2018 Impact Report

Flourishing, Together: The Intergenerational Power of Place, Permanence, and Shared Social Purpose

Founded in 2005, and welcoming home our first residents to North Portland in 2011, Bridge Meadows remains the only intentional, intergenerational housing community of its kind in the region, and the first one in the country in an urban setting. Working at the intersection of child welfare, affordable housing, health, and aging, our community-driven program of integrated onsite services and therapeutic interventions generates reciprocal social capital that improves quality of life for all three generations.

In 2018, your support helped improve quality of life for all three generations of residents. Over the past year, former foster youth received 461 hours of academic support and 107 hours of mentoring. Parents received 2,846 hours of childcare, while elders contributed over 4,284 hours to support families and one another. Thank you for your belief in our mission!

One of our resident parents describes the difference that living at Bridge Meadows has made in their life:

“I have elders cooking dinner for me and my family, coming over and just visiting, just sitting and talking. I know if I ever have a problem I can just go and talk to them. And it's not just the elders, it's the families, it's the kids supporting the other kids, the parents supporting the other parents. It's nice to know that you're in a safe place and that everybody is watching out for everybody else, and nobody is just here for themselves. They're here to be a part of something.” --Shirley

Our community-driven program of integrated onsite support services and therapeutic interventions generates reciprocal social capital for three generations of community members: 1) youth formerly in foster care; 2) families – including parents and, often, siblings – who will either adopt or become permanent legal guardians for the youth (many of whom have a pre-existing kinship relationship, such as grandparent, aunt, or cousin), and elders living on fixed or limited incomes.

As children move from the instability of foster care to permanent homes and families, they begin to heal from trauma and manifest their academic potential. Parents receive essential social support to increase their confidence and efficacy in parenting children who have experienced trauma. Elders with fixed or limited incomes can safely age in place while serving as honorary grandparents, mentors, and friends. All three generations are building resiliency and demonstrating improved health and wellness.

2018 Program Highlights:

♦ Our Community Members
Bridge Meadows currently serves 144 residents (62 former foster youth, 19 parents – mostly single women heads of household with a kinship relationship to the youth that they will be adopting – and 63 low-to-moderate income elders ages 55 to 94). Across both the North Portland and Beaverton sites, 7% of residents identify as Latino, 6% as mixed race, 17% as African American, 3% as Native American, 2% as Asian, 2% as Middle Eastern, 1% as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 62% as white.

♦ Housing Stability as a Lever for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
95% of Bridge Meadows residents have maintained stable housing for the past 12 months. A key lesson that we have learned, and which informs all that we do, is that the needs of Bridge Meadows’ youth, parents, and elders are all unique to that person or family’s own circumstances, and they evolve and change over time—but rarely in
a linear, clearly predictable way. For this reason, staff and leadership prioritize adaptive, trauma-informed programming to ensure it remains nimble and responsive to the three generations we serve. The voice of the community is captured through formal and informal feedback, community forums, and discussions. In 2018, with support from the Meyer Memorial Trust, Bridge Meadows participated in transformative Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training to develop and implement an Equity Plan, supported by a common language and unique set of tools and protocols integrated across the organization.

♦ **Children Achieve Greater Academic Success and Social Well-Being**

As supported youth move toward adulthood, they are better prepared to raise healthy, stable families of their own, breaking the cycle of poor health and poverty for the next generation. With the strong foundation of permanent homes, families, and extended community, 100% of youth at Bridge Meadows are attending school regularly, and 85% of youth are achieving greater academic success by meeting or exceeding grade-level benchmarks at school. Youth demonstrate improved social functioning as well, with 80% having a reduction in mental health-related disruptions at school, and 75% managing their emotional challenges better. Support from elders in the community through tutoring and mentoring helps children with academic performance, increasing the web of community connection and resulting in greater self-esteem and confidence. Children are more enthusiastic and confident about attending school, engaging socially, and participating in group activities.

♦ **Parents and Elders Increase Parenting/Mentoring Skills & Build Community**

Bridge Meadows provides a safe, healing community to support trauma-informed parenting and mentoring. 90% of adoptive parents accessed trauma-informed resources to build confidence in parenting, support children’s healing and increase family stability; 88% of both parents and elders report an increased sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy in parenting and mentoring former foster youth. Peer support from other parents who are experiencing the same kinds of unique challenges helps parents to manage their own stress in more effective ways.

Facilitated by the onsite Community Support Specialists, parents and elders participate in weekly, trauma-informed social support “circles” to better understand the needs of youth who have been in foster care, and how to support them in their healing. Weekly “Happiness Hour” gatherings, where residents enjoy a communal meal, has evolved into a signature weekly event for residents, a time to celebrate birthdays and other milestones, a “Wellness Check” to see how folks are doing, connect across the generations, and simply enjoy life together as a community.

♦ **Elders Increase Social Connection through Volunteer Activities**

Each year, resident elders each contribute 100 hours per quarter in service to the community. This creates daily opportunities to engage with peers, parents, and children, which combats the deleterious effects of social isolation that aging adults frequently experience. Over the last year, elders contributed 14,605 hours to support the community and one another. 85% of elders report an increase in social connection and overall wellness, allowing elders to safely age in place longer.

### 2018 Organizational Highlights:

♦ **A Network of Support**

The intergenerational nature of Bridge Meadows’ programming is unique by design, as it was developed to address gaps in the existing social service landscape for former foster youth, adoptive parents, and elders on fixed or limited incomes. To ensure that programs remain aligned with residents' needs as they emerge and
evolve over time, we partner extensively with other skilled providers and community organizations, both formally and informally. In 2018, we expanded our partnerships with Kinship House, an agency specializing in therapeutic services for children and families in the child welfare system, and which now has a co-located office at our Beaverton site. Other partners include: DHS – Multnomah & Washington County Office (referrals & case management); Hollywood Senior Center; Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center; Beaverton Committee on Aging; Elsie Stuhr Center (Senior Center); graduate level interns from OHSU’s Dietitian program; Oregon Post-Adoption Resource Center; PSU Institute on Aging; and other local schools and churches.

♦ Awards and Recognition

In 2018, Bridge Meadows’ innovative supportive housing model was recognized locally and nationally. Highlights include: The Portland Business Journal recognized us as one of the most admired nonprofit organizations in the state of Oregon; and we were featured in the documentary series “12 Neighbors”, exploring the question of what it really means to love one’s neighbor, and the social-economic benefits of our business model were covered in an NPR Marketplace report.

♦ Financial Health & Sustainability

Bridge Meadows has maintained a balanced budget for the last 12 months, even while engaging in an ambitious – and successful – campaign to position the organization for significant expansion and growth. Bridge Meadows relies on a mix of revenue streams that includes individual and business contributions, foundation and corporate grants, special events and earned income (rental payments, consulting fees). The Board of Directors’ Finance Committee meets on a monthly basis – and more frequently if needed – to ensure that activities track with the budget and to make adjustments accordingly. Bridge Meadows takes a conservative fiscal approach, and does not incur non-budgeted large expenses or increases to staff FTE unless there is plausible confidence in our ability to fund the increase. We generally operate with a two to three-month reserve, with a goal to increase that to a six-month reserve by the beginning of 2019. Bridge Meadows completed its 2017 Audit in Summer of 2018 and the report link can be found at the bottom.

♦ Looking Forward

There remains tremendous, urgent need for housing placements for foster youth, adoptive parents, and elders. Bridge Meadows’ Board of Directors and staff has developed an ambitious vision for growth. Our strategic plan outlines our goals with a clear vision of the organization growing to a national scale. Our vision preserves the core mission of the organization, and includes increased depth and breadth of staff capacity to deliver programs and services in a way that is meeting the needs and demographics of the communities we serve. As Bridge Meadows continues to bring on new community sites, it is critical for our organization to lay the foundation to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. Bridge Meadows is currently in pre-development for our third intergenerational affordable housing community, Bridge Meadows-Lynwood. The community will be located in the Rosewood Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative District of East Portland, a high-poverty and underserved urban area.