

Crossings

Fall/Winter 2011

THE NEWSLETTER OF COMMUNITY BRIDGES



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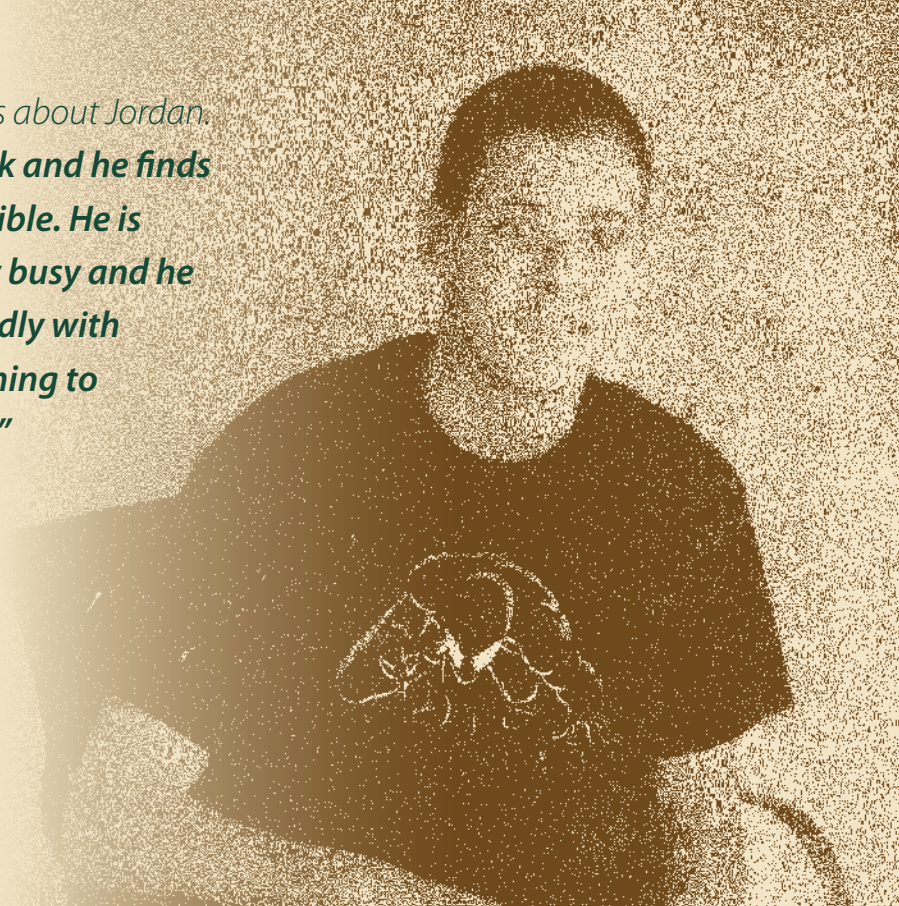
Connecting Individuals with Disabilities to Their Community

COMMUNITY

BRIDGES

Chartwells' Director of Dining Services speaks about Jordan:
"Jordan Suter has a passion for teamwork and he finds it very important to be as helpful as possible. He is constantly asking what he can do to stay busy and he likes to take on new tasks. Jordan is friendly with customers and very polite. He enjoys coming to Chartwells' events and associate parties."

Jordan Suter – Meeting Goals and Looking Ahead to a Bright Future



Jordan is a young man who just turned 21 this past February. He lives in Hillsboro with his mother, two sisters, aunt, and two cousins. Jordan was adopted at a young age, and has dealt with the challenges of ADHD, Fetal Alcohol Effects, and Bi-Polar Disorder in his young life.

Today, Jordan works at Chartwells at New England College in Henniker, averaging 16-18 hours a week. Jordan has proved to be a reliable employee and his confidence has grown over the year and a half he's worked there. What does having a job mean to Jordan? "I believe that having a job can be very rewarding because you gain many new qualities on the site, such as making new friends, having money in your pocket for expenses, and most importantly you gain more experience," says Jordan.

Jordan accomplished an important goal he had set for himself when he graduated from Hillsboro-Deering High School in June 2009 at the age of 19. During his last two years in high school, he participated in the Certificate Program for Graphic Arts offered through the Concord Regional Vocational Training Center at Concord High School. His interest at that time was to obtain a job in the graphic arts field, but he was not eager to pursue additional education after having struggled in high school. When an internship he had hoped to do in the graphic arts field fell through, he began looking for other career paths he could pursue.

A referral was made to Vocational Rehabilitation in May 2009 and Jordan began working with Community Bridges Employment Services in July 2009. Finding

employment in graphic arts that matched his skill sets was proving difficult, but along the way, Jordan discovered a strong interest in learning to cook and being involved in food services. Extensive exploration of opportunities within a reasonable commute from Jordan's residence revealed a Kitchen Utility position available at Chartwells. Jordan applied and interviewed for the position and started work in January of last year. Job coaching support hours were provided over the first three months of employment. Jordan learned his responsibilities quickly and adapted well to his new routine at Chartwells.

As transportation is always a challenge, it was agreed that Jordan should be evaluated through the Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center Driving School to hopefully set him on a path toward his driver's license. The evaluation took place in October 2009 and it was recommended that Jordan study the driver's manual, pass at least two trial tests, and then receive about 25 hours of driving support in order to receive his driver's license. It was determined the support he needed could be provided by a Driver's Education Course and Jordan immediately began saving up for it. Community Bridges was able to split the cost with him through a Family Support Council Grant, and in July 2010, Jordan contacted Freyler's Driving School in Henniker to sign up for their summer session. Jordan finished the course and received his driver's license the first week of September 2010 after passing the driving test on his second try!

After meeting this exciting challenge, Jordan's next hurdle was finding a car to drive. His mother Laurie was willing to sell him their older car, but he needed enough money each month to meet his expenses including a car payment, car insurance, his share of the household expenses, a cell phone bill, and some spending money for gas and other essentials. At that point, Community Bridges helped Jordan submit a Plan To Achieve Self-Support, otherwise known as a PASS Plan to Social Security. His "work goal" request was to be able to have transportation to maintain his job.

He requested that his Supplemental Security Income (SSI) check allow him to make a car payment to his mother each month in the amount of \$150.00. This meant that his check would not be reduced by this amount during the time the PASS Plan is in effect. The PASS Plan was initially denied; however, Jordan appealed the denial and ultimately received a letter stating that his PASS Plan was approved.

Jordan's other passion is being a Jehovah's Witness. He set a number of goals for himself over the past year and had the determination and the support he needed to meet each

one of them. His goals were to:

- *Obtain his driver's license.*
- *Be baptized into the Jehovah's Witness religion, which took place in April 2011.*
- *Participate in "Pioneering Work" that includes 50-70 hours a month of door-to-door ministry work.*
- *Become a part of the Regional Building Committee that travels throughout New England building new Kingdom Halls.*
- *Maintain his job at Chartwells.*

Jordan has had a very successful year and this motivated young man is ready for a bright future.

Recommended Online Resources

Get all the latest information on events, training and other happenings on our newly-updated website at www.communitybridgesnh.org or on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/communitybridgesnh.

Some new resources worth checking out include:

Factcheck.org is a project of the Annenberg Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. It is a nonpartisan, nonprofit "consumer advocate" for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. They monitor the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases. Their goal is to apply the best practices of both journalism and scholarship, and to increase public knowledge and understanding.

Peoplefirstofnh.org/NHAllianceForFullParticipation-

People First of New Hampshire has revived the state team for the Alliance For Full Participation (AFP) which was established in 2005. Our NH state team will assess current employment practices, determine areas to focus on for improvement, and create an action plan for achieving goals. The national AFP will provide access to best practices throughout the United States to achieve the vision of fully integrated employment. Our state team will prepare and present our work for the national summit in 2011.

Protectnhfamilies.org - Protect New Hampshire Families, sponsored by New Hampshire Citizens Alliance for Action, was created to educate the citizens of New Hampshire as to the threats and issues at hand and to empower concerned citizens to have their voices heard.

Who Are We?

Community Bridges is a non-profit agency serving the communities of central New Hampshire. Disability is a natural part of the human experience and may occur as a result of developmental impairments, injury or aging. We work with those in need, their families, and others in local communities so that people can lead active lives filled with meaning and opportunities for contribution.

We find opportunities, create networks, and build symbiotic

relationships that utilize the skills and life experiences of our participants so that they may remain in the community.

We find unique and creative ways that people with disabilities can enrich the lives of others in their communities — through employment, companionship, or assistance to others.

We identify barriers that make remaining in the community difficult



and use our participants' strengths, interests, and abilities to find ways to overcome these barriers.

By helping our participants find ways that they can fit into and support a community, everyone benefits. They feel a sense of independence and responsibility, and the community is enriched with their life experiences and skills.

From the Executive Director

by Roy Gerstenberger, Executive Director, Community Bridges



Welcome to the inaugural edition of Community Bridges Crossings Newsletter. A famous philanthropist said... “I’m a great believer that any tool that enhances communication has profound effects in terms of how people can learn from each other, and how they can achieve the kind of freedoms that they’re interested in.” It is our hope that through this newsletter you will learn more about us and our passion to serve people with disabilities within their home community through personal stories and updated information about the programs and resources we provide.

I’m often approached nowadays by people who want to know how our community system is doing now that the state budget issues have been resolved for the moment. It has certainly been a momentous period in our history as our legislators struggled to create a compromise budget that was balanced and met as many critical needs as possible. Advocacy organizations, including parents, family members

and self-advocates spoke out strongly to ensure that essential services were preserved. One of the largest rallies in state history was organized at the state capital. The eventual outcome has been positive for those who depend upon the Developmental Services system but many other areas of the Department of Health & Human Services sustained cuts that will have serious repercussions. While the budget included insufficient funds for new needs -- creating wait lists in many areas -- in our region we were able to identify over \$175,000 in cost savings and immediately applied this to new development so that everyone is able to be served.

Our attention has turned now to the legislative mandates to convert all Medicaid funded services over to a Managed Care system. A recent issue of the Challenge newspaper provides a very nice overview of the implications of this type of shift in our system. The Department of Health & Human Services has prioritized engagement with the public to hear concerns and help inform the new process. One of their

mechanisms for doing so will include a series of public sessions. I encourage all of those who have a stake in the outcome to attend and have your voices heard.



Roy Gerstenberger

Upcoming Public Sessions

- Nashua
Nashua Community College,
Sept 14, 6-8pm
- North Country
(Littleton, Claremont and Conway)
using Granite State
Distance Learning Network,
Sept 21, 9-11am
- Somerset
Avis Goodwin,
Sept 22, 10-12pm
- Manchester
Manchester Health Department,
Sept 23, 10-12pm
- Concord
IBEW Hall,
Sept 29, 1-3pm

Thank You to Our Donors and Supporters

We at Community Bridges are proud of what we do, and the improvements we make to the lives of the individuals and families we serve and to the community as a whole...AND WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU. Your charity, philanthropy and advocacy are what power our organization to accomplish great things.

The continuing economic struggles along with the uncertainty caused by the state's budgeting woes challenge organizations like ours that provide the services that people with disabilities need. The demand for our services grows and Community Bridges continues to evolve service delivery and manage available resources to meet demands.

Unfortunately, there are still needs our system cannot fulfill which is why the 2012 Annual Campaign's focus is the creation of the **Community Bridges Assistance**

Fund. Donations to the Assistance Fund will provide financial assistance for services not covered by traditional Medicaid funding sources or when the amount of services required exceeds the individual's funding allocation.

The individuals and families our programs support all have needs. From Christmas toys for toddlers, to after school care that allows parents to work a normal day, to a senior that needs an emergency prescription or a young adult who requires training to obtain a driver's license to get to work, your donations to the Assistance Fund will help.

You can donate online at our newly redesigned website or by mail. For more information on the Community Bridges Assistance Fund please contact John Lindgren, Director of Resource Development jlindgren@communitybridgesnh.org.

Homecare Options Program

by Victoria Chapman, Director, Homecare Options Program

The Homecare Options Program (HOP) at Community Bridges has been assisting seniors, individuals with disabilities, and the chronically ill in their homes for the past three years. The staff that provides these services goes by the title “Personal Care Service Providers” (PCSPs). By receiving services at home, individuals continue to be involved, active members of their communities. Many HOP participants continue to give back to their communities, through volunteering, by providing much needed companionship to others, and by using their life skills and expertise to further enrich the lives of those around them.

Providing personal care, housekeeping, grocery shopping, transportation, and laundry to these individuals is an experience the PCSPs find very

rewarding. Individuals who we have served state that they “are so happy to have their PCSP around. They don’t know what they would do without these services.” We serve individuals who most often live alone, have no family in the area, and rely on the PCSP for not only the work they perform, but for the comfort and companionship they provide while in their home. Sometimes a family just needs our services for their loved one on a temporary basis - mom has just come home from the hospital and daughter/son needs to go back to work, but worry that mom is alone all day. One of our PCSPs can go in on a daily basis to make sure mom is safe, eats her meals, and gets her personal grooming taken care of until she is totally back on her feet.

All individuals seeking services through HOP participate in an assessment, assist in designing their own plan, and provide input when selecting their personal care service provider. With support and assistance from HOP, the participant is in control of his or her own services, provider, schedule, and personal care.

HOP is a non-medical, hands-on service that can be paid for through the NH Medicaid “Choices for Independence” program, private funds, some long-term care insurance policies, or a combination of these sources.

For more information on how the Homecare Options Program can assist you or a loved one, please call (603) 226-3212, ext. 377 or ext. 229.

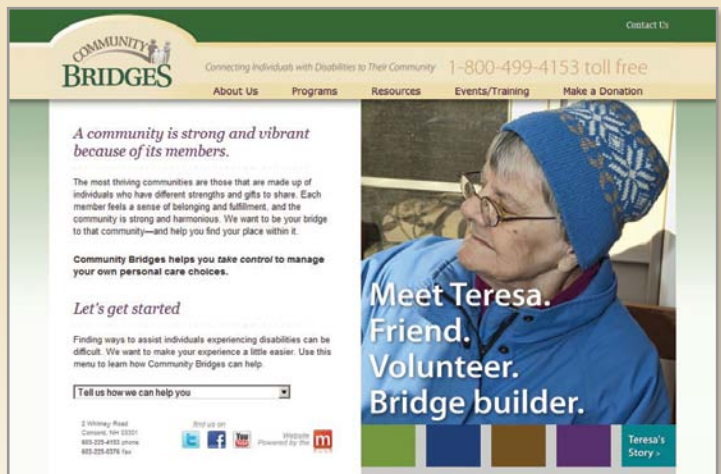
We Have a New Website!

Stop by www.communitybridgesnh.org to see our new and improved website! The new site, which showcases real people who have received assistance from Community Bridges, is clean, modern, and easy to navigate. Our goal in designing the new site was to make it easy for everyone - including people searching for services, our agency partners, job seekers, and donors - to navigate through the site and find exactly what they are looking for.

Some features of the new site include:

- An updated event and training calendar
- Contact information
- Donor information
- Improved descriptions of our services
- Job postings
- Key staff
- Links to our social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube)
- Live-in postings
- News articles and a live feed to our Facebook page
- Several resources including our Family Resource Database
- The ability to make a donation online

And these are just a few! To see everything that our new site has to offer, go to www.communitybridgesnh.org and check it out!



Community Bridges Programs

Community Bridges serves individuals with disabilities, aging, traumatically injured, or chronically ill individuals. Our programs provide a continuum of support for children under the age of three, while they are in school, as they transition into adult services and into the senior years. Community Bridges helps make it possible for 1700 people and their families in greater Merrimack County to live and work in their communities.

Early Childhood Services

Early Childhood Services works with families to prevent, identify, assess, and treat developmental delays in infants and toddlers up to the age of three. If a child requires services, parents take the lead in determining the direction and goals of these services. They include developmental therapies as well as services that benefit and support the entire family.

Each child participant is assigned a team that includes parents and at least two certified developmental specialists from different areas. Through assessments, parent reports, and observations, these specialists determine if the child is eligible to receive services, and if necessary, develop an Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP).

Navigating the resources required for a child experiencing a delay is difficult for many families. Our Early Childhood Services program provides each eligible child a service coordinator, who not only provides direct developmental services to the child, but helps families learn and connect with available resources.

Individual and Family Support Services

The Individual and Family Support Services Program for ages three and above serves as an important part of a support network—providing information, training, support, and enhanced access to services for individuals and families experiencing disabilities. Program applicants and their families are guided through the review process by a team of individuals, including an intake coordinator. This review covers the applicant's physical, intellectual, cognitive, and behavioral status, using age-appropriate standardized functional assessments.

Individual and Family Support Services provides each individual or family a single service coordinator who provides a consistent source of contact to coordinate different support staff and service delivery. The coordinator works with individuals and their families to determine what is most important for them and will meet with extended family members, schools, friends, and other supporters for person-centered planning.

The program includes a legislative liaison and coordinates

the Family Support Council, which is made up of individuals who reside in our service area and who each have a family member with a disability. This organization serves as a forum where families share information, support and resources with each other. Individual and Family Support Services also provides comprehensive educational training opportunities in order to help increase the family's capacity to support their loved one.

Self Directed Services

Self Directed Services partners with adults to give them the freedom to make choices and have more control over many aspects of their lives, including personalized budgets and support staff choices.

Participants may customize a budget plan and purchase a range of services like respite, therapies, assistive technology, environmental modifications or service coordination. Activities like cooking classes, art education, music lessons and outdoor recreation may also be purchased. Participants may use their funding to hire, supervise and direct their own support staff to provide assistance in the day and/or evening with achieving goals, personal care or supported employment.

Community Bridges help individuals and their families recruit, hire, and supervise staff by providing assistance through workshops, guidelines, best practices and advice to help maximize their success. We are committed to supporting participants in deciding how, when, and where to spend their budgets.

Day and Residential Services

Day and Residential Services and Supported Living/CSS Services are programs that embrace natural, community-based settings to provide support services for adults over the age of 21. We shape the services around the unique needs of the participating individual and their family, looking for ways to integrate these support services into a community experience.

Day and Residential Services participants live with a family member, roommate, or in a staffed residence. We empower participants to create their own life plans, make decisions, and openly contribute to their Community Bridges partnerships. Supported Living/

CSS Services is a residential option that provides individuals living independently in the community with assistance in daily living. This service is available to individuals who own, lease, or rent their own homes. Community Support Services include outreach support that provides targeted hourly support to individuals through one-on-one or group arrangements.

Direct support staff members help participants develop relationships within the community, and connect individuals and their families to service and health care providers in the community. We offer 24-hour monitoring for health conditions and can provide an on-call system to assist in emergencies. Medication administration is handled through a community-based approach with the help of an Agency Nurse Trainer.

Career Development

Career Development helps individuals with disabilities choose appropriate employment settings within their communities, and promotes responsibility and accomplishment by helping search out appropriate employment opportunities and solidifying these arrangements. We provide a comprehensive portfolio of services including:

- *Job shadowing*
- *Informational interviewing support*
- *Onsite work observations*
- *Job development & assessments*
- *Pre-employment preparation and practice*
- *Education about different job functions and skills*
- *Advocating for an employee to have a job expanded, changed, or adapted*

Our Career Development Program works in the community to build awareness about integrated employment efforts. We identify potential employment opportunities and utilize creative solutions to find employment for individuals with disabilities. Some of these creative solutions include internships, on-the-job training, and collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation.

Partners In Health

Our Partners in Health Program helps serve families with children from birth to age 21 with a chronic health condition to advocate, access resources, navigate systems and build capacity to manage the chronic health condition of their child. A chronic health condition is defined as a condition certified by a physician that is expected to last six months or more and have a significant impact on daily life.

We work directly with families, assisting in finding resources to meet family identified and prioritized needs. Family Support Coordinators assist families in accessing appropriate services and resources, arrange for special needs during hospitalization and after discharge, provide assistance with school planning, and can act as a support to families by attending meetings. Family Support Coordinators have access to recreational and respite opportunities, can act as an advocate, problem-solve financial concerns and find and share needed information. Under the guidance of parents in the community who understand the impact of chronic health conditions, Family Councils are developed to plan community interventions and programs that empower families and to provide a forum for mutual support.

Homecare Options Program

Homecare Options Program (HOP) allows seniors, adults with disabilities, and those with chronic illness who may need some services to continue to live independent lives in their own homes and continue to be involved, active members of their communities. All adults seeking services through HOP participate in an assessment and assist in designing their own plan of services needed to live in their home including:

- *Bathing, grooming, and dressing*
- *Housekeeping, meal preparation, and laundry*
- *Mobility and transportation to shopping, errands, and appointments*
- *Self-administration of medications*

Many of these services and other specialty services like visits to your relatives or companions to a special event can be provided on a temporary or as needed basis.

The adults we serve provide input when selecting their personal care service provider. There are multiple options for selecting a provider and Community Bridges acts as the employer of record, handling all of the payroll, paperwork, training, and oversight. With support and assistance from Community Bridges, the participant is in control of his or her own services, provider, schedule, and personal care.

Homecare Options Program is a non-medical, hands-on service that can be paid for through the NH Medicaid "Choices for Independence" program, private funds, some long term care insurance policies, or a combination of these sources.



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Concord NH 03301

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We're responsible ... We're responsive.

Community Bridges wants to be environmentally responsible. We also want to be responsive to your preference. If you would like to receive the next edition of Community Bridges Crossings Newsletter by email, please go to our website and join our email list.

Fall Events

October 1, 2011

**New London Historical Society
Old Home Day, 11am - 3pm**

Fun for the whole family! Includes 19th century games, hearthside cooking, general store, weaving and spinning, antique carriages and more!

October 8, 2011

Beech Hill

Maze Days, 1pm - 3pm

Bring the family and take the corn maze challenge!

October 28, 2011

Downtown Concord

Halloween Howl, 5:30pm

Includes a number of family friendly events throughout downtown.

November 10, 2011

Location TBD

Building Your Network, 7pm - 9pm

Come learn how to build meaningful networks and connections.

November 13, 2011

Movie Matinee

Join us for a movie at a local theater in Concord

Lending Library

The lending library is supported through the generosity of the Community Bridges Family Support Council. It contains books, DVDs and VHS tapes on a variety of topics.

For a full listing of materials or to borrow items from the Lending Library please contact Terri Warren at (603) 226-3212 or twarren@communitybridgesnh.org.

Community Bridges 30th Anniversary Celebration

Save the evening of April 18, 2012 to join us at the Grappone Center in Concord to celebrate 30 years of serving individuals and families that experience a disability.