

THE BRIDGE

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE BRIDGEWELL FAMILY
SUPPORT CENTER

INSIDE

THIS ISSUE

PG. 2-3

Program Director Judith Doherty reflects on the third birthday of the Bridgewell Family Support Center.

PG. 4-5

We had a great end of 2018 and we're looking forward to continuing to develop and improve our programming in 2019.

PG. 6-7

Whatever happened to Asperger syndrome? Case manager Caro Narby provides an explanation of ASD terminology and the newly eligible population.

Attached to this newsletter

See the attached flyers for upcoming events facilitated by the Family Support Center and our partners.



Bridgewell

January and February 2019

WE FINALLY HAVE A NEWSLETTER!

As we continue to grow, the Bridgewell Family Support Center will now be sending out a bi-monthly newsletter (that's every two months, not twice a month!). This provides a central space to learn about our upcoming events, and to read about updates and new initiatives.

In this first issue, we reflect on the past three years, look back on exciting recent events at FSC, and look ahead to the coming months. Case manager Caro Narby also explains some recent changes in the terminology around autism, and you can find flyers for upcoming events and programs offered by FSC and our partners.

ON TURNING THREE

From the desk of Judith Doherty, Program Director

The Bridgewell Family Support Center has a birthday coming up!

In June, the Family Support Center “turns three” and a lot has happened in those three years.

Age three can be a landmark year for many of our parents too, as this is the birthday at which your child ages out of Early Intervention and you begin to navigate the world of special education. At that time, there is a lot of unknown, however there should really be a lot of optimism too! Your child begins to expand their horizon and in a best case scenario, starts to receive individualized programming and services designed to bring about the best outcome for their social, emotional and educational growth. Sometimes navigating exactly what that programming should look like isn't particularly clear when you begin, but as you start to become familiar with the IEP process and learn to advocate for your child's best outcome, your goals grow, evolve and change as your knowledge base grows, evolves and changes.

Since 2017, our program has grown, evolved and changed as well, we have developed a lot in both services and outreach to the Greater Lynn community and beyond. Recognizing that the Bridgewell Family Support Center's mission is to support individuals and families where and when they need it most, we also recognized that to grow and help families best, we needed to be easy to access and visible as a center and as staff.

After a year at our first office, the Family Support Center moved to our current building, and now occupy an office at 66 Silsbee Street, right in the heart of downtown Lynn. This central location is easily accessible by public transportation and most of the time, (unless it's during the nearby elementary school's drop off and pick up hours!), has plenty of on-street parking and is a short walk from the train or bus stop.

We also recognized that for many of our families, attending meetings outside the home is time away from work or family and that can be a hardship. Our “small but mighty” staff has worked over the last three years to meet the needs of those we serve by offering home visits, groups, trainings and other events during and outside the typical office hours of 9-5.

After assessing the needs of our adult population with ASD who are able to function independently in the community for a few hours at a time, we began to offer monthly “meet ups” at places or events in the community to encourage friendships and foster relationships with the goal that these would continue beyond our facilitated events.

For parents of school age kids, our Family to Family, Familia mas Familia day time group held at the center each month, features a different topic and/or guest speaker. We cover a range of subjects, everything from “Will my Kid ever be Toilet Trained?” to “Autism and Insurance” to

“Caring for the Caregiver” and many of these topics come directly from your feedback. To meet the needs of our Latino community, we also hold many of these workshops and groups offering Spanish language simultaneous translation. The goal of groups is not just to present a topic, but to offer an opportunity for parents to meet and collaborate with other parents, and that has really been working well!

With more of that feedback in mind, in 2018, we established two new groups for Families of Individuals in a Day Program, recognizing that when a loved one ages out of the education system, families still need to connect with other families who are in a similar situation. These groups have generated many spectacular ideas for future programming, and we look forward to implementing these in the coming year.

So please feel free to contact me directly to bring me your ideas for what you would like to see in our 4th year and beyond for programming and support, or run them by Caro Narby or Paul Dolan, our Community Case Managers. While we can't always promise to implement this programming ourselves, our staff can be very creative at finding existing resources that may be out there to meet your needs.

Happy Spring!



We're looking forward to 2019!

LOOKING BACK AT THE END OF 2018 AND LOOKING AHEAD TO 2019

The latter half of 2018 saw some great events and new developments at the Bridgewell Family Support Center:

September 2018 - Caro Narby joined FSC as a part-time Community Services Case Manager

October 2018 - Northeast Arc Advocate Nancy Lucier presented on Basic Rights and the IEP at FSC's "Family to Family/Familia mas Familia" support group, and Northeast Arc Family Support Director Aymee Lucifora provided simultaneous Spanish translation

November 2018 - Diana Santiago of Mass Advocates for Children and the Volunteer Lawyer's Pilot Program partnered with FSC for a Spanish-language presentation on guardianship and decision-making; Community Case Manager Caro Narby held the very first Out on the Town meet-up at The Castle, a board game café in Beverly; AANE's Latino Outreach Coordinator Laura Perez provided two days full days of free 1:1 coaching for individuals and families at our center in Lynn, made possible through a generous grant from the Cummings Foundation.



December 2018 – Program Director Judith Doherty began organizing a monthly support group for parents of individuals in a day program; the Family Support Center welcomed clients and community partners to our annual Holiday Open House; and we all did the time warp again at an Out on the Town meet-up at an interactive showing of The Rocky Horror Picture Show.

January 2019 seemed to fly by! We have continued to promote our Out on the Town meet-ups for young adults with ASD. The support group for parents of individuals in a day program has been a vibrant success, and we hope it will continue to be a source of meaningful conversation and connection. The Family Support Center is a very small office, but we hope to make a big impact. At the end of January we held a very well-attended workshop on financial planning for families of individuals with disabilities. In response to feedback from that event, we hope to offer a future Spanish-language presentation on the same topic. We have been developing plans for future groups, and planning events and workshops through March. We are already gearing up for April, which is Autism Awareness month and one of the busiest times of the year for FSC.

Autism Awareness Month

Bridgewell Family Support Center will be out in force on April 11th 9am-1130am at the 15th Annual Autism Advocacy Day at the Great Hall at the State House, sponsored by AFAM, Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts. Come meet us there and join other families, self-advocates, and providers and make an impact on your legislators.

Bridges to Family Success Initiative

Through a grant with the Tower Foundation, in partnership with Children's Friend and Family Services/JRI, the Bridges to Family Success initiative addresses the needs of families raising a child or young adult with autism or another intellectual or developmental disability.

Now in its second year, this program focuses its aid particularly on families in Greater Lynn and surrounding communities who face additional barriers, such as cultural and linguistic diversity or complex behavioral health challenges, which hinder their access to appropriate services and community resources for their child.

Program staff help families develop an individualized family plan, which with support from trained care coordinators, to address a child's behavioral health needs and establish long-term care goals.

Families receive quality training and support on how to navigate the behavioral health system and access necessary services, as well as how to foster stronger familial bonds. Additionally, "Bridges to Family Success" hosts numerous community social events for families to create a continued network of peer support.

Stay Tuned

Flyers for upcoming events and programs are included with this newsletter. These include events hosted by the Family Support Center and events presented by some of our community partners. If you have any suggestions for future events, such as workshop topics, please feel free to let us know. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you!

Whatever happened to Asperger's?

AN EXPLANATION OF "ASD NO ID" AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "NEWLY ELIGIBLE"

In 2013, the American Psychological Association (APA) published the DSM V, the 5th edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This most recent edition of the DSM includes some significant changes in the official diagnostic labels that are often referred to as the autism spectrum. The APA believes that the introduction of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as an umbrella diagnosis [better reflects the current scientific and clinical understanding of autism](#). But many people have been alarmed or confused by the change. This article is intended to provide a brief explanation of the change from "pervasive developmental disorders" to ASD, and what it means to be "newly eligible" for DDS services in Massachusetts.

New Diagnostic Labels

In the previous version of the DSM, the disorders referred to as the autism spectrum were categorized under the umbrella term "pervasive developmental disorders". They included:

- Autistic Disorder (299.00 DSM-IV)
- Asperger Syndrome (299.80 DSM-IV)
- Rett Syndrome (299.80 DSM-IV)
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (299.10 DSM-IV)
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) (299.80 DSM-IV)

In the most recent version of the DSM, instead of separate conditions listed under the category of PDD, there is one [single condition referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder \(ASD\)](#). People who formerly were diagnosed with Autistic Disorder, Asperger Syndrome, or PDD-NOS are now all considered to have Autism Spectrum Disorder. Rett Syndrome, a rare condition that is caused by a genetic mutation, [is still recognized as a distinct condition](#) but is now categorized under genetic disorders.

Perhaps the most highly publicized aspect of the change is that the condition formerly referred to as Asperger Syndrome no longer exists as a diagnosis. [This does not mean that people diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome have necessarily "lost" their diagnosis and are no longer considered to have a developmental disability](#). Rather, people who meet the diagnostic criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder and who do not have an intellectual disability, who would formerly have been diagnosed with Asperger syndrome or who might have been considered to have "high-functioning" autism, are now labeled as "ASD no ID." They have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), but they do not have intellectual disability (ID).

New Eligibility Guidelines

In 2014, the [Massachusetts legislature passed the Autism Omnibus Bill into law](#). This law required DDS to expand its eligibility criteria to include individuals with developmental disabilities, including ASD, who do not have an intellectual disability. Prior to the change only individuals with ID could be considered eligible for DDS services. The population of individuals without ID who are now able to apply for DDS services are often referred to as the "newly eligible" population within the service system.

For more information about DDS eligibility and how to apply, please refer to the resources available online at mass.gov/dds, including [factsheets](#) for individuals with ASD and other specific diagnoses. You can also download an [eligibility application](#). If you live on the North Shore, and you need help filling out or submitting your application for DDS eligibility, the staff at the Family Support Center may be able to help.

From the desk of Caro Narby, Community Services Case Manager

Terms to understand:

DDS - Department of Developmental Services, a department of the Massachusetts state government that facilitates services for individuals with developmental disabilities

DSM - the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; currently in the 5th edition

ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder, a form of developmental disability characterized by social difficulties and repetitive behavior across a wide range of severity

ASD no ID - a label applied to the sub-set of individuals with ASD who do not have intellectual disability

ID - intellectual disability, a form of developmental disability characterized by delays or difficulties in mental ability

PDD - pervasive developmental disorders, the former category of diagnoses considered to be part of the autism spectrum; in the most recent version of the DSM this category has been replaced by the single diagnostic label of Autism Spectrum Disorder or ASD

Asperger Syndrome - a diagnostic label that was formerly used to refer to people on the autism spectrum who do not experience intellectual disability or speech delays

Resources:

DDS website: mass.gov/dds

DDS eligibility factsheets: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/your-guide-to-the-dds-eligibility-process#eligibility-fact-sheets->

DDS eligibility application: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/dds-eligibility-forms>

Text of 2014 law: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2014/Chapter226>

CDC explanation of DSM V criteria for ASD: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/hcp-dsm.html>

The Bridgewell Family Support Center is located at 66 Silsbee Street, Lynn, MA 01901

Judith Doherty, Program Director

339-883-1761

jdoherly@bridgewell.org

Caro Narby, Case Manager

339-883-1760

cnarby@bridgewell.org

The Family Support Center is a program of Bridgewell.

The Bridgewell headquarters are located at 10 Dearborn Road, Peabody, MA 01960.

Main telephone number: 781-593-1088

www.bridgewell.org

Connect with Bridgewell on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[YouTube](#)

[LinkedIn](#)



JOIN THE
BRIDGEWELL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS OF INDIVIDUALS IN A(NY!) DAY PROGRAM

This group is open to parents of individuals in
any day program, not just at Bridgewell!

THURSDAY, APRIL 25 2019
6 PM - 7:30 PM
PEABODY INSTITUTE LIBRARY
82 MAIN STREET, PEABODY MA, 01960
SECOND FLOOR

Facilitated by Judith Doherty, Program Director, Family Support
Center

RSVP and questions:
jdoherthy@bridgewell.org
339-883-1761



Bridgewell

OUT ON THE TOWN
WITH THE BRIDGEWELL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

JOIN US FOR A MEET-AND-GREET LUNCH

Out on the Town is our monthly meet-up series for adults with ASD or a similar developmental profile.

For this special meet-and-greet event, attendees are encouraged to bring along a family member or friend as a guest.

RSVP to Caro Narby at cnarby@bridgewell.org by Monday 5/6/19

EAST SAKURA
400 HIGHLAND AVENUE
SALEM, MA 01970

THURSDAY, MAY 9
1:30 PM





JOIN THE
BRIDGEWELL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER FOR A

Family Support Ice Cream Social

Featuring music and dancing with Kim Crowley



BRIDGEWELL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER
66 SILSBEE STREET, LYNN, MA 01902
ENTER AT THE FRIEND STREET SIDE OF THE BUILDING
AT THE DOOR FACING THE PARKING LOT

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2019
1 PM TO 3 PM

For more information or to RSVP, contact Program Director
Judith Doherty at jdoherty@bridgewell.org or at 339-883-1761

