

A Bridge & Beyond

June & July 2024



A Message from the Executive Director: Strengthening Our Community Through Mental Health Support

As we embrace the warmth of summer, our commitment at BRIDGES remains unshaken. We continue to extend our heartfelt and all-encompassing mental health support to the most underserved communities in Los Angeles County. Our services reach out to those grappling with



homelessness, individuals experiencing severe and persistent mental illnesses, and children dealing with severe emotional disturbances (SED). Despite the hurdles, we are proud to say that we are making considerable progress in fostering mental wellness and stability within our community. This is not just our mission—it's our passion and our promise.

The Importance of Integrated Mental Health Services 🧠❤️

In recent years, the conversation around mental health has evolved, emphasizing the need for integrated care that addresses both mental and physical health. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), integrated care can significantly improve outcomes for individuals with complex needs, including those with co-occurring disorders. We are proud to implement such approaches, ensuring our clients receive holistic and person-centered care. However, while this approach holds great promise, it also presents significant challenges. One major issue is the fragmentation of existing systems of care. Mental health services, substance abuse, and physical health services often operate in silos, leading to disjointed care and communication gaps. This fragmentation can hinder the effective delivery of comprehensive care and complicate the coordination of services necessary for our clients' well-being. We are optimistic that Los Angeles County will remain unwavering in its efforts to bridge these gaps in the coming years.

Despite these challenges, our commitment to integrated care remains unwavering. We continue to work diligently to bridge gaps, secure necessary resources, and advocate for policies that support the holistic treatment of our clients. This is a team effort that involves not only our case managers, peer support specialists, nurses, intake staff, therapists, mental health workers, counselors, and other direct service providers, but also our invaluable program assistants, managers at all levels, and departments such as Quality Assurance, Human Resources, Finance, Billing, and Maintenance. Some of these dedicated professionals work behind the scenes to ensure our operations run smoothly, enabling us to provide the best possible outcomes for those we serve. From ensuring program quality and compliance, managing resources, handling finances, to maintaining our facilities, and their contributions are integral to our mission.

Together, we strive to provide comprehensive support and coordinated care to address the multifaceted needs of our clients, easing their navigation through the system and enhancing their journey towards wellness.

Addressing the Needs of Children with SED 🧒

Children with severe emotional disturbances require specialized care that often extends beyond traditional therapy. Our Child and Family Services focus on creating supportive environments for children and their families. Through therapeutic services, educational support, and family counseling, we aim to foster resilience and long-term emotional health.

The Role of Community and Partnerships 🤝

Our work would not be possible without the support of our community and our partnerships with other organizations. Together, we are building a network of care that extends beyond our walls. From housing assistance, and substance use disorder treatment, to vocational training, our collaborative efforts are essential in providing comprehensive support to our clients.

Looking Ahead 🚀

As we move forward, we are committed to expanding our reach and enhancing our services. In closing I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, student volunteers, and supporters. Your unwavering commitment to our mission enables us to continue making a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve. Together, we are creating a stronger, healthier community.

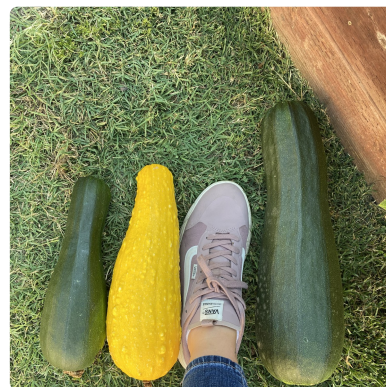
Thank you for your continued support!

Warmest regards,
Lori Pendroff, M.S.
Executive Director
BRIDGES, Inc.

News from El Monte 📣

Marvels from Our Garden: Giant Squash Take Center Stage! 📺

We're thrilled to share some exciting news from our garden this season! Amidst the vibrant blooms and lush greens, we've harvested some truly colossal squash that have left us in awe. Picture this: squash so large that they rival women's size 11 shoes!



These garden giants are not just a testament to our green thumbs but also a delightful surprise that brings smiles to our faces. The journey from seed to table has been filled with anticipation, care, and of course, a bit of amazement at their sheer size.

Stay tuned for more updates from our garden, where every day brings new discoveries and a deeper connection to the earth for both staff and clients.

News from Woodland Hills 📣



Client Achievement Spotlight: Rose's Journey to Stability

We are thrilled to recognize Rose, a Full Service Partnership (FSP) client who joined our program in April 2023. Rose has faced significant challenges throughout her life, including struggles with her mental health and a lack of stability. When she entered our program, she was paired with FSP therapist Carlos and case manager Alejandra. Together, they built a strong rapport and

supported Rose in exploring and processing her emotions, achieving her treatment goals, and overcoming daily challenges.

Rose's journey included tackling medication compliance, managing depressive and other mood symptoms, navigating interpersonal conflicts, and addressing her financial stability and housing needs.

Through open communication and an interdisciplinary team approach, the FSP staff assisted Rose in increasing her level of stability and successfully achieving her long-awaited goal: securing stable housing. Housing was a primary focus for Rose. After experiencing instability in foster care, shelters, TAY living facilities, and hospitals, finding a stable and safe place to call her own was crucial. The journey was not without setbacks, including regressions and communication challenges with multiple agencies. However, the FSP team remained consistent, supportive, and honest, never giving up on advocating for Rose, and Rose did not give up either.

As a result of their dedication, Rose was matched with a Section 8 voucher. Alejandra worked closely with Rose to locate an apartment that accepted the voucher, submit the application, and secure the deposit and furnishings using CSS funds. In June 2024, Rose moved into her apartment, finally having a stable place to call home.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the FSP team for their unwavering support, advocacy, and commitment. Despite the complexities inherent in coordinating community services, our dedicated team perseveres, continually enabling our clients to achieve their goals.

Congratulations to Rose and the FSP team for this incredible achievement!



Agency News



Management Matters



Empowering Our Team for Enhanced Mental Health Support

At BRIDGES we continuously evaluate and implement new initiatives to support the hard work of our dedicated team. Highlighting one such recent initiative, **Management Matters** has been introduced to provide our leadership team with concise, actionable insights designed to enhance their skills and improve overall support for our staff and clients.

Each week, these brief but powerful messages deliver tips and tricks aimed at improving leadership capabilities and fostering a more effective and supportive environment. By integrating these manageable pieces of advice into daily routines, we expect to see significant benefits, including enhanced team cohesion, increased staff morale, and improved client outcomes.

The goal of Management Matters is to ensure that our leaders are well-equipped to navigate the challenges of the mental health field, ultimately benefiting everyone we serve. By investing in the development of our leadership team, we reinforce our commitment to providing high-quality care and support to our community.

Stay tuned as we continue to roll out these initiatives, demonstrating our dedication to excellence in mental health support.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us!

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July Celebrations 🎉



Celebrating National Disability Independence Day

On July 26, we commemorate National Disability Independence Day, marking the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) signed into law in 1990. This pivotal legislation has significantly transformed the lives of individuals with disabilities by breaking down barriers and fostering greater inclusion and accessibility.

The ADA stands as a beacon of progress, providing essential protections against employment discrimination and enhancing access to goods, services, and communication for people with disabilities. It has paved the way for substantial changes over the years, continually improving mobility, safety, and equality.

The importance of National Disability Independence Day extends beyond celebration; it is a day of awareness and advocacy. It highlights the ongoing efforts needed to ensure that individuals with disabilities can live independently and participate fully in all aspects of society.

In Los Angeles County, numerous resources support individuals with disabilities, particularly those from low-income households:

1. [**Disability Rights California \(DRC\)**](#): Offers advocacy and legal services for individuals with disabilities, ensuring their rights are protected and upheld.
2. [**Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services \(DPSS\)**](#): Provides various programs, including In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), which assists low-income elderly, blind, and disabled individuals with daily activities.
3. [**California Department of Rehabilitation \(DOR\)**](#): Assists people with disabilities in obtaining and retaining employment and maximizing their ability to live independently in their communities.
4. [**Independent Living Centers \(ILCs\)**](#): Non-profit organizations that provide resources, advocacy, and support to help individuals with disabilities live independently. In LA County, notable ILCs include the Westside Center for Independent Living and the Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living.
5. [**The Braille Institute**](#): Offers free programs and services to help visually impaired individuals lead enriched lives, including youth programs, technology assistance, and orientation and mobility training.
6. [**The Arc of California**](#): Provides support and advocacy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, helping them achieve their full potential.

As we observe National Disability Independence Day, let us celebrate the strides made and recognize the work still needed to create a fully inclusive society. By supporting and utilizing these local resources, we can continue to foster independence and improve the quality of life for all individuals with disabilities.

For more information on these services or to get involved in advocacy efforts, please visit the links above or contact local organizations directly.



June Birthdays

Ashley Jara
Vivian La Febre
Ashley McDowell
Jennifer Mejia
Steven Peralta
Marisela Soto



June Anniversaries

Shyanne Macias - 2 years





July

Birthdays

Lynnae Hernandez
Shianne Torales



July

Anniversaries

Diana Camarena - 4 years

Larisa Cazacioc - 8 years

Heitzel Orantes - 1 year

Nicole Paredes - 1 year

Jakelin Trujillo - 7 years

Mindful Moment 🙏

Instead of worrying about what could go *wrong*, visualize what could go *right*.



👉 📄 [Donate Here!](#) 📄 👈

Support BRIDGES, Inc. by making a donation that directly impacts the lives of our clients. Your contribution ensures essential services reach those in need, fostering positive change & providing support to those facing challenges.

Contributors to this newsletter include Shannon (Esperanza), Natalia (FSP), Alejandra (FSP), Lori (Executive Director), and Nicole (Executive Assistant).



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