

2023 Bridge Meadows Impact Report

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A Dream Come True

Meet the Parker Family

The Parkers have been resource (foster) parents for over 20 years. For them, fostering children was a calling. It was a journey they knew they were meant to take, even with the challenges that come with raising children from the foster care system. As Brian Parker says,

“You've put yourself out there to love a kid that you don't know is going to be there with you for the long term. It's hard to engage other people in your friend circle or your family to take that kind of risk, too. So, it can be isolating.”

But today, the Parkers and their two young boys are far from isolated. They recently celebrated six years with the Bridge Meadows Beaverton community, where they have found a place of belonging. The boys are doing well in school, have many friends and mentors, and feel a deep sense of security that comes from having a stable home.

*“Bridge Meadows is built on the idea that you have this community of people that not only understand the situation that you're in but are excited and engaged in helping you and helping the kiddos. **It's been a dream come true for our family.**”*

In 2023, the Parkers were honored with the Adoption Excellence Award by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The award is given to people who have demonstrated incredible contributions to advancing permanency and promoting the adoption of children and youth from the child welfare system. Read more about this award [here](#).



The Bridge Meadows Story

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 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 story began in 2005 when a group of passionate philanthropists were inspired by Brenda Eheart's work on intergenerational communities. These passionate philanthropists convened to create a nonprofit to address the siloed issues they saw. They knew that a holistic approach to foster care, housing, and elder services could have a bigger impact. Six years later, our first community opened in **North Portland**, making Bridge Meadows the **country's first urban intergenerational housing model.**

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 75 youth, parents, and elders home, 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 is an annex to the original North Portland Bridge Meadows, serving youth ages 17 to 24 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 justice movement in 2020 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 the number of families served 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 **serves 230 people** in 128 households. Our community is diverse, with community members identifying as 51.2% white, 20% Black/African American, 14% Multi-Racial, 3% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 3% Latino/a/x, 1.5% Native American/Alaska Native, 1% Asian, 1% Middle Eastern, and 5% Prefer Not to Say.

100% of the people we serve have 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 heads of household, 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 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 believe that the people we serve understand their own ever-changing needs better than we ever could. For this reason, our therapeutic staff, called Community Support Specialists or CSS, prioritize **trauma-informed programming** that is constantly evolving to ensure it remains nimble and responsive.

In 2023, we facilitated 184 education and tutoring programs, 300+ community engagement and relationship-building activities, and 120 health and well-being workshops.

Our core programs include,

-  One-on-one mental health support
-  Happiness Hour (a twice-monthly community meal)
-  Wisdom Circles, Kid Circles, Parent Circles, Teen Circles, and Community Circles (not dissimilar to group therapy)

- Community Forums (similar to a townhall)
- Back to School Kick-off and school supply drive
- Summer/break camps and activities
- Wellness training and classes (examples include trauma-informed care, racial equity, Trust-Based Relational Intervention, conflict resolution, etc.)
- Art for All Ages
- Movement and health classes (examples include age-friendly yoga, fall prevention Tai Chi, Zumba, Medicare sign-up training, etc.)

These programs are designed to address one or more of the **Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)**, which are factors that influence individual and community health outcomes. Using SDOH as the foundation, our programs facilitate housing stability, decrease the impacts of childhood trauma, reduce symptoms of social isolation and loneliness, increase youth resilience, and enhance Caregiver Parenting Abilities. As a result, not only are community members leading happier, healthier, and safer lives, but society saves millions of dollars a year in social service and emergency treatment costs.

We also launched new programs in 2023, including,

- Intergenerational Play Therapy in partnership with a George Fox University professor and licensed play therapist
- Community Connection Club (a resident-led committee focused on increasing engagement among community members)
- Faith & Spirituality Discussion Group
- Seasonal Affective Disorder Support Group
- Little Free Library in Beaverton
- Race & Belonging in Community
- Neighborhood Story Project
- Emergency Preparedness Committee

Each of these programs promotes community members' overall health, well-being, and life satisfaction, **breaking intergenerational cycles of instability, poverty, and isolation.**

Community Outcomes

Youth are Healthy, Connected, and Resilient

“

My favorite thing about Bridge Meadows is the kids. There's always someone outside to play with, and it's always nice to see everybody out. Everyone is so close, and whenever there's an event, you know, almost everyone is there. It's like a second family pretty much.

- L, teen youth

Our program decisions are guided by research and data specifically focusing on measuring resiliency, exercise, 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,

- 81% of youth responded positively to the statement, "I like my community," indicating a sense of belonging.
- 100% of youth received a positive score on the resiliency scale, indicating a strong ability to overcome adversity, seek resources, and ask for help when needed.
- 90% of youth reported having at least one adult at school they feel supported by, indicating school connectedness, an essential proxy for determining academic success.
- 94% of youth indicated there is enough to eat in their home when they are hungry, indicating levels of food security significantly higher than the average youth population and their foster care peers.

Our findings demonstrate that **youth at Bridge Meadows are resilient, have a strong sense of connection** to their community, and access **healthcare at higher rates** than their foster care peers. Economic drivers, which significantly influence Social Determinants of Health, were also positive; these include housing stability, healthcare access, and food insecurity/hunger.

In addition to our internal outcome surveys, in 2023, Bridge Meadows partnered with a national research group called ChildTrends. We anticipate data from this project to be

available in late 2024.

Parents Feel Supported

“

Bridge Meadows is built on the idea that you have this community of people that not only understand the situation that you're in but are excited and engaged in helping you and helping the kiddos. It's been a dream come true for our family.

- Brian, parent

Children and youth can only thrive if their caregivers have the resources they need to support their families. Our programs are built on the research of Parents' Protective Factors. These factors are characteristics or attributes that, when present, increase the well-being of children and families. These factors support both parents' emotional well-being, social support, meaning, and purpose (flourishing).

Our Outcome Evaluation data indicate,

- 87% of parents reported feeling a sense of belonging to their community.
- 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
- 86% of parents reported feeling optimistic about their future.
- 92% of parents agreed with the statement, “I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.”

In addition to the standard programming and onsite mental health care Bridge Meadows offers, with the support of donors, **we were able to provide financial aid to all families.** Parents use the assistance in a way that is most meaningful and impactful for their family, such as buying school supplies, investing in technology necessary for at-home schooling, paying bills, buying food, or creating a joyful holiday season for their children.

Elders Are Ageing Well

“

If it weren't for this community, I'd probably be alone in my room, but I know it's not healthy for me; it's healthier for me to be out in the community and see everybody. One of the things I like to do is play music for everyone. It brings me joy. We all have great ideas and talents we can bring to the table and each other...that's what this community is all about.

- Jeff, elder

The needs of older adults change as they age, and they are at higher risk of severe social isolation and loneliness, making them one of the fastest-growing homeless populations. Decades of research on intergenerational relationships and community support have proven the social, emotional, and economic benefits of living in such a community. In addition to supporting parents, our Parents' Protective Factors focused programs also supported Elders; these factors address social isolation, increased social support, and flourishing lives, all support greater life satisfaction, few symptoms of depression, and a strong sense of community.

Our data reflect this.

- 80% of elders scored favorably on the Mental Health scale, indicating low symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- 75% of elders scored favorably on the Social Functioning scale, indicating that their mental and physical health does not significantly interfere with social activities.
- 89% of elders reported moderate to high levels of perceived Social Support, indicating that they feel connected and valued in their community and receive assistance when needed.
- 86% of elders agreed with the statement, “I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.”

Looking Ahead

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 community members are safe, happy, and healthy overall, survey results also highlight areas for improvement, both in program development and survey administration.

Our Program and Evaluation teams are using the outcome results to determine potential necessary adjustments to current programs, new programs that need to be launched, and resources community members need to lead happy, healthy, and safe lives. Our team is also exploring the data we captured to determine if new survey tools are required to fully capture Bridge Meadows' impact.

Organizational Development & Thought Leadership

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a Foundation

At Bridge Meadows, we believe that all people deserve to flourish in a caring community. We are committed to creating equitable and welcoming communities 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 significantly improved in this area and still have work to do.

As stated in the [*Demographics*](#) section of this document, most families and children at Bridge Meadows identify with a race other than white. In 2023, we hired a consultant, Rosanne Marmor, to help lead conversations with community members about race and belonging to ensure all communities are safe and feel a sense of belonging. Rosanne, alongside our newly hired Community Program Manager, facilitated these circles and created a space for folks to ask questions and express uncertainties in a safe space that encourages growth and self-reflection. The staff 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.

Financial & Operational Stability

Despite the financial challenges nonprofits continue to face due to tumultuous economic conditions, **Bridge Meadows has preserved its financial stability.** Our most recent financials can be found on our website at bridgemeadows.org/about-us/

Our Development Staff and Board have cultivated and stewarded relationships with foundations, corporations, government agencies, and individual donors to secure stable, diverse funding. Bridge Meadows has 11 months of operating reserves in the bank to support our business model. 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.

In addition to our continued financial stability, in 2023, we dedicated resources toward our long-term operational capacity. Under the guidance of HR consultant Abby Engers, KD, SHRM-CP, our Executive Leadership Team reviewed our job descriptions, compensation policies, and benefits package. This work is vital for our operational stability and part of our ongoing DEI work.

As a part of this work, we have accomplished the following,

- ☀ Launched a new continued education program to support ongoing learning amongst staff.
- ☀ Rolled out a new Employee Handbook.
- ☀ Launched a re-vamped annual review policy.
- ☀ Improved in-house property management by hiring 1) a Finance & Operations Manager who oversees the management of our properties, 2) a cleaning technician, and 3) a maintenance supervisor.
- ☀ Added a new sabbatical program to promote staff retention and prevent burnout.
- ☀ Hired a finance and housing development project consultant to help manage our regional expansion efforts.
- ☀ Hired a Government Relations consultant to support our policy and advocacy work, and help us seek new government funds.
- ☀ Hired a expert fundraising and communications consultant to support our donor engagement and fundraising strategies.
- ☀ Trained our staff team on child and elder abuse prevention, fair housing, and Infant, Child, and Adult First Aid, CPR, and AED.

Board Leadership

The Bridge Meadows Board of Directors has also continued to evolve, most recently welcoming two new co-chairs after our former chair retired from her role. Our 19-member Board contributes expertise in finance, real estate development, public relations and marketing, program design and development, fundraising, child welfare, and aging. The Board remains actively engaged, working closely with executive staff to ensure that day-to-day operations align with long-term vision and strategic planning.

This high level of engagement and commitment allows the organization to navigate complex issue landscapes, modulate growth to match capacity, and remain nimble as a leader in emerging intergenerational platforms locally and nationally.

The Board Development Committee – launched in 2021 – continues to evolve. Most recently, their efforts have focused on diversifying board membership, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and identifying growth and opportunity areas related to skills and long-term strategic planning.

A Leader in the Field

In addition to our community and housing development work, Bridge Meadows actively promotes the power of intergenerational living to the greater public. Alongside our partners, we are frequently asked to contribute to book publications, interview for articles, or present at conferences. We were also recently honored to be named a **Program of Distinction by Generations United**, a title reserved for organizations that “meet a higher standard and provide greater confidence in the program's sustainability and capacity to achieve targeted outcomes.”

In 2023, we were featured in,

- ✿ [Oregon Department of Human Services press release.](#)
- ✿ [Air1 interview segment.](#)
- ✿ [KATU Season of Giving interview segment.](#)
- ✿ Multiple New York Times articles
 - [When the Neighbors Are All Older, Too](#)
 - [The Magic of the Granny Flat](#)
 - [The Next Retirement Communities Won't Be Just for Seniors](#)
- ✿ [PDX BizWomen's March Newsletter.](#)
- ✿ [Vox Media article.](#)
- ✿ An award-winning independent short documentary film, [Believe in Wonder.](#)

Additionally, our team has been invited to collaborate on several publication projects highlighting intergenerational living as a solution to aging, housing, and child welfare issues. To stay up to date on awards and published media, visit our website at bridgemeadows.org/news.

Advocating for Systems Change

We were also proud to join Our Children Oregon and 127 other nonprofits across the state to develop a comprehensive legislative agenda focused on improving the well-being of children, youth, and families in Oregon. This work is deep and ongoing, and we look forward to working alongside our partners to make profound impacts that support

children and families across the state. Learn more about this work at ourchildrenoregon.org.

Bridge Meadows Tacoma

In 2021, we were invited to explore a new project in Tacoma, Washington. 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 private capital raise of \$1.5 million. These studies and partnerships revealed that our current donors and Tacoma philanthropists enthusiastically welcome Bridge Meadows to the city.

In 2023, our team continued developing partnerships with local leaders in Tacoma and wrote several funding proposals. To date, we have raised more than \$1.4 million in pre-development costs from the Washington Department of Commerce and the City of Tacoma. We will apply for public financing (Low-Income Housing Tax Credits) for this project in 2024. Construction will begin in 2025, and approximately 100 **residents will be welcomed home in 2026**.

Our Future Impacts




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 these needs through its onsite delivery model. To continue addressing these needs, Bridge Meadows has developed a long-term Strategic Plan focusing on building more intergenerational communities in high-need areas. Our strategic plan aligns with state and local priorities of alleviating poverty, increasing housing stability in priority populations, and supporting communities of color (most impacted by the child welfare system).

In addition to Tacoma, Bridge Meadows is actively pursuing land and resources in,

-  Clackamas County, Oregon
-  Douglas County, Oregon
-  and Lincoln County, Oregon

Other areas we've been invited to explore include,

-  Lane County, Oregon
-  Northern California
-  Southern California

Our expansion pipeline is robust. Bridge Meadows receives phone calls and emails weekly from leaders and philanthropists who invite us to explore their neighborhood to determine if a Bridge Meadows community is the right fit for their needs.

To stay up to date on our latest projects, [sign up for our newsletters](#) or visit our [website](#).

In Conclusion

With your investment and support of the Bridge Meadows mission, 2023 was a successful year. Youth, parents, and elders remained safe, stable, and healthy. There are many exciting things on the horizon for us.

Our 2024 priorities include,

- The Bridge Meadows Tacoma project.
- Investing in our team and hiring more staff.
- Continuing to grow operational infrastructure.
- Improve and expand our programs, driven by evaluation data.

Thank you for your support in 2023 and for your dedication to our mission. We are truly grateful for your partnership.

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