



Bridges to You

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2022

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Testimonies
- Thank You
- Ways to Give

Testimony of Being Helped at The Bridge House by Tim Pritchard Clinical Supervisor

In the past year – Just before COVID’s full lockdown, we celebrated a graduation of a man (we’ll call him Gerald for confidentiality) who, upon graduation, drove his car out of the program to his new sober housing, secured by not just a job but a “salaried position.” This was within what was effectively a year of treatment.

When Gerald first interviewed with the Bridge House intake manager, he shared he had no legal impediments. Then after acceptance to our counseling supportive residential program, he resisted employment at anything other than “construction”, where he had

(under the table) been paid quite well. When reminded the Bridge House program underscores with a “taxable” requirement that men find and maintain employment, the first job he applied for opened up a Warrant which turned into two Warrants (each related to his drug habit thefts). Needless to say, he didn’t get the job – but he did get graces of humility and willingness of the Bridge House program to continue to work with him, despite his misrepresentations at intake.

With the opened door to remain in treatment, in time he was able to find taxable employment and save enough money to get a car

and down payment towards housing. He also cleared his two court cases, while remaining verifiably (through regular random drug testing) sober and learning new life coping skills for remaining sober.

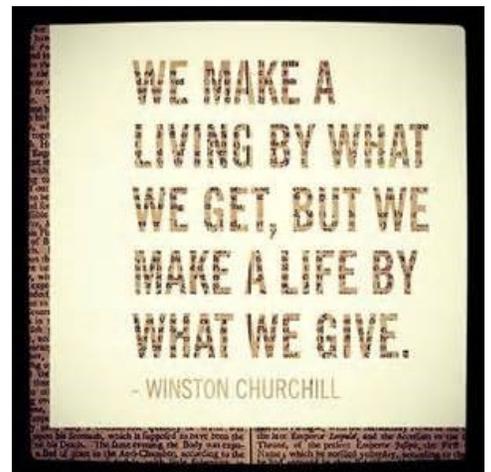
There’s more. The man who also announced at job search phase, “I don’t do fast food” (Continued page 2)



Thank you for the Christmas Gifts

For you who gave money, gifts, food, and treats this last Christmas: Thank you.

The men were blessed with so much, and even more with the thought that there are people who care and support them as they work on rebuilding their lives.



Thank You —(continued)

was successful in getting a fast-food job where he did well enough to make manager and get a nice salary.

After graduating, he continued to come to aftercare in the weekly process group run by his Counselor. Offering the hope of his storied outcome, he was able to give back to new residents in the program.

As many know, we follow strict confidentiality at the Bridge House. Not just because it is federal law (42CFR a subset of HIPPA), nor simply to honor alcoholics “anonymous”, narcotics “anonymous”, Gamblers Anonymous etc., but also it is important to understand that the men who come through the Bridge House are not your average addicts. Consistently more than 90% of our population were previously Homeless, which means they did acts to survive that dug a well of shame. Many score strongly on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) test, having experienced (before 18) abuse and neglect (emotional, physical, sexual), and growing up within broken families in which substance abuse, mental illness, and crime were norms. Previous



gang membership is not uncommon, nor is it uncommon that there may be people who might hurt them if given the chance. From this background and 30 days of stabilizing and verifiable sobriety, they enter the Bridge House for increments of 3 months that over time may (if progress and needs support their growth) become up to 2 years to heal and learn new ways of living life. Mind you, this is not 100% of the men we serve. We do have men who come from good family supported backgrounds and may have gone to and even completed College. Here, in one man’s case addiction began with a car accident. In others, the drugs and alcohol that friends found fun and could put down “that first beer (or Percocet) was magic”. In time, it would

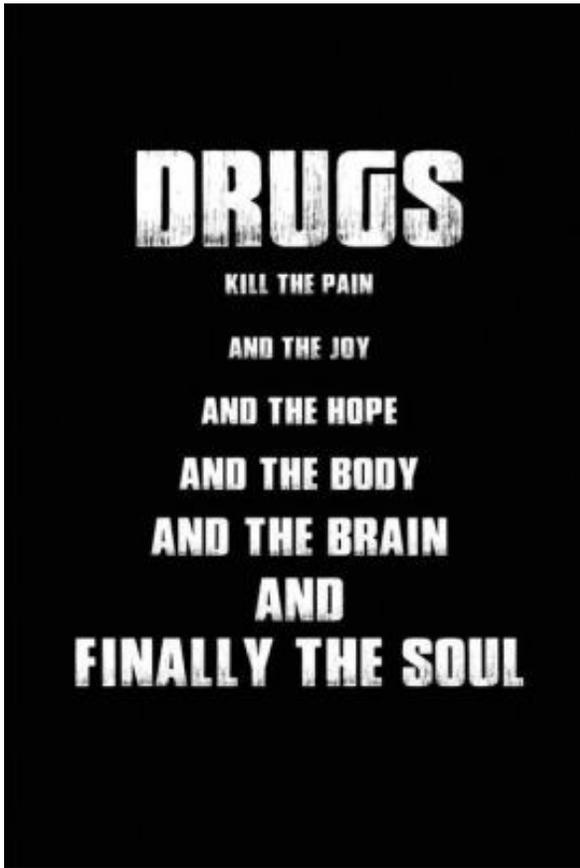
overwhelm them and create a compulsion that destroyed their life to the point of homeless wreckage.

One graduate of November 2021 was a college grad and stayed with us 7 months, in which he was able to get back into white collar work and drive a car out of the program (the golden grail for most of our men). His quick journey through our program was bolstered by active faith, including Church attendance and past History (renewed) in 12-step.

Nothing about the Bridge House program is simple. When a man comes to the house, we enter his life, where wins and losses, successes and failures are measured in days, weeks, months, and years including post program care.

Bill (not his real name) came (Continued page 3)

“
WE MAKE A
LIVING BY WHAT
WE GET, BUT WE
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WHAT WE GIVE.
- WINSTON CHURCHILL



to the Bridge House after jail release. In early counseling sessions, he would often refer to Worcester House of Correction (WOC) as “My House”, having spent roughly 6 years of 11 years between age 19 and 30 behind those bars. One of his challenges was that inside jail he was King Kong, and outside he was very uncertain of himself. This tempted him to seek emotional relief with drugs and of course, if consequences led him back to jail, it was “his house”. He had a short temper, just like his father whom he loved and from whom he sought approval, even after a childhood of severe emotional abuse, mixed with good days when his dad taught him car mechanics and how to use weaponry. In counseling, we focused on mechanics as a morale boost, and before long – while not a mechanic job – Bill was able to get work at ADESA Framingham doing detailing on cars prepped for auction. As months rolled on, Bill’s short temper would often be fodder for counseling session work, and we included anger management as a “contracted” requirement in his treatment plan. Overall, Bill did well passing drug tests. His probation officer said, “Bill’s never done so well.” Bill even found a girlfriend and had hopes of an apartment. At work he was being considered for full employment status versus temp, when a letter came to the program from ADESA ending his employment. Within a week or so, suspicion surfaced that it



was Bill on a video camera recording of a Convenience Store robbery in Worcester. Bill denied it saying, “What day of week?” When he left the program, he was required to turn himself in to sort things out, which ended with Bill going back and doing time at “his house”, WOC.

More than 2 years later, Bill rang the doorbell of the Bridge House. He wanted to show his counselor his car. He bought it for \$500 and rebuilt it himself. He also thanked us for his time in the program, sharing he was a changed man and was now sober, working and living at home with his mom (his dad had died). When Bill broke into tears, he was escorted to an office where he spent an hour with his counselor before heading to what we can hope was a home, not a “house”.

God is Good. Counseling at the Bridge House is an anointed privilege serving these men – these beautiful images of God. When asked “Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus answered, ‘The well do not need a doctor. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’” MT 9:11-12

THE BRIDGE HOUSE

A Ministry of New England Aftercare Ministries

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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:

Learn to Cope: learn2cope.org

Allies In Recovery: alliesinrecovery.net

The Bridge House has been serving adult men with substance abuse problems for over 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.*



Online Giving Tool for End-of-Year Giving!

I want to remind you of a tool for giving to the Bridge House. To give electronically, follow the steps below:

1. Go to www.thebridgehouse.org
2. Click on the "Donate" or "Donate Now" Button
3. Select whether you want to make a donation one time or be a regular monthly donor.
4. Fill out the payment information
5. Select the donate button

Thank You!

Thank you for your support !!