



# Bridgewell

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[www.bridgewell.org](http://www.bridgewell.org)

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## New name, new location, new website, new vision for the future...same quality services



**Bridgewell CEO Robert Stearns, Board Members Jim Purdy, Gailanne Reeh, Phil Clifford, DMR Regional Director Mandy Chalmers, Lynnfield Town Manager William Gustus & Bridgewell COO Jim Cowdell at our "Welcome to Broadway" Open House.**

Over the past year, Bridgewell has seen a plethora of changes. First of all, in July of 2005, we changed our name from Greater Lynn Mental Health & Retardation Association, Inc. to Bridgewell. We have been in operation since 1958, but had really begun to outgrow our old name geographically, and more importantly we saw our old name as being stigmatizing to the individuals we provide services to each day. Therefore, after a long, thought-provoking process where staff, individuals in our services, board members, family members and stakeholders partook in various workshops, we came up with Bridgewell. Robert Stearns, Bridgewell CEO says, "The word 'bridge' suggests a structure or system of services supporting

2005, we moved our corporate office from Friend Street in Lynn to 471 Broadway in Lynnfield, located on the corner of Route 1 north and Route 129. The move was sparked primarily because we had not only outgrown our offices (staff-wise) at Friend Street, but we also have many programs located outside of Lynn and closer to the Merrimack Valley. Our new corporate offices provide us with a more central location to all of our programs, and are very visible from Route 1, where almost 80,000 vehicles pass by each day!

In January of 2006, we launched our new website, [www.bridgewell.org](http://www.bridgewell.org), which provides a way for people to learn about Bridgewell and the services we provide, as well as a means to get involved with our

people through the many different challenges that they may face, and the 'well' is not only for good health, but also for being in good situations." Thus, our name change marked the first of several major changes within our organization.

Secondly, in September of

organization. In the "About Bridgewell" section, you can learn general information about our organization. Click on the "service locations" link to see in how many cities and towns we operate programs. You can also learn all about the services we provide by visiting the "Our Services" section. See the variety of programs we provide in the areas of: residential services, affordable housing, homeless services, employment training and educational services, day habilitation, day rehabilitation, clinical services, children's services and recreational services. These sections include the success stories of individuals in our services who are pictured on the homepage of the website. In addition, people who access our site will be provided with contact information for these services.

A great feature of the website is the careers section, which allows job seekers to browse the jobs we have available by a variety of factors such as location, position type (part or full-time) and job category (MR residential services, MH day services,

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## Message from our CEO

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Bridgewell! We are excited to reach out to the families of those we support, to the communities in which we have programs, to our stakeholders and to our friends. We hope that you will take the time to read this newsletter and become acquainted with our organization and the phenomenal things that we do each day. Our goal as an agency is to have the individuals we serve become as independent as possible and function independently within the community so that they may lead fulfilling and rewarding lives while achieving their own goals. I am proud to say that we have had a successful history of doing just that through our committed staff and wonderful volunteer Board of Directors.



We pride ourselves on having top-notch, dedicated staff who really immerse themselves in their work, as well as being on the cutting edge of program development. For example, we recently contracted with the Lynn Public Schools to formulate an after school program for transitional age youth, a population that is often neglected by regulatory services. We also have recently completed the construction of a new home in Dracut geared toward those individuals with highly medically intensive needs.

On behalf of our agency, thank you for the support you have shown us throughout the years. We hope you enjoy learning more about us!

### Did you know that...

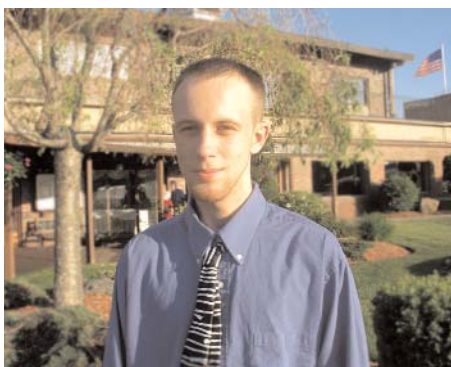
- **Bridgewell has been operating since 1958?**
- **Bridgewell provides services to over 2,900 individuals per day?**
- **Bridgewell manages 100 programs?**
- **Bridgewell's programs are located in 18 cities and towns across Massachusetts?**

## Continued from page 1

financial services, etc.). In addition, both internal and external applicants can apply on-line for any position listed! Friends can also make donations on-line through our secure website, and help us to strengthen our services, enhance our infrastructure, or honor a loved one by making a donation in their memory.

Finally, Bridgewell has recently finalized its first strategic plan, which will serve as a guide for the organization over the next five years. Our strategic planning steering committee identified five goal areas of focus for the plan: achieve long-term financial stability; become a recognized leader in MH and MR services; enhance or create programs and services in order to meet the evolving needs of the community; build and maintain the infrastructure/systems to provide reliability and efficiency; and build the Bridgewell community. Upon the identification of these areas, we worked tirelessly in small work groups to generate ideas that would make these goals come alive. After several months of hard work, our efforts paid off as our Board of Directors approved the plan in April.

## Meet Phil...DJ entrepreneur and member of Visions



Phillip is a 25 year old young man who has been attending the Visions Work Program since 2003. Visions, located in downtown Lynn, is a work service program for adults age 18-65, who are diagnosed with mild to moderate mental retardation as well as additional psychiatric disabilities. While at

Visions, Phil is dedicated to working hard and earning a solid paycheck. He works well as a team player and on his own, and is a positive role model for other people to follow. He is always prepared and ready to go, no matter what the job. Phil has an uncanny sense of direction, which is an asset when staff are going to a new location. He knows short cuts and side streets within Lynn and surrounding communities, and seems to have his own internal Mapquest!

As an entrepreneur, Phil began his own DJ business and has purchased all of the equipment with his own money. He is the DJ for all parties at Visions and has also been hired as the DJ for parties at other programs within Bridgewell. He sets his equipment up and plays a variety of music

as requested by the attendees. As the DJ at one of Bridgewell's day habilitation programs in Lynn that supports people who are blind and deaf, Phil will allow the individuals to hold onto the speakers to *feel* the music.

Despite his current business venture, Phil's future career goal is to work for the Fire Department. He is certified in First Aid/CPR, and is the Safety Officer at Visions. Phil is studying hard to learn about the requirements needed to become a firefighter, and he is ready to take the many challenging steps required to continue to succeed in order to make progress towards his ultimate career goal.

## Team Bridgewell makes great strides at NAMI walk

Several Bridgewell staff and individuals took time on Saturday, May 6th, to participate in the annual NAMI Walk at Artesani Park in Brighton. NAMI, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, is a grassroots mental health organization, developed in 1979 with the goal of improving the lives of individuals and families of individuals that suffer from severe mental illnesses. It has grown over the years, and has affiliates across the United States, including 26 across the Commonwealth. In order to achieve their goal, NAMI provides several support and advocacy programs geared towards educating individuals and families about mental illnesses and resources, several of which are facilitated by consumers of services. In addition, NAMI organizes and supports several functions that promote community awareness and appeals to local and state policy developers.

Bridgewell specializes in providing services for those with mental illness. Therefore, it was important for us to show our support for NAMI and their mission by organizing a walking team to participate in the NAMI Walk. Team Bridgewell sported a group of 40 walkers, who raised over \$2,600 in donations for NAMI. Our team was comprised of employees, family members and consumers from our North Shore and Lowell components, all eager to show support for the ongoing battle to increase awareness and reduce the stigma of mental illness. Shortly before the 11:00 starting time, our team gathered together to join the



Team Bridgewell geared up for the walk by taking a group photo.

group of nearly 6,000 others, and set off for the 3-mile trek, during which we could hear first hand how mental illness has touched the hearts and lives of those participating.

Bridgewell is proud to be part of the ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life and types of supports available for those affected by mental illness.

## CARF International gives Bridgewell 'exemplary' marks



Staff at VIP regularly conduct job training workshops for homeless or those at-risk of being homeless in the community.

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities known as CARF announced that Bridgewell has been accredited for a period of three years for its Employment Services, Community Services, Case Management Services and Day Rehabilitation programs. Although many other Bridgewell services and programs are accredited by CARF, this is the first time Bridgewell has sought and achieved accreditation for the aforementioned services.

This accreditation outcome represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization and shows the organization's substantial conformance to the standards established

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by CARF. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation outcome has put itself through a rigorous peer review process and has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during on-site visits that its programs and services are of the highest quality, measurable and accountable.

The CARF report noted that “One of the hallmarks of Bridgewell is the philosophy that everyone is equal; labels and stigmas are invisible; and persons served are involved in all levels and aspects of services, operations, and mechanisms for input.” All of the Bridgewell programs that were surveyed showed strength in their areas of expertise, however, one Bridgewell program, the Vocational Interest Program (VIP), achieved “exemplary” standards in its review. Located in Lynn, VIP’s primary focus is to

provide job training for individuals in the Lynn area who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, as well as to provide the opportunity to develop and refine skills needed to reenter the workforce. According to CARF surveyors, “The Vocational Interest Program is unique in its approach to employment and training for persons who are homeless. The representative payee program is a wonderful resource for those persons who cannot manage their finances independently.”

Bridgewell CEO Robert Stearns adds, “This Three-Year Accreditation is a reflection of the staff’s commitment and dedication to the individuals we serve, and we are thrilled to have these services accredited by CARF.”

# Bridgewell's Clinical Expertise

Bridgewell operates two outpatient clinics, Bridgewell Counseling Services, located in downtown Lowell, and the Sovner Center, located in Danvers. Bridgewell Counseling Services (BCS) has been in operation since 1996 and provides a myriad of psychiatric services to individuals suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), personality disorders, anxiety disorders and drug/alcohol addictions. BCS staff see approximately 115 individuals for medication management and 150 individuals for therapy each week. According to clinic director Gary Gastman, PhD, "For many of our patients, BCS is viewed as the place of last resort amongst treatment providers, as many facilities have refused to work with our patients given their psychiatric histories, and/or compliance with treatment. It is highly rewarding to know that we are reaching out to and helping this vulnerable population in the Lowell area". Services at BCS can be accessed by completing a

2-page referral form, or patients can also be referred by their primary care physician, therapist, DMH/DMR caseworker or family member.

The Sovner Center originated in 1992 and sees approximately 150 clients per week for a combination of psychopharmacology and therapy services for individuals with both developmental disabilities and mental health diagnoses including those with anxiety disorders, PTSD and schizophrenia as well as chronic depression and other mood disorders. The complexity of the population served coupled with the lack of similar services in the geographic area are what make the Sovner Center's services unique. Sovner director Kim Haley, LMHC, says, "It is a source of pride knowing that the individuals we serve have the ability to receive the services they require from a team of committed, caring professionals, who specialize in treating the dually diagnosed population."

## Our mission, vision & values

### Our mission

Inspired by the values of caring and respect, together we guide individuals with disabilities and other challenges to achieve and enjoy their highest quality of life and personal growth.

### Our vision

To be the provider of choice for services to individuals with disabilities and other special needs and to be trusted and recognized by all stakeholders for our leadership, innovation, professional expertise, quality of service, and managerial accountability and integrity.

### Our values

In our relationships and all that we do, we will demonstrate these fundamental values:

1. Caring
2. Respect
3. Dignity
4. Integrity
5. Safety
6. Wellness

Non-Profit  
Organization  
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