

Administration, Staff and Board (continued)

In the summer of 2007, a new full-time position, Director of Operations, was established and filled. Bridges operates with a full-time Executive Director, a full-time Director of Operations, a part-time Run Coordinator, and a part-time Run Assistant. All members of the Operations Staff have experienced homelessness. The Bridges Board of Trustees is comprised of both housed and homeless individuals.

Funding: Bridges does not seek or receive federal or state funding. In 2007-08, our income was received from one annual appeal, a 20th anniversary event, foundation grants, and individual donors.

We are pleased to have received grant awards from the following foundations:

- ◆ Christ Church, Summit, Board of World Fellowship
- ◆ Community Congregational Church of Short Hills
- ◆ Deutsche Bank
- ◆ Lena Willis Mission Fund
- ◆ Lydia Collins deForest Charitable Trust
- ◆ Sarah Ward Foundation
- ◆ A family foundation remaining anonymous

20th Anniversary: Bridges commemorated its 20th anniversary with a reception and concert by Howard Tate and his rhythm and blues band at the Dorothy Young Performing Arts Center at Drew University. Mr. Tate was a rising star in the 1970's, became disenfranchised, was homeless for several years and later rediscovered and nominated for a Grammy Award. Mr. Tate was chosen to perform for this event because his personal story exemplified the lives of so many we meet.

“On our early Runs we met Dino, Shorty, Carol, Doc, Roger, Texas and Tennessee and many others. Friday night after Friday night they shared their lives with us, and they were powerful teachers who helped us begin to shape what has become Bridges.”

—Co-founders, Ginger and Geoff Worden, remembering 20 years of Bridges

Bridges is grateful to our volunteers and donors who continue to support our mission to bring the housed and homeless together in community.

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Bridges Outreach, Inc.
2007-2008 Annual Report Summary

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The Bridges' Run, or outreach visit, is the heart of our mission to *bring the housed and homeless together in community*. In 2008, Bridges is humbled to commemorate twenty years of outreach to the homeless in lower Manhattan and, in more recent years, Newark and Irvington. We have been deeply affected by the people we have met, the stories they have shared, and their courage and strength. We are resolved to continue to meet the immediate needs of those living on the streets and in shelters and to provide compassion and fellowship with respect and dignity.

In this fiscal year, with the help of hundreds of volunteers, Bridges made 161 Runs to New York, Newark and Irvington.

New York City: Bridges made 74 Runs to lower Manhattan this year. Crowds of homeless peaked at nearly 200 people at Battery Park in the winter months. The population at Centre Street also reached all time highs of up to 150 people.

Newark: During this time period, 49 Runs were made to various locations in Newark including shelters at the Carlton Hotel, and the Emergency Residence Program at the Newark YMWCA. Runs to the South 10th Street neighborhood were initiated in October, 2007, and continue on a monthly basis.

Homeless children sheltered at the Emergency Residence Program in Newark welcomed groups of teenage volunteers who hosted a monthly birthday party or craft activity for the children. Up to 25 children of all ages attended the birthday parties and activity days.

Irvington: Every Sunday, with few exceptions, there is a Bridges Run to Irvington's East Ward. The Bridges' Run is a community event with neighbors helping neighbors.

Irvington Food Pantry: Bridges is pleased to have contributed volunteers, food and supplies to the revitalization of the Church Women United Food Pantry in Irvington.

Volunteers: Our volunteers are the core of Bridges. This year, over 60 volunteer groups from corporations to youth groups from houses of worship, schools, both private and public, and individuals participated on Bridges' Runs. Hundreds more donated seasonal clothing, brown bag lunches, breakfast bags, toiletry items, school supplies, holiday gifts, and camp supplies for sheltered children. Over 75,000 brown bag lunches and breakfast bags were distributed last year.

"Bridges has become such a vital part of the heart and soul of our school. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with everyone at Bridges. It has made an amazing impact in the lives of so many in our community."

—Brother Dan, Roselle Catholic High School

"Fill the Truck" is a new program that brings Bridges' distinctive yellow truck to schools, corporations and houses of worship. Community members are asked to "fill the truck" with specific seasonal items.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service provided an opportunity for over 150 area residents of all ages to volunteer at Bridges in the spirit of Dr. King. That day, over 1,000 toiletry kits were packaged, hundreds of bags of clothing sorted, and over 500 lunches made and delivered to St. Rocco's Men's and Family shelters in Newark.

Ellen Maher Volunteer Award recipients for 2008 are Christina Abruzzo from Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child and Ellen Salmi and Kenneth Murray from Roselle Catholic High School. This award is given annually to high school seniors who have faithfully and effectively engaged with fellow students to support the work of Bridges and who have also proved themselves to be a friend to the homeless.

Special Programs: Special programs provided necessities to over 1,500 neighbors in need this year. Bridges provides seasonal items of need to both street and sheltered homeless through various special programs.

Thanksgiving: A homemade Thanksgiving Dinner was brought to a shelter for women and children who were victims of domestic violence by a group of adults from an area synagogue that regularly participates with Bridges.

Holiday Gifts: In 2007, with the help of many donors and volunteers, Bridges distributed over 1,200 gifts. More than half the gifts were coats and boots of a specific size. Six shelters or groups working with children in need in Newark, Irvington and Summit, representing over 500 children, received hundreds of new toys and new pajamas.

I am a 10 year old male soon to be eleven years old. Would like to have a safe and healthy Christmas. My dad walked out on us to live somewhere else. My mom doesn't work much when I'm home sick which is often. I don't enjoy being sick and going to the hospital either. Please help my mom with our Christmas list.

—from a wish list of a ten-year-old boy

Special Gifts: Donations to Bridges to honor or commemorate a special event provided winter clothing, baby supplies and memberships to NYC Recreation Centers that provide showers and recreation for our homeless friends.

Camp Supplies for Sheltered Children: In the spring of 2008, Bridges supplied camp necessities for 50 children from the Emergency Residence Program Shelter in Newark to attend sleep away camp. Supplies were purchased by individual donors, grant support, and Bridges.

Day Camp for Shelter Children: A partnership between Bridges and the Reeves-Reed Arboretum allowed twenty young children from the Emergency Residence Program, a shelter in Newark, to participate in the Arboretum's Elephant Tree Nature Camp in the summer of 2007. The two non-profits joined forces to provide scholarships, transportation, and food for participating campers.

"This is a great opportunity to bring kids to the Arboretum who would not otherwise be spending much time in green spaces this summer. We work hard to make every day an enriching, and frequently, awe-inspiring event."

—Gilles Mesrobian, Executive Director of the Reeves-Reed Arboretum in 2007

Art Classes: In the summer of 2007, Bridges and the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts in Summit partnered to bring housed and homeless teens together for a professional art class. This class was part three of a three-part series of art classes that began in the spring of 2007.

School Supplies: Over 500 children in need in Newark, Irvington and Summit, were given new backpacks and supplies for school in August, 2007. An additional 500 children in Irvington, Elizabeth and New York received school supplies.

Administration, Staff and Board: In 2007-08, policy and procedures to ensure greater fiscal responsibility were established and a new website was created. Additional storage space was acquired at Oakes Memorial Center in Summit.