

Saugus Advertiser

Bridgewell opens new Saugus home for 5 men with disabilities

By Staff reports

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Saugus - Bridgewell, a private non-profit human services agency based in Lynnfield, hosted an open house on Thursday, July 23 for a new group home in Saugus for five men with developmental disabilities. The five residents and Bridgewell staff welcomed family members, friends, neighbors and representatives from the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS).



Courtesy photo:

The new group home is fully accessible to accommodate the needs of the residents, including an open floor plan with wide hallways and doors, roll-in showers, and an extra tall garage to accommodate a wheel-chair van

Bridgewell is committed to providing “life-care” and providing safe homes for individuals as physical challenges may arise as residents age. The new Saugus home is an example of this commitment. It was built by Bridgewell to meet the changing needs of the five men who had previously been living in a triple-decker home in Lynn, also owned by Bridgewell.

A couple of the men are over 50, and the stairs were becoming difficult for them. Their personal care needs had increased as well and Bridgewell saw the need for large, fully accessible bathrooms in the near future.

Bridgewell has similar housing projects in various stages of development in Salem, Peabody, Lowell, and Beverly.

The new group home is operated and staffed by Bridgewell on a 24-hour/7 days a week basis. Stephen, Anthony, Alan, David and Seth range in age from 26 to 70. Before coming to their first home at Bridgewell, two of the five had lived in state-run institutions and three of the men have lived with their families. Anthony and Stephen have been living in a Bridgewell home since 1982, and Seth came to Bridgewell in 2003.

Courtesy Photo:

Left to Right: At the open house are Seth Bird, (resident of Bridgewell’s new home), Peter Papadopoulos (Bridgewell Residential Supervisor), Amanda Chalmers (Regional Director, Northeast Region, MA Department of Developmental Services), Robert S. Stearns, Bridgewell Chief Executive Officer) and Steve Caruso (Caruso & McGovern Construction Company).



“This home provides another wonderful example of the positive impact our partnership with DDS has had on the lives of individuals with disabilities living on the North Shore,” said Robert Stearns, Chief Executive Officer of Bridgewell.

With single-level living and an open floor plan, the men often spend time with one another in the common areas when not enjoying the privacy of the own bedrooms. The house is stylishly furnished and decorated and rooms have been painted in soft pastels.

“It has been a joy turning this well-designed house into a beautiful home for these gentlemen”, said Monica R. Lindsey, Program Director for the home.

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“We are fortunate that our longstanding relationships with state, federal, and local agencies enable us to continue to develop specialized housing even during this difficult economy,” Mr. Stearns added. The home was designed by architectural firm Deerhill Associates LLC, and was the first of five fully-accessible private homes developed by Caruso and McGovern Construction Company, Inc. for Bridgewell.

The home is constructed on a grade that minimizes the height and grade of handicap ramps and meets all Architectural Accessibility Board (AAB) standards for safety. The home has an open floor plan, five-foot wide corridors and spacious bedrooms to accommodate the turning radius of wheelchairs and special medical equipment, and Hoyer lifts. The bathrooms are designed to accommodate shower chairs or gurneys. Other features include automatic door openers, security card access for entry, rear decks that accommodate outdoor activities for the men and provide access to the backyard, and an oversize garage that allows loading and unloading of a wheelchair van protected from the weather.

Bridgewell is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and helping individuals with developmental and psychiatric disabilities to direct their own lives, achieve personal and professional success and remain active participants in society.

Originating in 1958 as a child guidance center in downtown Lynn, Massachusetts, Bridgewell has grown and expanded its services and now serves over 2,700 individuals per day at more than 100 sites, including 61 group homes, in 18 communities in Essex and Middlesex counties. Bridgewell provides residential and day services, affordable housing and homeless services, clinical services, recreational services as well as employment training and educational services.

To learn more about Bridgewell, go to <http://www.bridgewell.org/>.