

***Bridging the Community*** was held at Good Samaritan Services, 342 S. Birch St., Kennett Square, PA 19348 on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm outside on the front lawn with fire pits for roasting marshmallows. The temperature was 68 degrees at the start.

**Melissa Horst** shared that Good Samaritan Services has five locations. She's been a part of the organization for twelve years. They offer many housing opportunities and can serve twelve people at their Kennett location. Currently, they have 5 emergency men; 3 men in transition and they will be welcoming a couple on 3/14, This is our **153<sup>rd</sup>** meeting with 38 attendees.  
Email - [melissah@goodsamservices.org](mailto:melissah@goodsamservices.org)

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm at LCH located at 731 W Cypress St, Kennett Square, PA 19348. Thank you for volunteering your organization, Kate Wickersham.** Email: [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

Minutes of *Bridging* meetings are posted on the web site: [www.bridgingthecommunity.wordpress.com](http://www.bridgingthecommunity.wordpress.com) and there will be a copy of the minutes at the Kennett Library. *Bridging the Community* meetings are held at different sites every time---to provide exposure to all segments of the community.

**Kate Wickersham** and **Jeanna Searer** welcomed everyone and led us in a private moment of silence, then shared Bridging's Framework and shared the Guiding Principles. Email: [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org), [jeannecrew491@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannecrew491@hotmail.com)

**Vision:** Kennett Square: Every day a better place to grow up in and grow old in

**Guiding Principles:**

**We will come from the heart---not an obligation**

**We will work for community---not personal agendas**

**We will focus on the potential side---not the issue side**

**We will keep it a process---not a program with infrastructure**

**We will value each person's contribution; each has a role to play--not focused on hierarchy**

**The overall context is our living philosophy, reflected by our land's energy/spirit - *peaceful, progressive, inclusivity*.** "Bridging" promotes this living philosophy for each and every day.

**Jeanna Searer** asked people who would like to share after hearing about the Bridging's Framework and the Guiding Principles. **Kate Wickersham** said to focus on potential, it's a different way to look. **Cathy Brison** loves seeing everyone's willingness to help and how it comes from the heart. **Liliana Guzman** shared it feels like family support. **Tom Hoehle** shared there is no infrastructure burden to our meetings; we take notes, they get posted and that's it. Email: [jeannecrew491@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannecrew491@hotmail.com), [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org), [liliana.guzman@garageyouthcenter.org](mailto:liliana.guzman@garageyouthcenter.org), [calorisonmm@aol.com](mailto:calorisonmm@aol.com) and [tomhoehle@yahoo.com](mailto:tomhoehle@yahoo.com)

**Kate Wickersham**, our Bridging the Community Leader, asked NEW people at the meeting, to share about why they were here and what bridges they hoped to make.  
Email: [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

**New Attendees Introduced themselves and made their requests or shared their offerings:**

**Rana Sakr (Kennett Library Assistant)** was invited by Joan Holliday to attend the meeting. She is the head of the health literacy initiatives at the Kennett Library and is excited to be here to build the potential for the “Live Better” health initiative – public health matters. Join the library for the Spring Forward Event on Wednesday April 24<sup>th</sup> at the Library from 10-12 and 5-8 cohosted with AHHAH. Join her and her committee for Live Better Monthly Meeting on the first Thursday of the month. Emergent Abundance Farming Collective invites you to a gathering on Sunday April 14, 2024 11-2 at Spar Hill Farm. Email: [rsakr@ccls.org](mailto:rsakr@ccls.org)

**Victoria Pascoe (Home of the Sparrow)** joined the meeting because of her passion for housing. They have a shared housing program for women. Email: [vpascoe@homeofthesparrow.org](mailto:vpascoe@homeofthesparrow.org)

**Shawn Holmes (Maternal and Child Health Consortium)** covers the SCC area and goes to homes to talk with fathers about child development. Email: [sholmes@ccmchc.org](mailto:sholmes@ccmchc.org)

**Elisa Salinas (SILO Oxford)** told us that she is the meal coordinator for SILO and always wanted to help the kids in her neighborhood – focusing on loving others. April 20<sup>th</sup> party like it is your birthday on April 20<sup>th</sup> at the Penns Grove Middle School Cafeteria from 2-4pm for pizza and cake. You are invited to Prom Night May 18<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 will have great food. Email: [ellie@oxfordsilo.com](mailto:ellie@oxfordsilo.com)

**Crystal Ayala (ELRC)** is new in her role and is here to build connections. Email: [crystala@cciu.org](mailto:crystala@cciu.org)

**Trevor Pruitt (Clinical Herbalist/Mental Health)** shared about the Community Herbal Garden Party on Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> in Landenberg from 2-6pm. Email Trevor for more information and to RSVP. Email: [trevorlpruitt@gmail.com](mailto:trevorlpruitt@gmail.com)

**Cierra Walker (Recovery Coach)** for LGBTQ about substance abuse. Has been networking on her own and wants to get to know the community better and what we need. Email: [cierra89walker@gmail.com](mailto:cierra89walker@gmail.com)

**Norma Ocampo (ReMax)** here on behalf of the Real Estate company to make connections. Email: [normaocamporm@gmail.com](mailto:normaocamporm@gmail.com)

**Fidel Guadarrama (Citizens Bank)** came to support his wife but also connecting with people. He is local and graduated from Avon Grove. Email: [Fidel.Guadarrama@citizensbank.com](mailto:Fidel.Guadarrama@citizensbank.com)

**Others were invited to share their needs or resources, as well as new ideas to find partners**

**Melissa Horst (Good Samaritan)** and team invited the community to join Love Pickleball Tournament benefiting Good Samaritan Services. Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup>, game play is at the

Kennett Highschool from 8am-2pm and the after party is at The Creamery from 4-6pm. They're collecting welcome baskets to neighbors in need, contact Brittany at [brittanyt@goodsamservices.org](mailto:brittanyt@goodsamservices.org) for more information.

**Rev. Marvin T. Williams (Second Baptist Church)** invited everyone to join in the Gospel Celebration at the Kennett Library on April 13<sup>th</sup> from 13 (tickets \$20) and then he said to join for food at the church after the Library. Call Mrs. Ruth Williams at 610-384-3243 for tickets and more information. If you would like to sponsor, please contact Joan Holliday. Email: [drwilliams9812@gmail.com](mailto:drwilliams9812@gmail.com) and [dochollisv@aol.com](mailto:dochollisv@aol.com)

**Liliana Guzman (The Garage Youth Center)** please let her know if you would like to have a youth intern this summer, as she has over 20 paid students, who are looking for an experience in the careers they are hoping to pursue. Email - [liliana.guzman@garageyouthcenter.org](mailto:liliana.guzman@garageyouthcenter.org)

**Stephanie Bernasconi (Stroud Water Research Center)** will celebrate World Water Day FREE on Friday March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 4:30-7pm. Call Jess at 610-910-0049 for more information. Email – [sbernascon109@gmail.com](mailto:sbernascon109@gmail.com)

**Kathy Hrenko (Community)** shared she is an art therapist who serves nonprofits. She also is a member of the Longwood Rotary and invites new members. Their motto is “Service Above Self,” so they fit with the Bridging philosophy. Email: [khrenko@comcast.net](mailto:khrenko@comcast.net)

**Jeanna Searer (Casa Guanajuato)** said Casa Guanajuato will be holding Cinco De Mayo on Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> on State Street. Contact her for more information for vendors and volunteers. Her number is 484-467-8011. They need sponsors. Email - [jeannecrew491@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannecrew491@hotmail.com)

**Janet Zeis (KACS)** shared about the Kennett Area Community Service, CHESCO Bridges Coalition, United Way of Southern Chester County, Oxford Neighborhood Service, SILO, Chester County Partnership to End Homelessness, and Chester County Community Foundation will host a Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) on **Saturday, April 13, 2024**, from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm at St. Michael Lutheran Church, 109 E Doe Road, Unionville, PA 19375. This learning tool has been created to help people understand the realities of poverty. During this simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families. Some will be designated as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients, some as disabled, and some as senior citizens on Social Security. All participants will have the stressful task of obtaining necessities and shelter on a limited budget during four 15-minute “weeks.” You will interact with human service agencies, grocers, pawnbrokers, bill collectors, job interviewers, police officers, and other resources in the community. Email - [janet@kacsimpact.org](mailto:janet@kacsimpact.org)

**Jim Mercante (Digital Alliance & Housing)** told us that there is a Chester County Digital Alliance that has been endorsed by the Commissioners to bring awareness and resources to those in need to help the entire community have robust Internet service and digital literacy. There will be a presentation at the Kennett Library on Tuesday, April 30, 2024 from 10am to noon coffee with Joan Holliday, Michele Moll from RSVP and Jim Mercante making the presentation.

Jim is also involved in promoting affordable housing with KACS and a County-wide Coalition. If you'd like to help with digital equity or housing contact Jim at: [vjmercante@gmail.com](mailto:vjmercante@gmail.com)

**Joan Holliday** (Bridging Community) is looking for someone to take on the Bridging manager/"glue" role that she has held for 26 years for Bridging the Community. Someone that sees it as "his/her" child with commitment & care, and when not able to continue, finding a new person, who will be faithful in carrying on the Bridging process. Email – [dochollisv@aol.com](mailto:dochollisv@aol.com)

**Molly Hampson** (Mighty Writers) shared about signing up to receive their Kennett e-newsletter. Sign up here <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/TaZoAQg> Email – [mhampson@mightywriters.org](mailto:mhampson@mightywriters.org)

**Kate Wickersham** told us about Fishing Night at the library on March 20<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm. Come out and learn how to fish! Email: [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

**The group then mingled and “bridged” and made the following bridges.**

- Rana Sakr stated this is where magic happens. Kathy Hrenko and Rana talked about Art Therapy and working with veterans, Shawn Holmes and Rana connected about a collaboration on breast feeding for the community and Trevor Pruitt and Rana Sakr connected about a sensory garden.
- Joan Holliday collected \$100 for scholarships for Rev. Marvin T. Williams Gospel Music Celebration at the Library. She “bridged” with Karen D’Agusto from Girl Scouts, hoping to develop a project for a digital literacy program at the Kennett Senior Center.
- Melissa Horst “bridged with Fidel Guadarrama from Citizens Bank
- Mighty Writers and Silo “bridged” – Latinos resources needed – great connections
- Kathy Hrenko and Melissa Horst “bridged” with Ellie from the Oxford Rotary.
- Karen D’Agusto will be connecting the Girl Scouts about computers for The Garage.
- Susan Dunn-Lisuzzo – community member is asking how can we make these resources more easily accessible? Ellie said we do have a way to do this!
- Esther Rochester is looking for books for New Garden AME church. She “bridged” with The Garage Youth Center and LCH, who will give her books for children.
- Jim Mercante, Victoria Pascoe and Ellie from SILO will be connecting about housing.
- Janet Zeis and Lilianna Guzman “bridged” about the donated kitchen space and youth program idea.
- Cathy Brison “bridged” with The Garage offering another macaroni and cheese casserole for a meal.

**Thanks to Good Samaritan for your hospitality! Everyone enjoyed the s’mores and the hot chocolate and coffee at “bridging” time and the tour of Good Samaritan after the meeting.**