

# *A BRIDGE AND BEYOND*

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023



# There is Always Something to be Thankful For



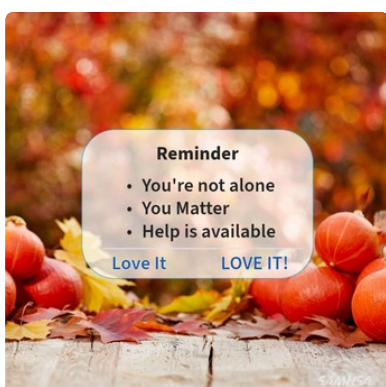
## Embracing the Colors of Change This Fall

As the leaves begin to change and the air turns crisp, we find ourselves in the embrace of a new season. The transition from the warmth of summer to the colorful canvas of fall is not just a change in the weather, but rather a symbol of transformation, growth, and hope.

We hope this message finds you well and full of the same energy and enthusiasm that has marked our journey through the summer. At BRIDGES, Inc., amidst the personal and systematic challenges, it has been a season of growth and positive change. We have so much to be grateful for and excited about, and we cannot wait to share it with you.

Summer was a season of activity and outcomes for our organization. We witnessed incredible progress and transformation in the lives of those we serve. The dedication and hard work of our team, the resilience of our clients, and your unwavering support have all played a pivotal role in these remarkable achievements. From successful treatment outcomes to community events, it was a summer to remember.

As we welcome the fall season, we do so with a sense of anticipation, ambition, and a commitment to expanding our impact. New ventures await us, and we are excited to embark on this next phase of our journey. The fall season is a reminder that change is not only inevitable but necessary for growth. Just as the trees shed their leaves to make way for new ones, we too are shedding the old to make room for new initiatives, collaborations, and opportunities.



## Some of the exciting ventures we have planned for the fall

- 1. Community Outreach:** We will continue our efforts to connect with more individuals and communities to raise awareness about mental health. Look out for us at an event or school near you!
- 2. Innovative Programs:** We are looking forward to implementing new, creative ideas across programs and services that aim to

provide tailored support and continuous quality care to our clients.

3. **Advocacy:** As we do year-round, we are committed to advocating for improved mental health services, expanded funding, and helping to reduce stigma in our community. Join us as we work towards a more inclusive and compassionate community for all.

4. **Student Opportunities:** As our network of students expands, we want to give a “shout out and big thank you to all our students”. Each one contributes to BRIDGES mission and service to others.

5. **Fundraising:** This year BRIDGES plans to integrate fundraising opportunities to help with enrichment. Looking forward!


This fall, we invite you to join us in embracing the colors of change. Just as nature reinvents itself during this season, we are inspired to bring new ideas, new hope, and new possibilities to the world of mental health.

Thank you for being a part of our journey, and we look forward to the many exciting moments that lie ahead. Together, we can create a world where mental health is understood, supported, and celebrated.

With warm wishes for a fulfilling fall season,  
Lori Pendroff Executive Director, BRIDGES, Inc.



## *NEWS FROM EL MONTE!*



**BRIDGES COMMUNITY  
TREATMENT  
SERVICES, INC.**

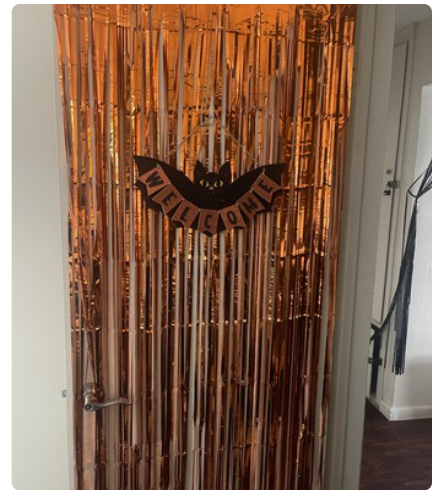
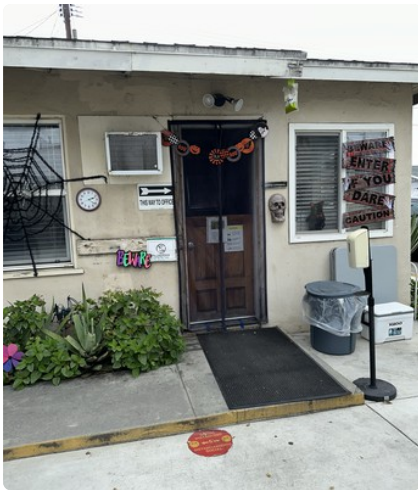
Andrew Zaragoza

On September 27th, our intake coordinator, Andrew Zaragoza, joined the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) to make a special presentation on BRIDGES and the residential programs we offer.

SGVCOG is a regional government planning agency that aims to maximize the quality of life in the San Gabriel Valley. They are a joint powers authority comprised of 31 incorporated cities, unincorporated communities in Los Angeles County Supervisorial Districts 1, and 5, and three San

Gabriel Valley Municipal Water Districts and consist of elected officials and representatives from Monrovia, Baldwin Park, La Verne, Duarte, South Pasadena, Rosemead, and Supervisorial Districts 1 and 5. Other attendees consist of staff and representatives from San Gabriel Valley cities, Brilliant Corners, Bonnie's Guest Home, DMH, Sycamores, Union Station Homeless Services, LA County Homeless Initiative, LAHSA, and L.A CADA.

Earlier this year, SGVOG created a Mental Health Ad-Hoc Committee, and their meetings cover a variety of topics and resources related to mental health in the San Gabriel Valley. During the meeting, an insightful presentation from Andrew shed light on innovative residential care programs designed to support individuals with mental illness. Andrew emphasized the importance of personalized and community-based approaches, highlighting success stories that showcased the positive impact of these programs on mental health outcomes. Attendees left the meeting inspired and with a greater knowledge of the resources available for people with mental illness.





## A Spooktacular Affair

Although unseasonably warm this year, our staff and residents decided to embrace the spirit of Halloween with a festive celebration that brought together costumes, games, and delicious treats.

In the days leading up to the event, everyone showcased their creativity by adorning their workspaces and houses with Halloween decorations. From cobwebs and spooky silhouettes to jack-o'-lanterns and ghostly figures, the site underwent a remarkable transformation. The collaborative effort not only created a festive atmosphere but also fostered a sense of camaraderie among our team.

On the day of, the site buzzed with excitement as both staff and clients exchanged compliments and laughs over the clever and spooky ensembles. No Halloween celebration is complete without a series of entertaining games, and ours was no exception. The competitiveness and laughter echoed throughout the site as everyone tried their hand at "Guess the Number of Eyeballs in the Jar" and "Guess the Weight of the Pumpkin." The cornhole boards and candy corn toss stations added a touch of friendly competition, while the suspenseful "Poke a Ghost" game had everyone on the edge of their seats.

Our Halloween celebration was a resounding success, filled with laughter, camaraderie, and a spooktacular display of creativity. As we wrap up the festivities, the memories of this unforgettable day linger, reminding us of the importance of fostering a positive and engaging environment both for staff and for our clients.



## *NEWS FROM WOODLAND HILLS!* 📣



The Full-Service Partnership (FSP) can be both a challenging and rewarding department to work in. Providing field-based services to an intensive population can at times feel isolating and draining. With that being said, we do the work because we are passionate about helping others and providing much needed support to a marginalized population. Practicing self-care and connection as a team are of utmost importance to reduce burnout, increase communication skills and employee relations, increase connection, and increase job satisfaction. The team engages in 3 team building activities per year to ensure we are actively practicing the principles we preach. This last team building we attended a paint class to tap into our creative brain and engage in a coping skill we frequently recommend to clients. Laughs were had, focus was demonstrated, and an overall relaxing environment was fostered. Thank you to the FSP team for their hard work in reaching clients, maintaining productivity, and adjusting to continuous changes brought on with this new fiscal year.



## *MONTHLY SHOUT-OUTS* 🙌



# ***October Birthdays***

***Susana Ascencion***

***Diana Camarena***

***Emmy Gomez***

***Telina Grace***

***Jasmine Jara***

***Monica Martins***

***Shannon Steib***

# ***October Anniversaries***

***Erica Fucci (1 year)***

***Mark Rodriguez (12 years)***

***Marisela Soto (6 years)***



# ***November Birthdays***

***Daniella Arias***  
***Anjena Mendias***



# ***November Anniversaries***

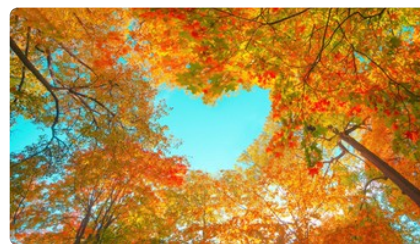
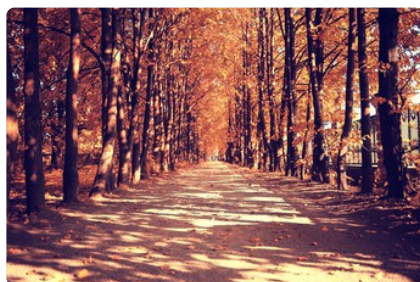
***Rosa Adame (2 years)***  
***Daniela Escalante (1 year)***  
***Emmy Gomez (1 year)***  
***Grizelda Mercado (1 year)***  
***Nicole Smith (1 year)***  
***Davis Truong (5 years)***  
***Karina Verduzco (1 year)***







# A MOMENT OF REFLECTION



## **Fostering Peace and Wellbeing in Times of Turmoil**

In recent months, our world has witnessed heart-wrenching events in Gaza and Israel that have deeply affected innocent civilians. The conflict has not only caused physical devastation but also taken a toll on the mental and emotional wellbeing of countless individuals. As a US-based non-profit organization committed to promoting mental health and wellbeing for all, we believe it is our responsibility to address these critical issues with empathy and understanding.

### **A Shared Vision for Peace and Healing**

It is in times of crisis that we must remember our shared humanity and the universal right to wellbeing. We stand firmly in our belief that mental health is a fundamental aspect of overall health and that access to mental health support and resources should be available to everyone, regardless of their circumstances.

The events unfolding in Gaza and Israel are undoubtedly heartbreaking, and the impact reaches far beyond the borders of those nations. These conflicts not only affect the individuals directly involved but also echo globally. As we strive to address these matters with compassion, we recognize that these issues are deeply interconnected with concerns here in the United States. The violence in Gaza and Israel has sparked discussions, debates, and emotions across the world, including in the United States. The pain and suffering witnessed overseas serves as a stark reminder of the importance of fostering peace, understanding, and empathy within our own communities.

In recent times, we have observed a troubling rise in religious threats and hate crimes within the US. It is essential to address these issues while remembering that our commitment to mental health and wellbeing extends to all people, regardless of their background or beliefs.

### **Promoting Healing and Understanding**

As a non-profit organization, we remain dedicated to promoting mental health and wellbeing for all. We believe that by fostering dialogue, understanding, and support for those affected by the conflicts in Gaza and Israel, we can contribute to healing and reconciliation.

### **How You Can Help**

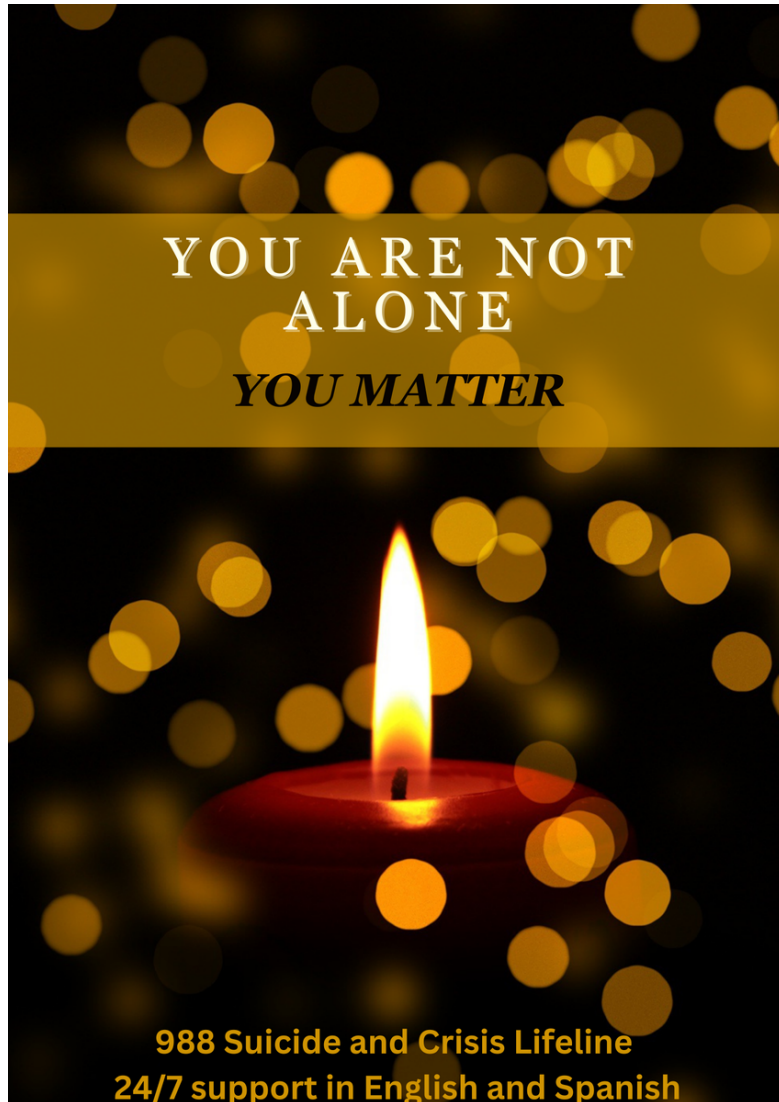
If you are in a place where you are taking on initiatives or thinking about doing so, some ideas include:

- Create spaces for conversations, create safe and empathetic environments that encourage unity.
- Provide educational resources.
- Support networks to help individuals navigate these difficult times.

Your support is invaluable in our mission to promote mental health and wellbeing for all. By participating in our programs, donating, or simply sharing our message of peace and healing, you are contributing to a brighter and more compassionate future.

In conclusion, while the challenges in Gaza and Israel are profound, they also remind us of the importance of addressing mental health and wellbeing globally. Together, we can make a positive difference and be a guiding light of hope for all who seek peace and healing.

Thank you for working together to promote mental health and wellbeing in our interconnected world.



## ***YUMMY FOR THE TUMMY***

*A hearty and comforting meal that's perfect for a chilly fall evening.*

# Fall Recipe



## Albondigas Soup

Prep Time : 20 mins    Cook Time : 30 mins    Servings : 6 portions

### Ingredients :

#### For the meatballs

- 1lb ground beef
- 1/2 cup cooked rice
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

### Ingredients :

#### For the soup

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 3 carrots peeled & chopped
- 1 1/2 cups Russet potatoes peeled and cut into 1/2 pieces
- 6 cups beef broth
- 15oz can of diced tomatoes
- 8 oz can of tomato sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 large zucchini quartered & sliced
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro

### Procedure :

#### STEP 1: The Meatballs

- Place the beef, rice, garlic, egg, cilantro, cumin, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Mix until thoroughly combined.
- Roll the meat mixture into 3/4 inch sized meatballs. Place the meatballs on a tray.

#### STEP 2: The Soup

- Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and carrot and cook for 3-4 minutes
- Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the potatoes, beef broth, tomatoes, tomato sauce, cumin, and oregano to the pot.
- Bring to a simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes.

#### STEP 3

- Drop the meatballs into the soup and simmer for an additional 10 minutes.
- Add the zucchini and cook for 5 minutes more.
- Season the soup with salt and pepper to taste.
- Sprinkle with chopped cilantro, then serve.

### Tips from Intake Coordinator Andrew:

Add a handful of mint leaves to the meatballs and add corn to the soup!



## LOOKING AHEAD

# December is National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month

*As the holidays roll around again, strive to make a commitment to taking care of yourself—and not just heroically decorating, cooking, hosting, spending and socializing. The wisdom of seeking balance can make a big difference.*

- **A recent OnePoll survey of 2,000 adults found that 67 percent report placing unnecessary pressure on themselves to engineer the “perfect” holiday.**
- **To reduce holiday stress, try to be more realistic about what you can do during this time. Don't aim for perfection; simplify and downsize wherever possible.**
- **Ask for help with tasks. Gracefully decline some invitations and look after yourself instead.**
- **Don't harshly criticize yourself or get into heavy debates with others during the holidays. Strive to keep things cool.**
- **If the same slightly-stuffy family holiday rituals are now a burden for you, break patterns and try celebrating in new ways.**

## CONTACT US!

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