

# Bridgewell helps people Imagine the Possibilities

Bridgewell's story is about consistency and innovation, and providing a continuum of care in the community. For more than half a century, Bridgewell has been true to its mission of connecting people with possibilities by providing premium services to adults with developmental disabilities, mental illness and other life challenges. Bridgewell is recognized for its ability to adapt its services to the changing needs among the individuals it serves.

That can mean adding specialized nursing care to meet complex medical needs of the disabled, modifying the architectural design of a residence to address some other challenging situation, or embracing the latest in adaptive technology. Whatever the need, Bridgewell will step up to meet it.

"We do not give up on people with complex needs, relegating them to nursing homes or other institutions," said Bridgewell CEO Robert Stearns. "We are determined to meet a range of needs by constantly evolving our continuum of care throughout an individual's lifetime."

When young adults turn 22 and are no longer eligible for special-education programs offered by school districts, families often are unsure where to turn. In many instances, Bridgewell is able to fill the void by offering a wide range of services, including: housing, employment training, day habilitation, healthcare support, transportation and opportunities for recreation.

"We focus on the person's abilities, not disabilities," Stearns said.

Bridgewell benefits from strong community support, without which it would not be possible to run an agency that has a \$42 million budget and 1,000+ staff members who service 3,000 people at 85 sites in 18 communities.

Each year at the *Imagine the Possibilities* Gala, Bridgewell recognizes individuals who have been particularly supportive of its mission. This year's honorees were: Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray, who received the Visionary Leadership Award, and longtime sportscaster Bob Lobel, who received the Excellence in Service Award.

Murray was honored for his longtime efforts to provide housing opportunities for those experiencing homelessness and individuals with disabilities. He leads the Patrick administration's efforts to end homelessness, and to enhance services for veterans.

"Lt. Gov. Murray's innovative work with Gov. Patrick through the Housing and Homelessness Agenda, Housing First and through the Division of Housing Stabilization Resources speaks to Bridgewell's mission and exemplifies our shared commitment to end homelessness," Stearns said.

Bridgewell's work with the homeless dates back to 1993 when it began providing HUD-funded housing and supports for homeless individuals. Bridgewell partnered with the Lynn Housing Authority to establish the Lynn PACT – People Acting as a Collaborative Team. Soon after, Bridgewell started the Vocational Interest Program (VIP) and Pathfinder program which offers a variety of supports to the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Lobel was recognized for his work on behalf of developmentally disabled adults and those facing other life challenges. Throughout his career, which spanned more than 30 years on Boston television and radio, he became known for his charity work for Children's Hospital and the Genesis Fund. He was also involved with Charles River Center, which serves people with developmental disabilities.

Growing up in Ohio, Lobel lived for six years on the campus of a state hospital where both his parents worked as nurses. He learned at an early age that everyone, regardless of disabilities, is entitled to a fair chance to lead a full life.

Recently, Lobel visited Bridgewell's Boston Street Center in Lynn, where program participants were excited to interact with a celebrity whom many recognized from television. In receiving the Excellence in Service Award, Lobel follows in the footsteps of Lynn attorney Sam Vitali, a staunch advocate for individuals with disabilities to have the right to live in the community with respect and dignity.

"We are pleased to honor Bob Lobel for all his work on behalf of the individuals whom Bridgewell serves," Stearns said. "In our many residential and day programs, we are all about connecting people with possibilities, helping them achieve to their fullest potential throughout their lives."

The *Imagine the Possibilities* Gala celebrates Bridgewell's work throughout the year, which is inspired by the values of caring and respect, reinforced by clinical and other expertise and buoyed by the support of the community. Those values, and that support, are what allow Bridgewell to provide the continuum of care that meets the needs of those it serves.

To learn more about Bridgewell, see photos of the *Imagine the Possibilities* Gala or to view Bridgewell's video about their commitment to the continuum of care visit [www.bridgewell.org](http://www.bridgewell.org).



Mike Carroll, left, and Nicholas Mont with sportscaster Bob Lobel at the Boston Street site.

## CONTINUUM OF CARE



From left, Lori St. Pierre, Rachel Deveaux, Bob Lobel and Patti White.