



## **2021 Bridge Meadows Impact Report**

In 2021, Bridge Meadows **helped improve quality of life for all Bridge Meadows community members** and our ensured financial stability allowed us to bring our program to more communities across the region. Despite the uncertainty and crises in the last two years, **we have accomplished so much together**, reminding us of the incredible power of community to promote well-being, even in difficult times.

Over the last 24+ months, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the growing need for affordable housing, holistic family support, and community-based solutions for improving health and well-being for all. Bridge Meadows is **more committed than ever** to bringing our model to more foster families and elders in need, so that together we can truly repair the fabric of our communities.

**Our vision is to create and build diverse, inclusive communities** that prevent and address the long-term impacts of trauma, end social isolation, provide housing and family stability for foster youth, and improve well-being across the generations through intergenerational relationships.

With your generous support, families and elders have weathered the pandemic by supporting one another, while strengthening relationships in the process. Youth navigated homeschooling and the return to school, using the resilience learned in community; parents received vital resources that allowed their families to flourish and avoid severe economic hardships; and our elders remained safe and healthy while finding innovative ways to stay connected.

Bridge Meadows is proud to present to you our 2021 Impact Report, a document that highlights the **power of community and partnership to improve the health and well-being** of youth who have experienced foster care, their forever families, and elders.

***Thank you for your belief in our mission!***

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### **The Power of Housing & Intergenerational Relationships to Improve Health & Well-Being in Foster Youth**

*Mission:* Bridge Meadows brings the generations together to improve health and well-being through meaning, purpose, and belonging. Built around the concept of interdependence, our affordable communities support children who have experienced the foster care system, their adoptive families, and elders, who serve as mentors and caregivers.

*Vision:* We envision a world where every child has a family, every parent is given the resources to thrive, and every elder is cherished for their wisdom.

Bridge Meadows, opening our first community in North Portland in 2011, remains the only intentional, intergenerational housing community of its kind in the region, and was the first in the country in an urban setting. In response to regional demand for affordable housing and permanent solutions to the foster care

crisis, Bridge Meadows opened a second community in Beaverton in 2017, welcoming home 75 youth who've experienced foster care, adoptive parents, and elders and doubling the number of people served. In 2018, Bridge Meadows created the Dorothy Lemelson House and New Meadows Program in partnership with New Avenues for Youth. This 15-unit building functions as an annex to the original North Portland Bridge Meadows, serving youth ages 17 to 24 who are transitioning out of the foster care system without a permanent family connection. A third site in Redmond, Oregon opened in November of 2021, serving the rural population of Central Oregon's Deschutes, Jefferson, and Crook Counties.

**Our work is not done.** The COVID-19 pandemic and racial reckoning since 2020 has further highlighted the glaring issues in our current systems of support, and Bridge Meadows is committed to doing our part alongside our partners to bridge gaps, effect change, and support our communities. To that end, Bridge Meadows has multiple new sites in the pipeline with the goal of doubling our impact in the next five years. Expansion plans include East Portland, Tacoma, WA, Clackamas County, and California.

In 2021, Bridge Meadows celebrated its 10 year anniversary. One of our parents, Jackie, moved into Bridge Meadows North Portland when the doors opened a decade ago. In 2021, after years of saving, she was able to purchase a home for her family, including the two children she has raised since infancy. She describes the difference that living at Bridge Meadows has made in her family's life:

*"Before I moved here, things were hard. I was a single parent with two babies, and it was overwhelming. [Associate Director] Renee, [Executive Director] Derenda, and everyone in the community kept reassuring me that everything was okay. Elders would come and they would offer their help and their support.*

*I worked full time, and any time I needed help – if I got a call from the daycare – I knew I could call someone and say "Can you please go get the kids for me? I can't leave work." **All that support for 10 years has gotten us where we are today.** Where I am stronger, I'm more confident, my kids are just amazing. Their ability to advocate for themselves, their ability to do so many things came from being in this community. They would never have been where they are today if we had been somewhere else.*

*I think we have a story to tell, and I think we can share that story and that success. **Us moving out is part of that success.** And I want to thank you."*

As Jackie's story demonstrates, in the more than 10 years we've operated, our community-based housing model has shown what can be achieved through a holistic, intergenerational approach. Starting with a safe, stable environment to call home, Bridge Meadows cultivates family permanence and resilience, building connection between neighbors and across generations. As children move from the instability of foster care to permanent homes and families, they begin to heal from trauma and manifest their life potential. Parents receive essential social support to increase their confidence and efficacy in parenting children who have experienced trauma. Elders living on fixed or limited incomes can safely age in place while serving as honorary grandparents, mentors, and friends. **All three generations together are building resiliency and demonstrating improved health and well-being.**

## **2021 Program & Community Member Highlights:**

### ***Our Community Members***

Bridge Meadows currently serves 185 residents across our three sites, and we expect this to increase to 230 in 2022 when Bridge Meadows Redmond leases up. Across the North Portland and Beaverton sites (the two sites we currently have demographic data on), 46% identify as white, 23% as Black/African American, 6% as Native American, 6% as Latino/a/x, 3% as Asian, 1% as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 15% untracked/missing data. Bridge Meadows collects demographic data at the time of move-in and update regularly.

### ***Community-First Programming***

After over 10 years of program design and delivery, Bridge Meadows knows that youth, parents, and elders each have unique needs, and each individual and family's circumstances evolve and change over time, but rarely in a linear, predictable way. For this reason, staff and leadership prioritize adaptive, trauma-informed programming to ensure it remains nimble and responsive to the people we serve. Community input is captured through formal and informal feedback, community forums, surveys, and discussions, directing the creation of new programming and other community offerings.

The Bridge Meadows model relies on service user voice and influence to operate effectively. The onsite therapeutic staff continually assess and identify the needs of all community members with the overall social purpose of promoting healthy development in youth who have experienced foster care. Where other supportive, affordable housing communities emphasize traditional patient/client social service methodologies, Bridge Meadows assumes the role of partner, focusing on a strengths-based view of the individual.

### ***Youth are Healthy, Connected, and Resilient***

Bridge Meadows administers an annual outcome evaluation survey to assess the impact of our intergenerational community model on community members. Validated research instruments specifically measure resiliency, exercise and healthcare utilization, sense of community, and school connectedness in youth. Our data reveal that with the strong foundation of safe, permanent homes, families, and an extended community at Bridge Meadows,

- 100% of youth indicated they feel safe with their family/caregiver.
- 100% indicated they have enough to eat when they are hungry.
- 77% indicated that they had seen a dentist for a checkup or cleaning in the last 12 months, compared to just 69.6% of their foster care peers.
- 88% indicated that they had seen a doctor for a wellness visit or check up in the last 12 months, compared to just 73% of their foster care peers.

- 77% of youth indicated that they like their community (this could be Bridge Meadows, school, friends, clubs, or faith-based networks).

Our findings demonstrate that youth who live at Bridge Meadows are highly resilient and feel a strong sense of connection to their community, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic when face-to-face interactions with others in the community, especially elders, was limited. Economic drivers of health, including housing stability, healthcare access and food insecurity/hunger (which are identified as major influencers of Social Determinants of Health) were also positive; youth reported always having enough to eat, had accessed preventative medical and dental care in the previous year, and none had been evicted or experienced housing insecurity.

Our onsite therapeutic staff, with the help from community members, partnered with Mainspring to host a weekly food pantry to increase access to food and prevent food insecurity during the economic hardships of COVID-19. In addition to the standard programming and onsite mental health care Bridge Meadows offers, with the support of donors, we were also able to provide financial aid to all families at Bridge Meadows to ensure they had the resources necessary to pay bills, purchase food and school supplies, invest in technology necessary for at-home schooling, and have a joyful holiday season.

### ***Parents and Elders are Flourishing***

Bridge Meadows provides a safe, healing community, affordable homes, and the resources parents and elders need to thrive and age well. Our outcome surveys specifically measured parents' Protective Factors (characteristics or attributes that, when present, increase the well-being of children and families), emotional well-being, social support, and meaning and purpose (flourishing); and elders' social isolation, social support, and flourishing. Our data indicate that,

- 85% of parents received a positive Protective Factors average score, scoring high in the areas of Family Functioning/Resiliency, Social Supports, Caregiver Relationship, and Nurturing and Attachment.
- 92% of parents received a positive score on the Flourishing Scale, demonstrating that parents at Bridge Meadows overall feel that they are leading a meaningful life and are optimistic about their future.
- 76% of elders scored favorably on the Emotional Wellbeing scale, indicating that are experiencing low symptoms of depression.
- 89% of elders reported the highest level of perceived Social Support, indicating that they feel connected and valued in their community, and receive assistance when they need it.
- 92% of elders received a positive score on the Flourishing Scale.

Parents at Bridge Meadows report positive family and environmental strengths, or Protective factors, which are shown to increase the wellbeing of children and families and creates lifelong positive impacts that prevent future cycles of instability, poverty, and isolation. Our findings in 2021 show that 89% of elders and 85% of parents living at Bridge Meadows reported the highest level of perceived Social Support possible. The same survey revealed that elders at Bridge Meadows were also experiencing about the same level of perceived social isolation as the general population according to a 2018 Cigna study conducted using the same UCLA loneliness scale used in our survey. Their results found that nearly half of Americans report sometimes or always feeling alone. Our findings suggest that elders living at Bridge Meadows during the pandemic were on par with the general population's level of loneliness before the pandemic.

## 2021 Organization Highlights:

### *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a Foundation*

At Bridge Meadows, we believe that all people deserve to flourish in a caring community. Bridge Meadows is committed to creating communities that are equitable and welcoming, where all people find a place of belonging.

In 2021, Bridge Meadows' Leadership Team developed an organizational equity lens to further our DEI goals and continue addressing inequitable systems and policies. With the support of the Bridge Meadows DEI Committee, each department is undergoing a review of our internal policies and organizational culture and making formal changes and procedural updates to ensure we are modeling equitable behaviors and policies at every level of the organization. Our Board of Directors launched a Board Development Committee to support this work at the board level and create equitable recruitment practices.

Throughout this process, our team has:

- Hired a captioning/ASL interpreter team for large events and clarify our communications regarding accessibility needs.
- Created a minimum goal (30%) of BIPOC and MWESB vendors for events and projects and a minimum goal (30% by 2025) of BIPOC representation on our board and staff teams.
- Implemented a more inclusive fee structure for our events.
- Found creative ways to recruit and advertise for our open career opportunities to attract more diverse candidates.
- Included personal and lived experience as adequate qualifications for jobs.
- Ensured every job posting has a salary or salary range listed to combat pay inequities and promote transparency.
- Encouraged continuous personal and professional DEI growth opportunities.
- Conducted annual audits of our current partners and foundation/corporate funders to ensure DEI value-alignment.
- Formalized a Gift Acceptance Policy and committee to review gifts from any potentially challenging or problematic sources.
- Created formal processes to protect our staff from any unsafe or prejudiced situations they may experience.

We strive to ensure that the life experience of Bridge Meadows staff and board reflects that of the communities we serve (e.g., female business owners, adoptive parents, communities of color, single moms, people with low-income backgrounds, people living with disabilities, immigrants, and people who live intergenerationally), and the Bridge Meadows leadership team has developed policies to implement inclusive hiring and recruitment practices to further reflect racial diversity, and create a culture of inclusion and safety.

Our most recent data (currently being updated) show:

- 27% of our staff identify as a person of color (up from 10% in early 2021).
- 17% of our board identify as a person of color.
- Our staff and board range in age from 25 to 65, reflecting the intergenerational diversity of age of our community members.
- 82% of our staff identify as female; 9% as male; 9% as nonbinary
- 64.7% of our board identify as female; 41.1% as male.
- 20% of our staff identify as LGBTQIA+.
- 11.8% of our board identify as LGBTQIA+.
- 30% of our staff identify as having a disability (physical or psychological)

We recognize that we have more work to do because **creating a culture of inclusion and equity is never complete**, and we look forward to continuing this journey with the support of our board and staff leadership.

### ***A Leader in the Field***

Bridge Meadows is proud and honored to be recognized as a leader in innovative solutions to housing, foster care, and aging services. Our model has been featured in local and national media, including PBS NewsHour, New York Times, Nonprofit Association of Oregon, Portland Business Journal, and the Wall Street Journal. This media recognition and the awards we receive for our work in the community, further highlight the impact of our model and expand our reach into new, global audiences.

In 2021, Bridge Meadows was honored (alongside our friends POIC + Rosemary Anderson High School) to receive the Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Award, an award given to two local nonprofits to support their work in the community. As Neighborhood Builders, Bridge Meadows receives a \$200,000 grant, comprehensive leadership training for our Executive Director, Dr. Derenda Schubert, and our Resource Development Director, Lisa Steenson, on topics ranging from increasing financial sustainability, human capital management, and strategic storytelling. With this partnership, Bridge Meadows joins a vast network of peer organizations across the country, and we are given the opportunity to access capital funding to expand our impact in the Portland region. This program continues to be the nation's largest investment into nonprofit leadership development, and we are thrilled at the opportunity, which will support our goal of doubling our impact in the next five years.

### ***Financial Health & Sustainability***

Bridge Meadows' fiscal year runs January 1 - December 31. Despite the significant financial challenges Bridge Meadows has faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the cancellation of events and transitions to virtual events, our expert staff and board teams have maintained strong relationships with



foundation, corporate, and individual donors who have continued to support the Bridge Meadows mission and ensure we have the financial stability to increase our impact and expand to new communities in need.

Due to these partnerships and expert team members, as of January 2022, Bridge Meadows has roughly 15 months of cash in the bank. Our organizational goal was to increase our cash reserves from 3-months to 6-months by 2020 to improve our financial stability; we have far exceeded that goal. Additionally, Bridge Meadows has secured a long-term contract with the Oregon Department of Human Services, further increasing our financial stability, and positioning our organization as a pivotal partner in addressing foster care concerns in the state.

### ***Bridge Meadows Redmond***

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, we proudly opened our third intergenerational community, located in rural Redmond, Oregon. This community is located within the newly constructed Maple Meadows development, minutes from downtown. As of January 2022, all elder units are leased up, and the 35 elders who now call Bridge Meadows Redmond home have jumped into community living with enthusiasm. Due to some unforeseen delays with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), our family townhomes in Redmond are not yet leased up. This delay has allowed us the opportunity to revise our recruitment strategies and deepen our partnership with ODHS, which is vital to the future success of our organization. Two families – 3 parents and 11 children – have settled into their new homes and have already begun building relationships and community. Last December, the Bridge Meadows Redmond community members came together with the support of our onsite Community Support Specialist to coordinate safe holiday activities; in just a few short months, our new community members are already thriving.

### ***Our Future Growth***

Over the last 24+ months, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the growing need for affordable housing, holistic family support, and the power of community to fill gaps in our current systems. Bridge Meadows' innovative model fills many of those gaps with an onsite model that aligns with state and local priorities of alleviating poverty, increasing housing stability in priority populations, and supporting communities of color (those most impacted by the child welfare system). To continue addressing these concerns, Bridge Meadows has developed a long-term strategic plan that focuses on building more intergenerational communities in a responsible and sustainable manner so we can begin to repair our social fabric and heal our communities.

In addition to our third community in Central Oregon, Bridge Meadows has been invited by Clackamas County officials to discuss the feasibility of bringing the model to Milwaukie, Oregon as part of the city's Comprehensive Plan. The City of Milwaukie and civic leaders our team have been working with have set aside a plot of land for our use and we are in the final stages of a formal partnership with the county. We anticipate this project moving forward and being finalized over the next few years.

Bridge Meadows Lynwood (East Portland) is still in development as our Development Team pursues multiple avenues of funding. Due to the lack of affordable housing, in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Portland has invested heavily in solving the current homelessness crisis. Thus, Bridge





Meadows Lynwood was temporarily delayed while we navigated options with the county and city. We are happy to report that in 2022 Bridge Meadows will seek public financing to accomplish this project, with the goal of opening Bridge Meadows Lynwood in 2023.

Our board has done extensive research into our growth projections and strategic planning to expand Bridge Meadows regionally as well as across the state. This includes a new alliance with the City of Tacoma where we have begun a formal partnership to bring our model to Washington State. Our team has completed a comprehensive due diligence process to ensure the Tacoma community will truly benefit from our model. In 2021, Bridge Meadows conducted a financial and philanthropic feasibility study with a third-party consultant, Rose City Philanthropy. Our team met with foundation officers, community stakeholders, and local philanthropists to assess the opportunities available for a capital raise of \$2.5 million. These studies and partnerships revealed that our current donors and Tacoma philanthropists are enthusiastic to welcome Bridge Meadows to the city. The data and stories we gathered from this study were vital to Bridge Meadows and helped shape our strategic plan. We anticipate that construction of Bridge Meadows Tacoma will begin in 2023, welcoming approximately 150 residents home in 2024.

### ***In Conclusion***

Despite the many challenges and uncertainties 2020 & 2021 has exposed and introduced - the pandemic, racial injustice, wildfires, transitioning to virtual events, working remotely, distanced learning - Bridge Meadows is privileged to have dedicated board members, supporters, and donors who have helped us navigate these hurdles and ensure our residents remain safe, healthy, and connected.

Thank you for your dedication to our mission and for your partnership.

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*Want to connect and learn more? Contact Lisa Steenson, Resource Development Director at*

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