



Every Rose Has Its Thorn – and Bud.

Schoolchildren in West Hartford often learn the game Rose, Thorn, and Bud. This playful exercise teaches perspective-taking and helps build mental health. Children identify the roses, thorns, and buds in their lives and begin to recognize that they will always have rosy moments that bring them joy; yet, they will also have thorny ones that bring them pain.

Framing life in this way is a gift to young children. As they grow into the more complex years of adolescence, perhaps they will feel less flustered when they experience life's ups and downs. And if they are able to identify the buds in their lives, perhaps they can trust that good times always lie ahead. As an adult, if you have never thought about your own life in this way, we encourage you to try it. We did, and in this edition of Every Family, we share with you what came to mind. Have a beautiful summer, and take time to stop and smell the roses in your own lives.

Truthfully, we are awash in “roses” on a regular basis. However, June 2 was a day that stands out. Jayme, as we will call her here, is a young woman living in one of our Star Homes. She has endured significant trauma in her life and has not had a lot of roses to put it mildly. So when she came to us to share that she wanted to attend her high school prom, we sprang into action. Prom season does not come regularly to our shelters, so when it does, it is a very, very special occasion and one we try to make beautiful for our kids. And beautiful it was.

Utilizing funds donated for special experiences, our residential staff took Jayme shopping, and the glow on her face grew brighter with each new purchase. She expressed how much she appreciated everything that the Bridge was doing for her, and when it came time to choose where to get ready, Jayme chose to spend her pre-prom time with staff, a testament to the bonds formed over her time with us.



The afternoon of the prom, a former resident who is now in cosmetology school came by to do Jayme's make up, and staff helped her get ready. They played the role of paparazzi as she left for the Elizabeth Park Rose Garden to meet her friends, and as any caretakers would, they hugged her goodbye, made sure she knew how beautiful she was, and reinforced that they were available should she need anything throughout the evening. And off she went, whisked away in the shiny black Bridge Acadia, her only special request. That night, Jayme was quite clearly our rose and one we will remember for a long time.

Unfortunately, our thorn continues to be the Connecticut State budget. As an organization contracted with the Town of West Hartford, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Education, our programs are at risk each time funding to these areas decreases. Our mental health clinics earn unrestricted revenue and we continue to grow them steadily, and we continue to appreciate the generosity of the many foundations, corporations, and private donors who support us. Those are the funds that keep our programs running at a quality level when our largest sources of funding are compromised.



It didn't take us long to discover a bud, because 12 of them were sitting in front of us on the morning of June 1 as they graduated as the 2018 cohort of the UConn People Empowering People Program (PEP). PEP is an innovative personal and family development program with a strong community focus. Each year, our Family Resource Center runs this program locally and launches agents of change into our community. If you take a closer look at the leaders in our region, you will discover that many of them are PEP graduates. Their individual and collective service projects make our communities stronger, and graduates emerge empowered to take on the vital work of child advocacy. Thank you, PEP graduates for being our buds, and thank you to our donors for continuing to support important programs like PEP that train parent leaders

Visit our website to read past editions of Every Family, as well as our Every Family School Edition.

Annual Meeting & Bridge Business Award



(l to r) Matt Cuddy, Debra Carson, Andreas Kapetanopoulos, Laurie Brooks, Ryan Lynch, and Kevin Kickery

On June 5, 2018, the Bridge held its Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors at the Pond House in West Hartford. Mary Butler, Caroline Demers Calio, and Felicia Wilion were honored for their many years of service, and two new members were added to our distinguished board: Kathy Christensen, Director at Connecticut Wealth Management, and Peter Macdonald, Vice President of Worker’s Compensation Claims at The Hartford. Margaret Hann, Executive Director of the Bridge, honored Farmington Bank with the Bridge Business Award for their ongoing and generous support of our mission. Andreas Kapetanopoulos, Senior Vice President, accepted the award on behalf of the Farmington Bank team.

Upcoming Events

- 9/12/18 BREAKFAST ON THE BRIDGE
- 9/13/18 VIEW OF THE BRIDGE
- 1/26/19 CHILDREN’S CHARITY BALL



This year, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Bridge and the 20th Anniversary of the Children’s Charity Ball. Show your support by celebrating with us on January 26, 2019, and help us network to secure significant sponsorships and auction items (houses, trips, and tickets are always a hit). The Ball is our largest source of unrestricted income.



Meet Our New Board Chair

We proudly announce Susan I. Hamilton as the next Chair of the Bridge Family Center Board of Directors. Susan has a long history with the Bridge, which began when she served as Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). Prior to serving as Commissioner, Susan was Director and General Counsel in DCF’s Legal Division. She currently serves as the Director of Delinquency Defense and Child Protection for the Division of Public Defender Services and is transitioning to her role as Board Chair after serving as Vice President for many years. Susan earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law; a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work; and a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a focus on Psychology and Justice Studies, from the University of New Hampshire.



MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE. *leave a legacy.*



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Did you know there’s a simple way you can make the gift of a lifetime and leave a legacy in the community for generations to come? It is never too early to think, dream, and plan for the impact and legacy you want to make with your life. After providing for your loved ones, you can:

- Include the Bridge Family Center in your Will
- Name the Bridge as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy, IRA, or other retirement plan
- Remember loved ones with a charitable bequest in their honor

When you make a gift to support our future, you will become a member of Builders for the Future, our planned giving society. No gift is too small. And the impact will be deep and long-lasting. You can also make an online gift today to our Endowment Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving at: hfpg.org/donate and search “The Bridge.”

To learn how you can make a difference for children and families far into the future, contact Martha Rennie, Director of Development, at 860.521.8035 ext. 1105 or martha@bridgefamilycenter.org. For more information, visit www.bridgefamilycenter.org

PLEASE INCLUDE US IN YOUR GIVING BY MAILING A GIFT IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE, OR BE IN TOUCH TO LEARN ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL GIVING AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT FEEL RIGHT FOR YOU.

EVERY FAMILY is a newsletter of the Bridge Family Center | 1022 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06107-2105 | 860.521.8035
info@bridgefamilycenter.org | www.bridgefamilycenter.org | facebook.com/BridgeFamilyCenter | Executive Director: Margaret A. Hann | Editor: Amanda Aronson.
The Bridge is a private, nonprofit youth and family service agency offering a broad range of services to children, youth, families, and adults. Our counseling centers are in West Hartford, Avon, and Rockville, and our Family Resource Center is located within the Charter Oak International Academy in West Hartford.