



## **2022 Bridge Meadows Impact Report**

In 2022, Bridge Meadows **improved quality of life** for community members across our three locations. Our financial stability allows us to continue providing safe, stable, **affordable housing** and **wraparound therapeutic services** for youth and families impacted by foster care, and older adults searching for meaning and purpose and a home to age in place safely.

In 2022, youth successfully navigated the return to in person school, using the resilience learned in community; parents received vital resources that allowed their families to flourish and avoid severe economic hardships; and elders remained safe and healthy while finding innovative ways to stay connected. Together, we learned how to safely gather in person again, and how to adapt our programs to ensure we are **always meeting the most pressing needs of the community**.

Over the last three years, the COVID-19 pandemic, recurring climate emergencies (i.e. extreme heat, cold, and natural disasters), and ongoing social inequities have 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 intergenerational housing model to more families and elders so that together we can truly repair the fabric of our communities.

**Our vision is to create and build** diverse, inclusive housing communities that prevent and address the long-term impacts of trauma and end social isolation. Our communities focus on family stability for youth impacted by foster care, and **improved well-being outcomes for all**.

Bridge Meadows is proud to present to you our **2022 Impact Report**, a document that highlights the innovative work of Bridge Meadows that you have supported.

*Thank you for your belief in our mission!*

Warmly,

**Lisa Steenson**

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## The Power of Housing & Intergenerational Relationships

***Mission:*** Bridge Meadows creates and inspires intergenerational communities **enriching the well-being of children, families, and elders**. Built around the concept of interdependence, our affordable communities support children and youth impacted by foster care, their families, and elders searching for meaning and purpose.

***Social Purpose:*** To provide **permanency of home and family for children** and youth who have been impacted by foster care.

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

***Our Evolving Story:*** Our history begins in 2005 when a group of passionate philanthropists were inspired by the work of Brenda Eheart on Intergenerational Communities. These passionate philanthropists convened to create a nonprofit that addressed the issues they saw being siloed but knew could be addressed collectively: foster care, housing, and elder services. Six years later, our first community opened in **North Portland**, making Bridge Meadows the **first urban intergenerational housing model in the country**.

In response to regional demand for affordable housing and permanent solutions to the foster care crisis, Bridge Meadows opened a second community in **Beaverton, OR in 2017**, welcoming home 75 youth, parents, and elders, and doubling our impact. 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 sparked in 2020 has further highlighted the glaring issues in our current systems of support. Working alongside our partners, Bridge Meadows is committed to actively addressing the impacts of these societal issues. We work to bridge gaps, effect change, and support our communities. Our Leadership has set a strategic framework to achieve our goal of doubling our impact in the next five years. **Expansion plans include Tacoma, WA; Clackamas County and Douglas County, Oregon; and Northern and Southern California.**

## Program & Community Member Highlights

### Demographics of Who We Serve

Bridge Meadows currently **serves over 210 residents** across our three sites. Current demographic data shows 39.6% of community members identify as white, 21.4% as Black/African American, 2.7% as Native American/Alaska Native, 3.3% as Latino/a/x, 1.1% as Asian, 3.3% as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 0.5% Middle Eastern, 13.7 Muti-racial, and 14.3% untracked/missing data. Bridge Meadows collects demographic data at the time of move-in and updates regularly; we anticipate new data will be available in summer 2023.

100% of the people we serve are low-to-moderate income, with most living at or below 60% of the Area Median Income. The vast majority (around 90%) of families are single female head of households, and most are kin (aunt, grandma, close family friend, etc.) to the youth they are raising.

We know that racial disparities and biases in the child welfare system continue to tear Black families apart; the Annie E. Casey Foundation found in 2018 that Black children make up just 14% of the country's population, but more than 23% of the foster child population. Bridge Meadows' internal data confirms this; 46% of the youth at Bridge Meadows identify as Black, and a total of 85% identify as a race other than white/Caucasian. **This racial breakdown informs our programming in vital ways.** See section [\*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a Foundation\*](#) for more information.

### Community-First Programming

Bridge Meadows operates from a strengths-based approach, understanding that children, youth, parents, and elders who comprise a Bridge Meadows community are much more than the pain and suffering they have experienced. We aim to create a healing-engaged community that recognizes the symptoms of trauma, responds appropriately, and believes that “those exposed to trauma are agents in the creation of their own well-being” (Ginwright, 2018), rather than victims without agency and capacity.

The community is the agent of its own healing. In contrast to hierarchical social service models that can be disempowering, we believe our role is to help develop the community's capacity to support and lead itself. Developing this capacity is healing and transformative, generating deep interdependent connections between people.

After 12 years of program design and delivery, our therapeutic staff (Community Support Specialists – CSS) know that youth, parents, and elders 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, the CSS staff prioritize **adaptive, trauma-informed programming** to ensure it remains nimble and responsive to the people we serve.

Community input is captured through both formal and informal means, including community forums, surveys, one-on-one therapy/consulting sessions, meetings, group circles, and discussions. Input and feedback inform the creation of new programming and adaptation of current programs. Bridge Meadows recognized the need to evaluate expected outcomes as well as integrate relevant research into our model. In 2020, we hired a Research & Evaluation Coordinator with over 10 years of experience in social science research. This staff member develops evaluation tools and works with the CSS staff to understand the impact of the model.

The Bridge Meadows model relies on service user voice and influence to operate effectively. The CSS 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**. We assume the role of partner, focusing on a strengths-based view of the individual, and encouraging community members to create their own activities with the support and skilled facilitation by our clinical staff.

## Community Outcomes

### Youth are Healthy, Connected, and Resilient

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% 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 at Bridge Meadows are resilient, feel a strong sense of connection** to their community, and are **accessing healthcare at higher rates** than their foster care peers. 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.

In response to ongoing economic challenges, the CSS staff, with help from community members at all three locations, partnered with local food pantries to **increase access to food and prevent food insecurity**. Food insecurity continues to be a real challenge for community members, and we are seeking foundation and social service partners to address the issue.

### Parents Feel Supported

We know that children and youth can only thrive if their caregivers are given the resources they need to support their family. Our program is built on this idea.

Our Outcome Evaluation surveys specifically measure 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,

- 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**.
- 85% of parents received the highest possible score on the Social Support Questionnaire, demonstrating strong support networks amongst peers, neighbors, and Bridge Meadows staff.

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** in the form of gift cards. These gift cards allowed parents the opportunity to use the assistance in a way that is most meaningful and impactful for their family, whether that was paying bills, buying food or school supplies, investing in technology necessary for at-home schooling, or creating a joyful holiday season for their children.

### Elders Are Ageing Well

Older adults remain at risk of severe social isolation and loneliness, and are one of the fastest growing homeless populations. Decades of research on the subject of intergenerational relationships and community supports have proven the social, emotional, and even economic benefits of living in such a community. Our data reflect this.

- 67% of elders reported their General Health as Good, Very Good, or Excellent.

- 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, indicating life satisfaction and positive feelings about the future.

A 2018 Cigna study conducted using the same UCLA loneliness scale used in our survey 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.

While the needs of this population continues to change as they age, overall elders are reporting life satisfaction, few symptoms of depression, and a strong sense of community.

## **Lessons Learned**

### **What the Pandemic Taught Us**

The COVID-19 pandemic forced Bridge Meadows to adapt our programming to virtual methods, a difficult task considering the relational nature of our model. However, this adaption allowed us to **reconsider the way we think about our programs**. For the last three years, the CSS staff have focused programming and activities on addressing community members' basic needs of housing, food, suitable technology for at-home work and school, climate emergency supports (AC units, fans, heaters), and immediate crisis management. With the worst of the pandemic behind us and data showing community members are safe and healthy, we can once again build out our core programming. Examples of new and revitalized staff- and community member-led programs include:

- Age-Friendly Zumba
- All-Ages Spanish Language Lessons
- Regular Bingo Nights
- Swap Meet Days (for community members to swap clothes, housewares, games, etc.)
- Homework Help Hour
- Medicaid Sign Up Trainings
- Race and Belonging Conversations
- Art for All Ages
- Board and Card Game Nights



- ER Preparedness Trainings
- SMART Reading
- And more

These programs contribute to the community of care Bridge Meadows maintains for children, parents, and elders; we believe in the transformative power of people and our developed Theory of Change reflects this. The Theory states that shared experiences build relationships, and people who have caring relationships – particularly relationships across the lifespan – are happier, healthier, and overall lead more fulfilling lives.

### Areas for Improvement

A core value of Bridge Meadows is **constant improvement**. People and their needs grow and change over time, and our programming must adapt alongside those needs. While our data show that, overall, community members are safe, happy, and healthy, survey results have already highlighted areas for improvement, both in program development and in survey administration.

Survey participation was low last year. Our Research & Evaluation Coordinator is working closely with Program Staff to help community members understand the importance of the surveys and increase participation for the next evaluation cycle. Ideas for improvement include,

- Staggering survey the administration for the different generations (elders in the fall, parents in the spring, kids in the summer, as an example).
- Discussing the importance of evaluation with community members to build understanding and gain feedback.
- Implement a recruitment plan for participation in the evaluation process, including incentives. .

Program development areas for improvement include,

- Some youth reported feeling disconnected to their community (school and Bridge Meadows). One way to address this feeling is to resume Kid/Youth Circles, which serve as a kind of group therapy specifically targeted for youth. The CSS staff use talk therapy, art, music, movement, and writing to facilitate these conversations.
- Some parents reported feeling disconnected from the CSS staff. Consider the use of a routine needs assessment for parents to help identify constructive areas that both parents, staff, and community members could work on to help improve supports to parents, alleviate their stress level, and increase their feelings of energy.
- Some elders reported feelings of loneliness. Consider including and assessing an





objective measure of elder's face-to-face contact with other people, or their social connections at Bridge Meadows, to help determine which elders may need more intentional social connection.

## **2022 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.

Equity, inclusion, and belonging are core values of Bridge Meadows. 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, people who've experienced the foster care system, single moms, people with low-income backgrounds, people living with disabilities, immigrants, and people who live intergenerationally). **We have improved greatly in this area, and still have a lot of work to do.**

Our most recent data show:

- 25% of our staff identify as a person of color (up from 10% in 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.

After the racial reckoning in 2020, we recognized the need for **diversity education with community members**. As stated in the [\*Demographics\*](#) section of this document, the majority of families and children at Bridge Meadows identify with a race other than white. To ensure all communities are safe and feel a sense of belonging, we hired a consultant to help lead **conversations with elders about race and belonging**. Rosanne Marmor, alongside our newly hired Community Program Manager, facilitates these circles and creates a space for elders to ask questions and express uncertainties in a safe space that encourages growth and self-reflection. These Race & Belonging conversations are happening in three sessions each, across all three communities. The



CSS staff have already reported witnessing incredible growth and relationships being repaired. As one staff member states, we are tapping into “the transformative power of people.”

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

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 has joined 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 region. In 2022, we entered the second year of this partnership, and we look forward to continuing to use the resources learned and connections made to expand our reach and help more people in need of intergenerational housing.

Bridge Meadows continues to be recognized as a leader alongside other intergenerational models. For a full list of articles, interviews, and published media, visit our website at [bridgemedows.org/news](https://bridgemedows.org/news).

### Financial Health & Sustainability

Our fiscal year runs January 1 - December 31. Despite the financial challenges nonprofits faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, **Bridge Meadows preserved our financial stability**. Visit us on our website at [bridgemedows.org/about-us/](https://bridgemedows.org/about-us/) for our most recent financials.

Our expert Development Staff and Board teams have cultivated and maintained relationships with foundations, corporations, and individual donors to secure stable, diverse funding. Due to these partnerships, Bridge Meadows has roughly 9 months of cash reserves in the bank. Additionally, Bridge Meadows has secured a **long-term contract with the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)** and Portland Children’s Levy, further increasing our financial stability, and positioning our organization as a pivotal partner in addressing foster care concerns in the state.

### Bridge Meadows Redmond

In 2022, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of Bridge Meadows Redmond, which is our first community outside the Portland Metro region and our first in a rural setting. We are excited to report that, after some initial delays, Bridge Meadows Redmond is 100% leased up.

Furthermore, in alignment with recent changes to ODHS' priorities, Bridge Meadows has launched a **Family Reunification Pilot Program** for some of the townhomes in Redmond. Parents who have undergone and successfully completed ODHS required parenting classes, rehabilitation programs, or other services are reunited with their children and live at Bridge Meadows Redmond where they receive additional support from the community. This pilot program is in line with the state's [Vision for Transformation Plan](#) for child welfare which states, in part, that a guiding principle for this plan is "Focusing on strengthening and preserving connections to family and community."

### Our Future Growth

There continues to be a 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 high-need areas, in a responsible and sustainable manner so we can begin to repair our social fabric and heal our communities.

Our expansion pipeline is robust; Bridge Meadows receives phone calls and emails weekly from leaders and philanthropists invited us to explore their neighborhood to determine if a Bridge Meadows community is the right fit for their needs. At the top of our pipeline is **Tacoma, Washington**.

In 2021, we were invited to explore Tacoma. After completing a comprehensive due diligence process to ensure the Tacoma community will truly benefit from our model, we entered a formal partnership with the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA). We then 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 \$1.5 million. These studies and partnerships revealed that our current donors and



Tacoma philanthropists are enthusiastic to welcome Bridge Meadows to the city.

We will be applying for public financing of this project in 2023. We anticipate that construction of Bridge Meadows Tacoma will begin in 2024, and approximately 150 **residents will be welcomed home in 2025.**

In addition to Tacoma, Bridge Meadows has been invited to explore,

- Clackamas County, Oregon
- Douglas County, Oregon
- Lincoln County, Oregon
- Lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
- Northern California
- Southern California

Each of these projects are in the exploration and discussion phase. To stay up to date on our latest expansion projects, [sign up for our newsletters](#) or visit our [website](#).

## In Conclusion

With your investment and support of the Bridge Meadows mission, 2022 was a successful year. Youth, parents, and elders remained safe, stable, and healthy.

There are many exciting things on the horizon for us. Our 2023 priorities include,

- The Bridge Meadows Tacoma project.
- Investing in our team and hiring more staff.
- Addressing food insecurity.
- Establishing opportunities for enrichment and education for youth during Out of School Time (camps, sports, and other extracurricular activities).

**Thank you for your support in 2022, and for your dedication to our mission. We are truly grateful for your partnership.**

*Want to connect and learn more? Contact Lisa Steenson, Resource Development Director at [lsteenson@bridgemedows.org](mailto:lsteenson@bridgemedows.org) | 503.953.1100. Visit us at [bridgemedows.org](http://bridgemedows.org) for more information.*

Our History and Impact, Told Through Video | [YouTube Channel](#)



### Diane, and the Parker Family

“When our licensing worker told us that a place like Bridge Meadows existed, it really was like a dream come true.” *Learn more about their story [HERE](#).*

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### Inside the Mission, according to the kids

“Community is not a word you say, it’s an action you do, not for yourself or anyone else, but for everyone together.” *Hear more from the youth at Bridge Meadows [here](#).*

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## From Struggling to Flourishing

“The self-confidence [my kids] learned, the ability to speak and advocate for themselves, feel comfortable around people – that all happened at Bridge Meadows.” *Learn more about Jackie’s story [here](#).*

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## The Team Behind the Mission

“It’s incredible to see the capabilities of every person. If they can tap into their gifts and feel supported, there’s nothing they can’t do.” *Learn more about our team [here](#).*