



# Lynn Journal

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NEWS

## Bridgewell Honors George Sonia With Its Visionary Leadership Award

by [Journal Staff](#) • May 5, 2022 • [0 Comments](#)

### Special to the Journal

As part of its Imagine the Possibilities Gala held on Friday, April 29 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston, Bridgewell honored Lancelot Janitorial & Paper Products owner George Sonia with the 2022 Visionary Leadership Award. Bridgewell's Visionary Leadership Award is presented to an individual who has provided leadership, dedication, and tireless efforts in support of the Bridgewell community.

Sonia and his team have worked with Bridgewell for more than 30 years. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lancelot Janitorial & Paper Products helped Bridgewell secure PPE gear and cleaning products when they were difficult to obtain, ensuring that its essential employees had the supplies to operate Bridgewell's programs as safely as possible.



Visionary Leadership Award recipient George Sonia and his wife, Stephanie Sonia, join the family and friends who attended the Bridgewell gala for a photo before the award presentation ceremony.

### **Elaine White's Presentation Remarks**

Elaine White, Bridgewell's Chief Operating Officer, had the honor of presenting the prestigious award to Sonia.

"Tonight, it is my privilege to present Bridgewell's Visionary Leadership Award to an individual who has shown a true commitment, to both the Lynn community and to our Bridgewell community, for more than 30 years – Mr. George Sonia," said White. "George began working at Lancelot Janitorial & Paper Products when he was just 14 years old, and he purchased the company in 1988. George and his team have worked alongside Bridgewell, formerly Greater Lynn Mental Health, since then.

"George has a tremendously strong work ethic, and he holds very high standards for his team. He understands the work we do at Bridgewell and the importance of our services to the community, which drives him to go above and beyond to support this work. He doesn't do this just because he's a good guy, or just because his business is rooted in excellent customer service. George goes above and beyond for Bridgewell because he is committed to our mission – and he truly cares about those we serve and how they can contribute as active members of the community.

In addition to all he has done for Bridgewell, George is a leader in his home and business community of Lynn. He's been involved with My Brother's Table since 1983, serving on its Board of Directors since 1985. Along with family and friends, George started an organization called "Freezin' For a Reason," which is a polar plunge fundraising event held each New Year's Day at Nahant Beach to raise funds for local charities. In fact, Freezin' For a Reason has raised over \$100,000 in 7 years. George also supports a number of community events, such as this gala, and organizations like youth sports leagues, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Lynn Community Health Center.

George, we thank you for your steadfast support of Bridgewell and the Greater Lynn community. It is truly my pleasure to present you with Bridgewell's Visionary Leadership Award in recognition of all your efforts," concluded White.

### **George Sonia's Award Acceptance Speech**

George Sonia, who received a tremendous ovation from the assemblage that included his family and friends, delivered the following remarks in his gracious acceptance speech of Bridgewell's Visionary Award:

First off, I just wanted to thank the entire Bridgewell organization and team for this great honor.

I also wanted to thank my wife Stephanie. I could never accomplish anything without her help and support.

The Gala is one of my favorite nights of the year and receiving this award makes it so much more special. Bridgewell is extremely important to me and my family. I admire and fully support their mission and I am proud to say The Bridgewell organization have been fantastic business partners for over 30 years. I've had the privilege of working alongside such a wide and diverse group of people over the years including the CEO, program

managers, maintenance staff, and more. I actually worked at McDonalds with Elaine White and her family for a few years when I was in high school. But those stories will be kept out of this speech.

Over the years, I've been given the opportunity to see first-hand the amazing outreach Bridgewell provides to our community. I've been to the day programs, residential services, employment offices, and treatment programs and I have always seen the same things: people being treated with respect, positive reinforcement, and guidance. One thing I have always noticed is that staff and guests are always happy and have smiles on their faces.

It means everything to me to see Bridgewell carry out their mission by inspiring and empowering people experiencing everyday life challenges. Personally, I have a great friend, Nick Capano, that takes part in Bridgewell's employment program and I see how much it means to him to be successful and counted on at work.

I have always admired how Bridgewell works and partners with their vendors. I believe we've worked so well together over the years because we both realize team work make everything better. This has never been more important than the last few years.

I have supported Bridgewell for many, many years and will continue to do so for a very long time to come.

Thank you!

### **A Successful Event**

The Imagine the Possibilities Gala, held for the first time in person since 2019, raised \$326,000, surpassing its goal of \$300,000. All funds raised from the gala support Bridgewell's behavioral health, day habilitation, employment, housing, and recovery programming.

Bridgewell strengthens communities by providing an unmatched range of social and human services that empower people with life challenges to live safe, self-directed and productive lives. We're committed to helping people in need, from those with autism to people with substance use disorders, become engaged members of their communities. Bridgewell is also the industry leader in developing innovative offerings in response to unmet or emerging needs. [www.bridgewell.org](http://www.bridgewell.org).

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