– Dr. Aaron Beck

trusted with a bowl of fruit – how can we expect them to feel like they can conquer the world? Or be trusted to leave the building? Or make any plans for their future?”

According to Dr. Beck, creator of Cognitive Based Therapy (CBT), and CT-R, “the entire recovery focus of our treatment is bringing out the individual’s strengths and building on these to restore a sense of

hope, adequacy and belonging.” Dr. Paul Grant, the co-developer of CT-R, says “the key is establishing strong and positive personal connections.”

Andrea Wolloff agrees. “The staff build stronger connections with the individuals and provide opportunities for them to explore areas of interests in collaborative group settings or individually. Our goal is to “guide” not steer the process” she added. “it’s important to let individuals work on their own recovery.”

An example of an individual whose recovery has been sparked by CT-R is the story of Joe. He was having difficulty with energy levels and was sleeping all day and staying awake at night. Joe recalled a memory in exploring his interests with staff. He had always wanted to go to a football game. Staff said – we can take you! They attended a local high school football game and that sparked something for Joe. He started watching football on TV and attending more high school football games, becoming a major fan of the local team. Along the way, he started to feel more energized – getting up without prompting, inviting others to watch games with him. Eventually, he decided he would like to go to Bingo and invited some individuals in the program to go with him. He doesn’t express negative thoughts about himself and others anymore, and he is far more energetic and engaged.

In the December, 2017 issue of SAMHSA’s Practicing Recovery: Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Therapy: http://www.ahpnet.com/files/RTP-Newsletter13_December_2017.pdf, the subtitle reads: Combining the Heart of Recovery with Clinical Research.

The newsletter noted that CT-R is an evidence-based practice with outcomes that are closely aligned to the four dimensions of recovery – home, health, community and purpose. CT-R focuses on engagement, achievement of goals and elimination of obstacles. CT-R combines the person-centered and hopeful spirit of a recovery orientation with solid clinical evidence, treatment protocols and supported dissemination and implementation.

In this same newsletter, The Bridge’s journey with CT-R is profiled.

Dr. Grant says CT-R is focused on helping people whose lives have been disrupted by symptoms of schizophrenia (and other mental health challenges) to get back to achieving what they want in life. “Deciding what that is and how one may get there might include a guided process, but ultimately, the choice and the success are in the hands of the person using services.”

For more information, contact Stefanie Gregware at stefanie.gregware@thebridgecm.org or Andrea Wolloff, at andrea.wolloff@thebridgecm.org.

Safe Homes People of Courage Awardees



Peter Bacchiocchi – Volunteer Award

Peter is a Financial Advisor at Cambridge Investment Research Inc., and a long-time member of the Safe Homes Advisory Committee. In more than 10 years of leadership, program development and activism with Worcester Pride and on the Safe Homes Gala Committee, Peter has made a significant and lasting

impact on the LGBTQ community of Worcester County.

Nathan Manna – Collegiate Award

A student at The College of Holy Cross, Nathan serves as the Chair of Worcester Youth Pride, is a member of the Worcester Pride Committee, and serves in a variety of other roles on campus and in Worcester. Despite a hectic academic schedule, he is passionate in his advocacy for LGBTQ youth on the Holy Cross campus, and beyond.



Senator Michael Moore – Public Service Award

Senator Moore is a tireless advocate for LGBTQ equality, particularly Transgender Rights, at the Statehouse and in the communities he serves. Senator Moore consistently offers his legislative support and advocacy for equality and protection for all people, and we value his leadership on vital LGBTQ issues.

Dr. Diane Blake – Health Equity Award

Dr. Blake specializes in adolescent care, and was the co-founding practitioner of the hospital's Youth Gender Services Clinic. She has worked collaboratively with youth-serving groups and coalitions across the city, and within the medical community to ensure the highest quality of care and resources for LGBTQ youth and their families.



Kristen Eck – Media Award

Kristen, formerly Scott Eck, is a 30-year veteran of the radio news industry who has shared the journey of her transition with radio listeners and media outlets over the last two years. Currently the Traffic Reporter for WBZ News Radio, Kristen had the full support of her employer

and has candidly communicated her story with warmth, strength, and a healthy dose of humor as she advocates for the LGBTQ community.

Craig Miller – Social Justice Advocacy and Action Award

Craig is a motivational speaker and suicide attempt survivor who has been relentless in his efforts to prevent suicide, and assist families who are survivors of suicide. Whether it be through his advocacy with the Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention, in his memoir "This is How It Feels" and related documentaries on his website, or in hundreds of speaking engagements across the country, Craig has made a significant, far-reaching effort to prevent suicide – a serious concern in the adolescent LGBTQ community.



Saint Gobain Abrasives – Corporate Award

One of the world's largest building materials manufacturers, Saint Gobain has

been included on the Human Rights Campaign's 2018 Corporate Equality Index. With a score of 90 out of 100 percent, Saint Gobain has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to providing a diverse, inclusive workplace culture that promotes equitable employment benefits, policies and resources for members of the LGBTQ community.

Rhys Stuller – Youth and Young Adult Award

At just 19 years old, Rhys has already served as a Peer Leader in the Safe Homes program for nearly three years, graduated from the Early Childhood track at Worcester Technical High School and is continuing post-graduate studies online, and holds down a part-time job in a local restaurant. Rhys found therapeutic support and friendships at Safe Homes that helped him to work through identity and bullying issues during high school, and he's committed to paying that help forward as a Peer Leader in the program today.



Safe Homes Gala Sponsors



GRAFTON



Allison Bernier Appointed Vice President of the Central Community Health Partnership

The Central Community Health Partnership (CCHP) has appointed Allison Bernier, LICSW, QMHP as its Vice President. Prior to joining CCHP, Ms. Bernier served as Director of Care Integration for The Providence Center, the largest community mental health provider in Rhode Island. In that role, she managed the integration of the center's behavioral healthcare services with organizations including community agencies, health centers, and primary care practices. During her tenure at The Providence Center, Ms. Bernier also served as a Clinical Supervisor, and as Associate Director of Wellness, Employment, and Network Services. She holds a Master's degree in social work, and has completed the National Council for Behavioral Health's Addressing Health Disparities Leadership Program.



As Vice President of the CCHP, Ms. Bernier will lead a team of Nurses, Clinicians, Care Managers, Recovery Coaches, and Care Coordinators. Ms. Bernier states "I'm excited about this new initiative. In the CCHP model, we can address all of the individual's needs in a care plan, and line up the supports they need to follow through on that plan. That might mean addressing chronic mental health or medical concerns, looking at physical fitness and wellness goals, or helping them to identify ways to achieve housing or employment stability – essentially any issues that may be contributing to their hospitalizations or poor health outcomes."

The Central Community Health Partnership unites five human service providers – AdCare, The Bridge of Central Massachusetts, Alternatives, LUK, Inc. and Venture Community Services – as one Community Partner, serving thousands of MassHealth members across Central Massachusetts. Within the new model, the CCHP will provide both Behavioral Health and Long-Term Services and Supports. The partner agencies serve individuals and families with complex behavioral health challenges, intellectual or developmental disabilities, autism, and brain injury. Together the agencies provide person-centered services to more than 8,000 people.



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SAFE HOMES *in the city*

