



Bridges to You

NOVEMBER 2020

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- COVID – Responding in a Reactionary Time
- Two Volunteers
- Christmas Service Project
- Contribute to The Bridge House While you Shop for Christmas

COVID—Responding in a Reactionary Time

No doubt 2020 will be a stand-out year because of how COVID-19 made a global shift in how we view our lives. I am sure all of you could testify as to how your life has been changed. The elderly and infirmed have had their isolation intensified. Students have had to adjust to distance learning, loss of many extra-curricular activities, and even graduations have been “celebrated” virtually. Many of those still

working have had to do their work from home. Many have had their employment lessened or have been laid off. Medical and emergency workers have had their jobs intensify with the threat of getting COVID while being at the center of those who are receiving treatment. Ironically, at the beginning of this crisis, some in the medical field suffered reduced employment, as many procedures were put on

hold.

At The Bridge House, the stresses and challenges have added to our already challenging work of helping men transition to healthy living from years of alcoholism and drug addiction.

Back in March when the crisis started, our staff was reduced by 25%. While I can’t elaborate details, as a result of COVID we were down some full-time positions
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Two Volunteers—Two Lives that Bless

While at this time volunteers have been limited for coming on-site, the Bridge House has been blessed and supported through many volunteers. Churches, businesses, individuals, and former residents have helped men seeking recovery.

Tom Emmons has recently

“retired” from being our board chairman for the longest tenure of any of our chairs. He is a CFO for a local corporation. Tom Emmons has been volunteering since the early days of Bridge House operations. We were desperately underfunded in those days, so having his

financial expertise was huge. As a man of faith, he believed with us that this was God’s house/ministry and was encouraging and stood with us in the darkest days. He was on the Board of Directors for most of the years that we were operating and took a leadership role as we dealt
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Responding in a Reactionary Time cont.

and one part-time. Also, it was decided for the remaining staff to work only 3 longer shifts to alleviate stress and minimize exposure for staff and our residents. This meant that some managers had to work extra shifts and some weekends for coverage.

Other measures were mandated by the state. No overnight visits for the residents, no volunteers on the premises, access to houses in one door, extra sanitization procedures, masks in common areas, social distancing, and now periodic testing. Other measures were taken, but the overall effect was more financial expense and greater stress for the men and staff. Some regular staff helped cover for the “holes” in coverage, which meant more hours and, at times, some staff needed to get “away” from all the dynamics of working during a pandemic.

The focus that I kept was twofold. First, we needed to obtain accurate information from the state as to our right response. While this was a changing dynamic, it was good to have this guidance. I didn’t want to ignore safe and healthy guidance during this dangerous time. Because of our license with the state, we were able to receive clear guidance of what we should do to protect our staff and residents.

The other focus was watching out for how I took care of myself. For me, that meant shutting down the media (from the left and right) and keeping my focus on my own spiritual welfare. Last Autumn. I had a sense to intensify my spiritual life with prayer, meditation, and quiet moments. As a Christian, this enhanced my love for God and my staff. While the temptation to panic was real, a

greater calm and peace from God settled my soul.

Others met the challenge, too. I am truly blessed to work with a dedicated staff who have heroically helped our residents and each other to weather this difficult time. All through this time we have not had to turn away any needy person from treatment or close our doors even for a day. We have much to be thankful for. Thank you for your faithful support and prayers.

“ A grateful heart is one that finds the countless blessings of God in the seemingly mundane everyday life.”

WE MAKE A
LIVING BY WHAT
WE GET, BUT WE
MAKE A LIFE BY
WHAT WE GIVE.

- WINSTON CHURCHILL

Christmas Service Project

The holiday season is both a blessing and a challenge to men in early recovery. Many of our men are homeless, and many do not have families with whom to celebrate. In the past, individuals and churches have contributed to meet this need. We serve 33 men and want all to be included. Please consider for your family, church, business, or school to donate a gift this Christmas to bless the men at the Bridge House.

The items to consider are:

- *Gloves*
- *Hats*
- *Warm socks*

- *Umbrellas*
- *Treats*
- *Gift cards from Walmart or Target*

*If you prefer for us to shop for you, just send a check with **Christmas** in the memo and we will shop for you. If you send a card with the gift, we will display it for the men to see. It is an encouragement for these men to see the people who support their choice for recovery.*

If we could receive the gifts by the 11th of December, it will ensure the men will receive them in time. You will brighten and encourage someone by giving.

Thanks for your consideration – Dave

If interested, please contact Dave Lang:

dave@thebridgehouse.org .

Two Volunteers who Bless cont.

with many problems, both financial and spiritual.

During a difficult crisis about 8 years ago, which almost shut the doors to The Bridge House, it was his leadership, encouragement, and counsel that helped the Bridge House to stay open. His sacrificial efforts made it possible to continue this ministry since 1987.

Another volunteer to be honored this month is Jean Smith. While she is sorely missed by friends and family, she is remembered here. I remember Jean with the First Baptist Church of Holliston

bringing meals for the men and visiting with them. Her ready smile and kind manner were an encouragement for the men struggling with broken family relationships.

In the words of our founder James Spence: *“Jean Smith has been a faithful friend and an encourager to us, especially when God directed us to found the ministry of The Bridge House in Framingham, MA. She was one of our first church representatives for the support of our ministry to men reentering society from prison. She, with others from First Baptist Church in Holliston, faithfully prepared and delivered home-cooked meals for*

the men. She supported our fund-raising events and prayed during the good and bad times. Jean will always have an enduring place in our hearts”.

Though now restrictions have curtailed a lot of personal contact with the residents in our program, we are looking forward to the day when volunteers like Tom Emmons and Jean Smith can contribute.



THE BRIDGE HOUSE

A Ministry of New England Aftercare
Ministries

18 Summit St.
Framingham, MA 01702
www.thebridgehouse.org
Admissions/ intake: 508-872-6194 ext. 105
dave@thebridgehouse.org

Help is at hand:

Emergency Assistance: 911

State of Massachusetts Addiction Helpline:

1-800-327-5050

Support for Care Givers:

Allies In Recovery: alliesinrecovery.net

Learn to Cope: www.learn2cope.org

The Bridge House has been serving adult men with substance abuse problems for nearly 30 years. As a state-licensed residential home The Bridge House brings dedicated staff to serve the men.

New England Aftercare Ministries, as a faith-based Christian entity the mission is to:

PROVIDE A MEANS FOR THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST TO OFFER RECONCILIATION TO GOD AND TO SOCIETY FOR PERSONS WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS;

PROVIDE A STRUCTURED, LOVING ENVIRONMENT, BY WHICH THOSE WHO ARE SINCERELY MOTIVATED MIGHT SUCCESSFULLY REENTER SOCIETY;

AID IN BUILDING INTIMATE AND SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHURCHES AND RESIDENTS IN THE PROGRAM;

MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES RELATED TO THE PROGRAM;

BE A GOOD WITNESS TO THE LOVE AND POWER OF GOD IN THE COMMUNITY;

ESTABLISH A CENTER OR CENTERS IN WHICH THIS WORK CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED.



*Reconciliation
to God and Society.*



Support the Bridge House for Free

There are a number of quick and easy ways to give to the Bridge House without actually sending in a check to the ministry.

If you use the internet and a search engine or if you shop on the internet here is how to do it:

Raise money for New England Aftercare Ministries just by searching the Internet or shopping with www.GoodSearch.com (powered by Yahoo), or shopping online with www.GoodShop.com or shopping online at Smile Amazon at : <https://>

smile.amazon.com/. Just choose New England Aftercare Ministries as the benefactor.

Click on either or both websites to set up your toolbar to search the web and support us at the same time!

Thanks for thinking of us and raising money to help people in recovery from substance abuse disorders

Thank You!

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