



# Annual Report 2013



**Every Family. Every Child. Every Time.**

**The Mission of the Bridge Family Center is to foster the courage and strength in children and families to meet life's challenges and build fulfilling lives.**

- Founded in 1969, the Bridge Family Center, Inc. based in West Hartford, is a comprehensive, regional nonprofit agency that provides a broad range of services for children and families throughout the Greater Hartford area.
- The Bridge offers child and family counseling; intervention in times of crisis; support groups for children who are struggling in school; mentoring for boys who need extra support from positive adult role models; supervised after-school alternatives for teens; prevention programs; personal development programs for parents, children, and youth; shelter for homeless youth; and assistance with the transition from youth to adulthood.
- The Bridge is recognized as a leader in bringing the community together to assess issues and needs, and plans, coordinates, delivers and evaluates services in a cost-effective manner.
- Last year the Bridge Family Center served more than 7,500 young people and families.
- The Bridge's annual budget is \$7.9 million. Our services are funded by private donations from individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations; the Town of West Hartford; the State of Connecticut Departments of Children and Families (DCF) and Education; and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The Bridge is governed by a Board of Directors composed of 16 individuals from West Hartford and the Greater Hartford community.
- 215 staff members (86 full-time and 129 part-time) carry out the programs and services of the Bridge. Of our employees, 57% are people of color, and 79% are female. More than 150 volunteers assist staff.

# Letter From the Executive Director



## **Margaret A. Hann** **Executive Director**

In 1998, I became the Executive Director of the Bridge. I have learned so many things about leadership, business, and compassion since that day sixteen years ago. Even though our business is the delivery of human services, and our successes are not exclusively measured in dollars and cents, we are still a business. We must assure that we have adequate financial resources to carry out our mission, take care of our work force, and maintain a positive corporate culture.

We must be strong leaders with good business sense, while remaining compassionate. It is a challenging mix of skill sets indeed. The importance of attracting a diverse board of directors, staff, and

volunteers is essential to our success.

My position requires me to wear many hats and manage multiple tasks. I am energized by the complexity of my job, and am periodically reminded in very vivid fashion of the gritty importance of our work and its main ingredient—compassion. This reminder came walking through my office door a few days ago in the form of a very handsome young man who lived in our West Hartford shelter for an extended period of time several years ago. He later moved to our transitional living apartment program, the Moving On Project, before enlisting in the Marines. He is now attending a four-year college with the hopes of becoming an attorney. After we reminisced about some of his shenanigans and shared a few laughs, I asked what mattered most to him about the Bridge. He said simply that we never stopped believing in him.

The Bridge does not give up easily. We work hard to find a way. We make it happen. Your generous support allows us to always be there when people need us the most. Thank you.

Very truly,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Margaret A. Hann". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Margaret A. Hann  
Executive Director

## West Hartford Shelter Renamed in October

This past October, the West Hartford STAR home was renamed Freymann House. Ruth Freymann, the second executive director of the Bridge, was the person most responsible for the shelter's opening. She struggled through controversy to open a temporary shelter for teen runaways and was finally successful in December of 1978. Originally called Junction 1019, the home was renamed the Bridge Youth Shelter, and now Freymann House.

We held a reception at the shelter to honor Ruth Freymann. She had a long history with the Bridge. In 1971, she volunteered at the Bridge, then a fledgling grassroots organization, later became a board member, and eventually the executive director from 1975-1979. Ruth secured a federal grant that helped to stabilize and expand the Bridge.

Ruth and Maiya Pierre have something in common. Ruth is also passionate about helping kids.



**Maiya Pierre, program director at Freymann House, and Ruth Freymann**



## Freymann House

Freymann House is a STAR (Short-Term Assessment & Respite) home, one of five that the Bridge operates. Freymann House has a licensed bed capacity of nine girls ages 11-18 who receive assessment and clinical services in a home-like setting. Six of the beds are for girls in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) system and three of the beds are for girls in the community.

Freymann House is accessible to girls from throughout Connecticut. Referrals come from the State Department of Children and Families, juvenile courts, friends, schools, social workers, police, parents, and young people themselves. The target length of stay is 60 days (21 days for community beds).

Mike Rulnick, the director of residential services, oversees the STAR homes. Each home has a program director, clinical coordinator, a part-time nurse, and limited psychiatric hours. All homes are staffed for 24 hours by at least two staff members.

The goal of the home is to provide a high quality of care for every young girl. This means providing for every need that a child has when she enters the program, i.e., shelter, food, clothing, medical and dental care,  
*continued on next page*

## **Freymann House** *continued from previous page*

counseling, education, drug and sex education, and recreational and social activities. Girls are taught basic community life skills, such as how to use the library and the post office, how to grocery shop, how to schedule appointments, how to fill out job applications, and how to interview for a job.

A primary responsibility of the STAR home is to prepare girls for their next placement, whether

it is reunification with their family, placement with a foster family, or placement at a group home. Some of the girls could transition to other Bridge programs.

The Bridge Youth Shelter is funded by the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families, and by private donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

## **Maiya Pierre— Program Director of Freymann House**

### *“I Have a Passion for Working with Teenage Girls”*

Maiya Pierre is the program director at Freymann House, our West Hartford STAR program for girls. Prior to coming to the Bridge in July 2012, she worked in a variety of settings—in a safe home for young children, for the Department of Children and Families, and in a group home for boys.

Choosing social work as a career came natural to Maiya. “I have been a listener my whole life with friends. I have always had a strong passion for working with kids—no matter the age. I love to give back,” said Maiya.

Once she started working with different populations, Maiya found that she had a strong connection with teenage girls. “It was very easy to connect with them—to be firm, but nurturing. Not many people like to work with adolescent girls because they can be difficult,” said Maiya. “Then add on issues of neglect, abuse, low self-esteem, no parent in the home. . . . I try to develop relationships with the girls when they arrive at the shelter. For some reason, they connect well with me.”

Maiya talks in superlatives about her job. “I love coming to work every day. I love helping the girls. I try to be a role model for the staff and teach them different interventions,” said Maiya. “There is a time to be firm and a time to be nurturing—sometimes going back and forth between the two within a conversation. Maybe we don’t need to be firm in a particular situation. We tried and it’s not

working; let’s try something different!”

April Zadrozny is the clinical coordinator at Freymann House. “We are a team running the home and the staff sees that,” said Maiya. “We work well together. We are complements—she is calm and peaceful, so I can be the disciplinarian.

“I have met a lot of wonderful people at the Bridge—the administrative staff; the program directors and clinical coordinators in the other residential programs; the direct care staff—they are the backbone of the agency,” said Maiya. “It is hard work dealing with psychiatric acuteness and a high level of aggression; it can be overwhelming. I try to show the staff that I appreciate their work by doing little things—ordering pizza for staff meetings and writing notes of appreciation.”

Maiya lives with her husband, a 16-year-old daughter, and 8-month-old twins. Her mother and stepfather are very much involved in helping to raise the kids. “My Mom is very much a blessing,” said Maiya. When she has time, Maiya loves arts and crafts, cleaning (“I’m a nerd”), reading, shopping, and going for walks. “I like to get out in the fresh air. I am constantly walking with the girls here in the nice weather. I like to walk my dog and hang out with him at home.”

Maiya is pretty much superlative about life in general. “I am very happy right where I am,” she said.

## Thank You to Our Generous Wish List Donors

### Our Holiday Wishes Came True

This was a banner year for holiday donations. We were very touched by the many groups, businesses, and individuals that wanted to make a difference for the children and families the Bridge serves. Below are some of the donations that touched our hearts.

#### Poppins Children's Theatre

Vickie Culligan directs the Poppins Children's Theatre of West Hartford. Before Thanksgiving, the group presented *The Castaways*, a play about the struggles of immigrant children on the streets of New York City in the early 1900s. The ending was happy for these children, who were all placed in foster homes. Vickie hoped their poignant stories would sensitize the children actors and the children who saw the play to the stark realities of homelessness.

The ensemble did a special performance for girls in our youth shelters as well as other Bridge clients. After the show, the young actors and their families served desserts and healthy snacks to the audience.

The theatre group also collected new pajamas and flannel PJ bottoms from the children in the troupe and people who attended the performances. Dozens of colorful pairs of pajamas were arranged by size in the main office of the Bridge so that staff members could choose holiday gifts for shelter kids and other clients.



**Vickie Culligan and the Poppins Children's Theatre troupe deliver dozens of pairs of new PJs to the Bridge.**



**Calie Philopena and Callie Schnog deliver gifts to the Bridge.**

#### Travelers Claim Legal Group

Travelers Claim Legal Group chose the Bridge as its holiday charity this year. They asked us for specific needs and requests for our clients. The week before Christmas, Calie Philopena, Operations Analyst, and Callie Schnog, Managing Counsel, delivered more than \$1,000 worth of gift cards, Nintendo Wii and accessories, board games, books for children from birth to 10, and various requested toys. The cards and gift items were distributed to the directors of our different programs for their clients.

## Cub Scout Pack 46

For one week in December, Cub Scout Pack 46 collected books through the classrooms at Whiting Lane School and in front of California Pizza Kitchen in Westfarms mall. Hundreds of new and gently used books for infants through fifth graders were packed up and donated to our Family Resource Center for the children and families that participate in our programs. Mami Nishimune coordinated the drive.



Cub Scout Pack 46 delivers children's books to the Bridge.



(l-r) Judy Bierly and Wendy Kopp celebrate the holiday donations.

## Panera Bread Café

Every year, Panera Bread in Bishops Corner, West Hartford asks for a list of holiday gift requests by youth in our shelters. They create gift tags and post them in the store. Panera customers take them and purchase the gift items. In mid-December, Christmas elf Wendy Kopp, marketing manager for regional Panera Bread Cafés, delivered the gifts for shelter residents. Judy Bierly, director of community services, accepted the gifts on behalf of the Bridge.



**Bob Burke and his granddaughter Carly deliver gifts for girls in our West Hartford shelter.**

## **Carly Wanted to Give to Others**

When Bob Burke asked his 9-year-old granddaughter Carly what she wanted for Christmas, she said she didn't really need anything. She talked about the homeless people in New York needing so much. Instead of gifts, she wanted to help others. A member of the Bridge board, Bob spoke to Carly about the children we serve in our shelters. Together they decided that the Bridge would be a wonderful organization to support. Carly picked out gifts for the girls at Freymann House, the Bridge's youth shelter in West Hartford, and together she and her grandfather delivered them to the Bridge.

## **Bracewell and Giuliani LLP**

In early December, attorneys at Bracewell and Giuliani hosted their 7th annual "Holiday Breakfast for Community Awareness" at the Hartford Club. They invited local organizations who are making a difference in the Greater Hartford community. The Bridge was invited along with five other charities. Each year, the law firm asks guests to bring gift cards for one of the charities, and this year they chose the Bridge. Guests donated more than \$1,300 worth of gift cards to clothing stores, discount stores, supermarkets, and restaurants. Bracewell and Giuliani donated 14 breakfast basket centerpieces that graced each table, 14 gift cards for the Honeybaked Ham Company, and a check for \$5,000.



**Bridge staff were honored to accept the generous donations at Bracewell and Giuliani's holiday breakfast. (l-r) Judy Bierly, community services director; Margaret Hann, executive director; Martha Rennie, development director.**





## **A New Record for our 15th Annual Children's Charity Ball**

**With Support from Many Sectors of the Community, We Did It Again...**

Silver stars and streamers decorated the ceilings.

It was a star-studded evening at the Hartford Golf Club as 375 guests gathered for the Children's Charity Ball on January 18, 2014. The theme for the gala was "Reach for the Stars"—what we try to encourage in the lives of the children and families we serve. The golf club was decorated in shades of silver, pink, and green.

Once again, our community was incredibly generous. The entire event with ticket sales, silent and live auctions, Restaurant Row, a raffle, and the Changing Lives Challenge netted more than \$270,000 for Bridge services for children, youth, and families in West Hartford, the Greater Hartford area, and beyond. The Bridge is grateful to an incredible group of women who spent months planning the gala; to hundreds of businesses and individuals who sponsored the event or donated items to the silent and live auctions; to many individuals who made monetary donations to support the ball; and to our guests for the evening.

Thank you, thank you.



2014 Children's Charity Ball Committee poses for a photo before guests arrive. Front row (l-r): Penny Lightner, Cyndi Brown, Carol Lorenzo, Nancy Kennedy, Judy Bierly, Martha Rennie, Lynn Jimenez, Dee Newton, Heather Clifford, Laury Currier. Back row, l. to r.: Jane Mielcarek, Megan Baumgartner, Gail Lowe, Mary Ellen Flege, Mary Butler, Kara Langan, Laura Giannone, Kara Flanagan, Beth Ryan, Cheri Stabnick, Ellen Sayers, Paula Stabnick, Cynthia Gutermann, Amanda Aronson. Missing from the photo: Stephanie Barnes, Elizabeth Hall, Rebecca Holmes, Margaret Johnson, Kristin Magendantz, Shelley Mendoza, Ki Miller

Photos are from Powerstation Events.

**Put next year's date on your calendar: Saturday, January 17, 2015.**



Executive director Margaret Hann is happy with the way the live auction is proceeding.



Ellen and John Moran enjoy the cocktail hour and auction at the ball. John Moran is Director of Public Relations, UTC Corporate. United Technologies was the Presenting Sponsor of the Children's Charity Ball.



Judy Thomas bids eagerly in the live auction.



Chris and Holly Williams enjoy themselves on the dance floor.



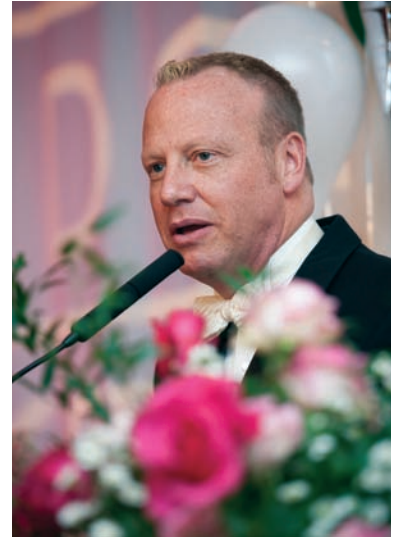
Patrick and Sherri Thompson, Wayne Giuffrida



Ball committee member Amanda Aronson and Scott Aronson.



Rob Bouvier enjoys the speaking portion of the evening.



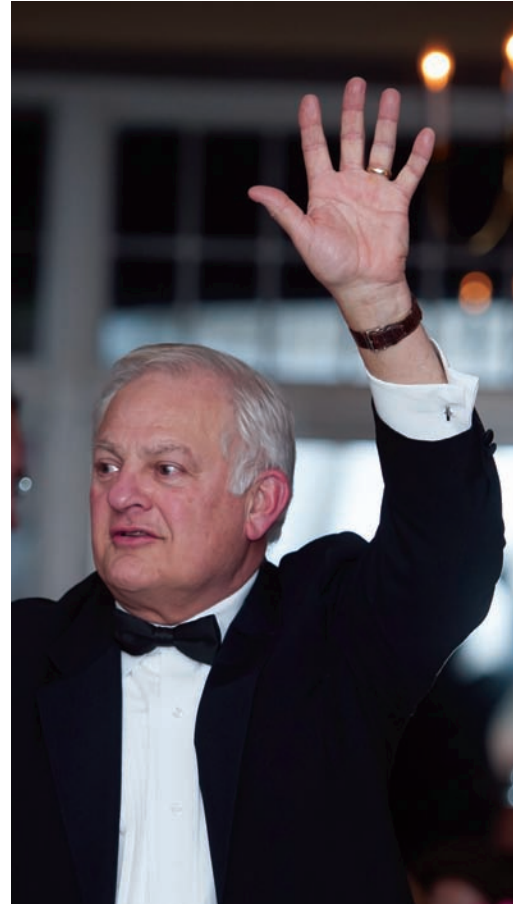
Emcee Scot Haney, Channel 3 meteorologist and co-host of "Better Connecticut"



Mark and Elaine Walker watch the Bridge video prior to the bidding "to change the live of a child."



Rachel Lutzker and David Jorgenson discuss bidding on a silent auction item.

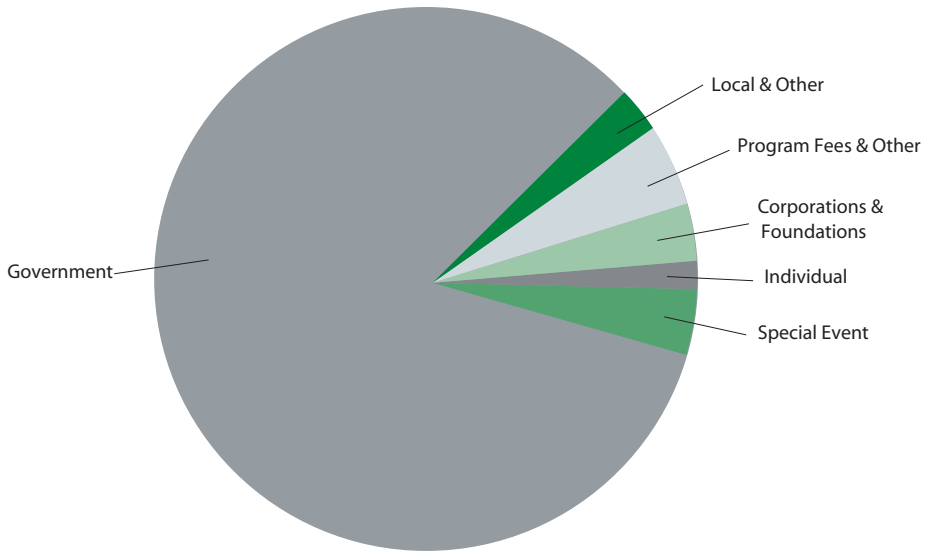


John Bierly, a Platinum Sponsor of the gala, joins in the fun with emcee Scot Haney.

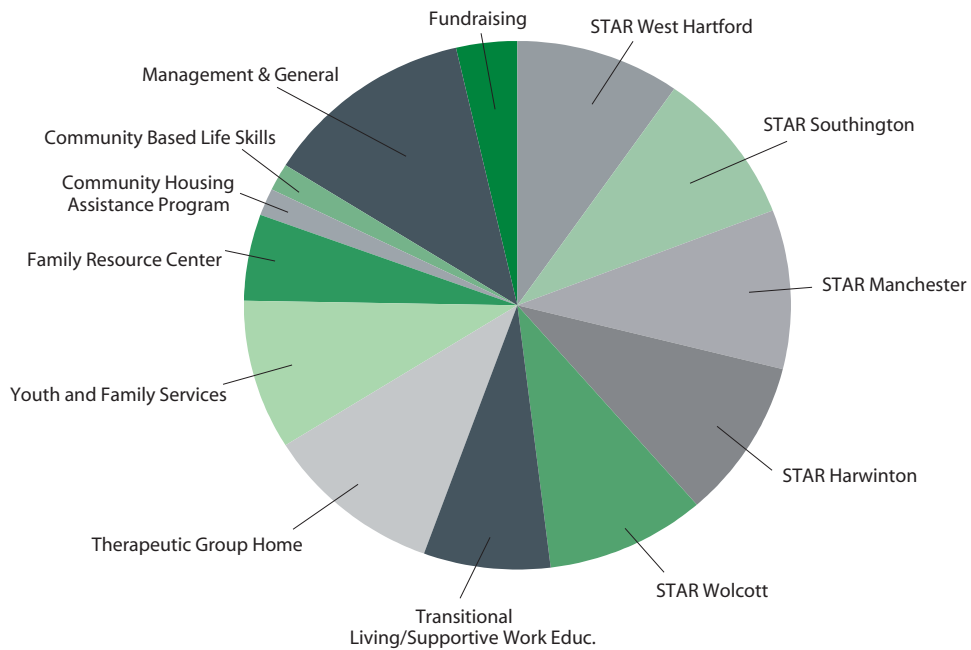
# Income and Expenses – Year Ending June 30, 2013

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
<b>INCOME</b>			
<b>Revenue</b>			
Government	6,480,152		6,480,152
Local and Other	269,637		269,637
Program Fees and other	460,770		460,770
Net assets released from restriction-satisfaction of program purposes	264,376	(264,376)	0
Charitable Contributions:			
Corporations and Foundations	38,198	292,069	330,267
Individuals	141,403		141,403
Special Event	298,673		298,673
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>7,953,209</b>	<b>27,693</b>	<b>7,980,902</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Program Services			
STAR West Hartford	668,220		668,220
STAR Southington	694,681		694,681
STAR Manchester	661,317		661,317
STAR Harwinton	724,415		724,415
STAR Wolcott	719,506		719,506
Transitional Living/Supportive Work Educ.	622,577		622,577
Therapeutic Group Home	732,137		732,137
Youth and Family Services	749,952		749,952
Family Resource Center	496,630		496,630
Community Housing Assistance Program	203,740		203,740
Community Based Life Skills	83,135		83,135
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>6,356,310</b>		<b>6,356,310</b>
Supporting Services			
Management and General	944,372		944,372
Fundraising	253,441		253,441
<b>Total Supporting Services</b>	<b>1,197,813</b>		<b>1,197,813</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>7,554,123</b>		<b>7,554,123</b>
Change in Net Assets	399,086	27,693	426,779
<b>NET ASSETS, beginning of the year</b>	<b>1,549,997</b>	<b>84,687</b>	<b>1,634,684</b>
<b>NET ASSETS, end of the year</b>	<b>1,949,083</b>	<b>112,380</b>	<b>2,061,463</b>

# Income



# Expenses





## **Donor Profile:** **Cynthia and Peter Gutermann** *Giving of Themselves to Make a Difference*

Over the years, generous community members have contributed their “time, talent, and treasure” to ensure the Bridge’s mission of helping children and families to overcome life’s challenges and build fulfilling lives. Cynthia and Peter Gutermann have given of themselves in many ways to help us realize our vision of serving “Every family, every child, every time.”

As Cynthia relates, “Judy Bierly [the Bridge’s community services director] asked me to join the Ball committee in its second year and bring some friends. I invited Mary Butler, now Vice President of the Bridge board, and four or five others, and we were hooked.” That was 14 years ago. Since then, Cynthia has run the Ball auction, volunteered in the Bridge office, joined the staff for several years, and now tutors children in the Bridge’s SAIL after-school program. Peter served on the Bridge’s development committee and gained insight into how we develop resources to meet community needs.

“The most impactful thing for me was going to a *View of the Bridge* breakfast and hearing staff describe what they do,” he says. Also affecting him deeply were the videos shown at the galas and the “Bridge Evening” at Board members’ homes. “It’s incredibly moving to hear directly from clients,” Peter commented. “How can you not support such a fine organization that deals with very serious issues affecting the lives of so many people in our community? The Bridge supports its clients in good times and bad and makes a profound difference.”

For the past two years, Peter and Cynthia have served as Honorary Chairs of the Children’s Charity Ball, helping to raise a record \$270,000 this year. Peter is vice president and general counsel of United Technologies’ Propulsion & Aerospace Systems, and UTC was presenting sponsor of the Ball. “The energy, creativity, and enthusiasm of the Ball committee is remarkable,” Peter says. “They’re supporting something they deeply care about, and it shows.”

## **The Heart of the Bridge**

Cynthia and Peter agree that the Bridge’s staff is passionate about helping people in all walks of life. “The quality of the people Margaret Hann hires is amazing,” Cynthia says. “They are dedicated to turning lives around and making all parents and kids feel welcome. The Bridge serves a wide spectrum, from the typical family to the homeless.”

“The Bridge is the one organization that really impacts people in their daily lives,” states Peter. “Whether the issue is bullying, divorce, alcohol or drug dependency—the Bridge is there. I’ve never found another organization like the Bridge that helps everyone.”

Please join Cynthia and Peter in supporting the Bridge to build a brighter future for our families and community.

# Making a Lasting Difference

## Thanks to our Special Donors Who Are Supporting the Bridge's Future

### ***Builders for the Future***

The Bridge's Planned Giving Society, ***Builders for the Future***, honors donors who have made a bequest or other planned gift to support our future and leave a legacy for many generations to come. Joining is simple: just include us in your will and let us know you have done so. Any size gift qualifies you for permanent membership.

We are grateful for this most profound level of support for the Bridge and are proud to recognize the members of *Builders for the Future*:

Lori M. Budnick	Emily W. Rankin
David L. Clay*	Sali G. Riege
Margaret A. Hann	George C. Hastings

\* New Member

### **The Bridge Family Center Fund**

The Bridge is also pleased to recognize the generous donors to **The Bridge Family Center Fund**, our endowment fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Along with members of *Builders for the Future*, these donors are committed to ensuring our ability to meet the needs of children and families far into the future. Contributors to date are:

Vicky Aldrich	Dr. and Mrs. William A. MacDonnell
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Benjamin Kehl and Barret Katuna	West Hartford Youth Basketball League
Helen M. Kemp and Lloyd Schaffhauser	George and Mary Wiseman
Ilze Krisst	Allan Polak and Deborah Zipkin
Thomas and Hollace Lorch	

You can make a lasting difference for the children and families of our community by making an outright or planned gift, such as a bequest, to **The Bridge Family Center Fund**. The Hartford Foundation provides management expertise, is a resource for advice on planned giving to the Bridge, and can work directly with you and your advisors on structuring a gift to the Fund.

To learn more about giving to **The Bridge Family Center Fund** or joining ***Builders for the Future***, please contact Martha Rennie, Director of Development, at (860) 521-8035 ext. 325 or [martha@bridgefamilycenter.org](mailto:martha@bridgefamilycenter.org). More information is available on our website, [www.bridgefamilycenter.org](http://www.bridgefamilycenter.org).

## The Bridge Family Center is very grateful to all of *YOU*— our supporters in fiscal year 2013!

### **Hero (\$10,000+)**

Scot Haney  
Jane Lehman and Matthew Winter

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\*Donor to endowment fund

\*\*Member, Builders for the Future



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