



## *Creating Routines for Children and Families*

*Routine is highly important to our children. It is natural to feel uncomfortable with, or even afraid of, the unknown. Our lives are filled with uncertainty at times in which we feel out of control. This can be stressful, especially for our kids. Developmentally, young children do not yet have the capacity to understand many of the complexities of our day-to-day lives. Older kids and adolescents simply have not had the life experiences to see the broader picture of their world. Routines within the home are an opportunity to help kids better understand what each day may bring. Predictable routines allow kids to feel safe, and serve as a “secure base” for times in which things become unsure. When we know what comes next, we can relax a bit, and worry less about what might happen.*



Routine also enables young people to develop increased mastery in handling their lives. By developing consistent routines, we learn to do things more independently. Through guidance and repetition, young people learn how to stay organized, how to engage in self-care practices, how to manage time, how to balance work and play, and more. Good life skill habits become internalized when a young person engages in these skills in a structured manner, over a consistent period of time. Therefore, it's important to think through what we want our child's or adolescent's days to look like. How their day is structured will determine the types of skills they will learn. These skills may include: waking up and starting the day on time, eating healthy meals, setting aside time for homework and play, and establishing a comfortable bedtime routine.

### **MORE BENEFITS OF HAVING ROUTINES**

By creating regular routines, we are reminded to pay attention to important aspects of our lives that can easily be forgotten as we navigate our busy schedules. Spending time together and connecting with one another takes focus and effort. But the benefits are clear. When families can maintain low conflict, through high levels of support and open communication, there is an increased likelihood for positive mental health outcomes.

Routine can also help alleviate power struggles within a family. When expectations are known, there is typically less negotiating. When our process for handling a particular challenge or task becomes routine, everyone is familiar with what to do. The decision to do the task is not arbitrary, but rather a well-established practice. This can be true for young children who may resist getting ready for bed, or for an adolescent who wants to spend time with friends without leaving enough time for homework.

As we start the new school year, think through the important aspects of your lives. What needs to be a priority each day? What tasks need to be done? What do I need as a parent to get the support I need? What do my kids need to be successful? These are big questions, but they should be considered as we plan the structure of our days. The more planning we do, the better chance we have of maintaining the most fundamental aspects of our lives.



# 33rd Annual Breakfast on the Bridge

EVERY FAMILY, EVERY CHILD, EVERY TIME.



Top Left: Maxine Smith with her family | Top Right: Patrick Johnson and Martha Rennie | Center Left: Jeffrey and Jessica Capone, Mike Rulnick, Bryan Block | Center Middle: Tammy Exum, Ronni Newton, Shari Cantor, Nancy DePalma, Shelley Solomon | Center Right: Thomas Moore, Tor Fiske, Frank Cardona | Bottom Left: Doreen Tarascio, Margaret Hann, Maxine and Tony Smith | Bottom Right: Susan Hamilton

Maxine Smith, a 7th grade guidance counselor at Sedgwick Middle School, was honored with the **“Build No Fences”** Award at the 33rd Annual Breakfast on the Bridge on September 11, 2019. Maxine exemplifies a collaborative and compassionate spirit while embracing the Bridge’s vision of Every Family, Every Child, Every Time. Congratulations, Maxine, and thank you for always putting our children and families first.

# Upcoming Events

## VIEWS OF THE BRIDGE

- 11/14/19 West Hartford Counseling Center 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
- 3/3/20 West Hartford Counseling Center 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.



## CHILDREN’S CHARITY BALL

January 18, 2020

Please join Honorary Chairs, John and Judy Bierly and Paul and Mary Butler for an elegant black-tie evening featuring a cocktail reception, dinner, live and silent auctions, and dancing. We will be returning to the Hartford Golf Club for this year’s event with Scot Haney, Channel 3 Meteorologist and Co-Host of “Better Connecticut”, continuing as our emcee.

Tickets go on sale in early December. Purchase early, as the event sells out quickly. Visit [www.bridgefamilycenter.org](http://www.bridgefamilycenter.org) for details.



## CONNECT WITH US

## Support the Bridge through Workplace Giving

Fall is kick-off season for workplace giving campaigns, an easy and convenient way to support our mission and the safety net we provide for children and families. In these days of economic hardship and financial insecurity, your support means more than ever for the thousands of people whose lives we touch each year. Donors like you strengthen our programs and help children grow and thrive.

### HOW IT WORKS

The Bridge is affiliated with America’s Best Local Charities, ABLC, for the Fall 2019/2020 campaign year. Our ABLC affiliation includes participation in the Connecticut State Employees’ Campaign (agency code #7824), as well as many corporations and other workplaces. You can find us in your campaign giving directory under the Bridge Family Center. If your company participates in the United Way Community Campaign, please designate the Bridge Family Center (agency code #5237) on your donor pledge form.

Your donation may also qualify for a **company matching gift**. At many companies, you can apply directly online for a matching gift. Check with your HR department, or contact the Bridge at 860.521.8035 for more information.



## Your Support is Changing Lives

Every day, across our communities, your support provides a hands up, a first step, and a fresh start for hundreds of children and families. You are ensuring a safe haven for teens and young adults who have experienced significant trauma in their young lives. You are welcoming and educating families from all corners of the world. You are promoting positive youth development. And, you are meeting the mental health needs of children, adults, and families. Your choice to support the Bridge fosters the courage and strength in children and families to meet life’s challenges and build fulfilling lives. Thank you!

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: Doreen Tarascio.  
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 Avon, West Hartford and Rockville, and our Family Resource Center is located within the Charter Oak International Academy in West Hartford.