Dear Friend,

As I reflect on the past year and the unprecedented challenges we’ve all faced in our personal and professional lives, I do so with a sense of gratitude, pride, and hope for brighter days ahead. Despite all the challenges the pandemic has presented, the Bridgewell team has worked diligently to adapt our programs, providing continued support for the individuals in need of our services as safely as possible.

Our team continues to work with strict safety protocols in place, but we are grateful that 51% of our staff and 99% of individuals in our programs were vaccinated against COVID-19 from January-March. We are grateful to Long Term Pharmacy Solutions and Walgreens for partnering with us to provide on-site vaccination clinics for our staff and individuals in our programs.

As spring approaches, it is very enjoyable spring!

Thank you to our dedicated staff, the individuals in our programs and their families, for your collective and ongoing efforts to keep everyone at Bridgewell safe and healthy.

Wishing you and yours a healthy and enjoyable spring!

Best wishes,

Christopher Tuttle
President & CEO

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**NEW! People of Bridgewell Series**

Bridgewell is excited to feature a new video series, People of Bridgewell. Listen to Mari, pictured here, a graduate of Bridgewell’s Women’s Program, Johnson Street and the impact the program has had on her life.

*Please visit www.bridgewell.org/stories to view our People of Bridgewell series videos and hear inspiring stories from others like Mari.*

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**Bridgewell Employees Recognized**

Bridgewell’s Ainsley Flynn, Angela Lopresti, and Thao Mai were recently recognized as 2020 PALs (Partners, Advocates, Leaders, Supporters) Award recipients by Roman Music Therapy Services, along with 30 others from other human service organizations. PALs Award recipients were honored in a virtual celebration hosted by Roman Music Therapy Services in February.

Debbie Eldred, a Bridgewell Service Manager at the Kelly J. Martin Day Habilitation Program, was recognized as the January 2021 Workforce Hero by The Caring Force. Debbie, pictured here, has worked for Bridgewell for eight years. She is known for her caring nature, her fierce advocacy for those she serves, and her dedication to supporting all who need a helping hand.

Conratulations Ainsley, Angela, Thao, and Debbie – we’re proud of you!

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**Empower Hope with a Monthly Gift**

Empower hope and make a big, lasting impact with a small monthly gift to Bridgewell!

Bridgewell Empower Members are a special group of valued partners dedicated to helping empower people with life challenges to live safe, self-directed and productive lives.

Empower Members make small automatic donations every month, which makes it easier for Bridgewell to plan long-term and offer vital, innovative programming to those in need of our services, such as community housing, day programs, outpatient treatment, and recovery services, as well as education and employment training. It’s an easy way to give regularly and feel great about the real, positive impact you are making on those we serve.

Visit www.bridgewell.org/give to quickly and easily set up your recurring monthly gift.

*If you have any questions about the Empower Monthly Giving Program, please email info@bridgewell.org or call 339.883.2100.*

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**Virtual Live Workshop Opportunity**

Bridgewell’s Center for Professional Development is providing a workshop entitled “Chronic Marijuana Use In Teens: What’s the Big Deal?” on Wednesday, May 26 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in this workshop, Rick Cresta, LICSW, will focus on how to engage youth in an exploration of their use without increasing defensiveness. He will explore the impact of chronic marijuana use in a variety of functional areas, including physical, behavioral, psychological and emotional. The impact of recent changes to the law on attitudes and behavior will also be discussed.

To learn more or register, visit www.bridgewell.org/cpd.

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**Long-Standing Partnership with UMass Lowell**

For more than a decade, participants in Bridgewell’s Day Habilitation Programs have benefited from our partnership with Dr. John Palma and the Assistive Technology Program in University of Massachusetts Lowell’s Electrical and Computer Engineering Department. Dr. Palma and his students have created one of a kind projects to help those served in our day programs meet functional objectives and have fun in the process.

The tower features a series of colored buttons that illuminate. The objective is for users to press the button when it lights up within a set amount of time. There are three speed settings available, accommodating those with various ability levels. The tower was also built with easy to clean materials, has soft edges so there is no risk of injury, and is on wheels to make it easy to reposition.

The light tower motivator has already become a fan favorite for those at our Roseway Day Habilitation Program; participants rave about the fun they have while engaging with it. They have dubbed the light tower motivator, “Danny’s Light Tower” in honor of their peer who recently passed away who was the inspiration of this project.

Our Bridgewell team is grateful for our partnership with Dr. Palma and the impact he and all of the students in the Assistive Technology Program at UMass Lowell have made over the past ten years by sharing innovative projects like the light tower motivator to enrich our programming.

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Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube to stay up to date on what’s happening at Bridgewell!
1. One of many Bridgewell residents who received their COVID-19 vaccinations. 99% of individuals in our programs have received their vaccinations!

2. The Saugus-Wakefield Elks Lodge made holiday gift bags for six of Bridgewell’s residential homes. The bags included mittens, other winter gear, and arts and crafts supplies.

3. A festive Halloween costume worn for Bridgewell’s Family Support Center’s Virtual Halloween Party.

4. On December 22, Santa visited every Bridgewell day and residential program to share some holiday cheer. 70 residential homes were visited over the course of the day!

5. One of Bridgewell’s Family Support Center’s daily Zoom activities. Participants joined to celebrate the holidays with Halloween costumes in October, their favorite ugly sweater in December, and a New Year Celebration to welcome 2021.

RECENT EVENTS

For more than a year now, the social distancing requirements that the coronavirus pandemic made necessary presented significant challenges for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities such as autism, as well as their caretakers, who depend on our programs for a sense of structure and routine. Bridgewell was forced to close day programs and employment support programs, and we needed to change how we operated our behavioral and mental health clinics, residential homes, and other housing programs to ensure safety.

In an effort to keep the people we serve connected and on a routine, our staff worked quickly to make a shift to virtual programming. For example, our Family Support Center partnered with area agencies to develop a schedule of about 30 virtual program activities weekly. These virtual programs eventually drew – and continue to draw – more than 500 logins each week from people across Massachusetts.

As our day programs are not yet allowed to reopen at this time, virtual programming continues to offer those we serve connections, support, and a sense of routine from home.

“There’s so much great energy in these virtual classes, and it brings a lot of families together both inside and outside the Bridgewell community. Having daily classes to attend on Zoom helps them maintain a schedule,” said Judith Doherty, Bridgewell’s Family Support Center Program Director and Autism Specialist. Despite the pandemic, Bridgewell’s behavioral health clinics have continued to provide medication management, group and individual therapy to our clients. Since March of 2020, our clinicians have provided over 85,000 individual services via telehealth – a platform that had not previously been used to serve our clients.

As we look forward to a day when we can resume all of our in-person programming, we continue offering quality virtual programming to provide support, stability, and connections. Even after the pandemic is no longer such a threat and we can gather safely in groups, our Bridgewell team plans to continue reaching more people through virtual programming to complement our in-person services.

Save the Date! 2021 Imagine the Possibilities Gala

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

The Imagine the Possibilities Gala provides critical financial support for Bridgewell’s important work and an opportunity to celebrate the people in our programs and our dedicated frontline staff. We hope to be able to safely hold this event in person this year.

If you are interested in learning more about joining the gala planning committee or partnering with us as a sponsor of this event, please contact Erik Langhoff, Chief Development Officer, at 339-883-2163 or elanghoff@bridgewell.org.

For more information, please visit bridgewell.org/gala.