

Bridging the Community meeting was held at First Baptist Church, 415 W. State Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348 on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. A picnic was enjoyed beforehand from 6:00pm to 7:00pm with grilled hot dogs in buns and fresh fruit. The event was held inside due to the intense heat index warnings. This is our 155th meeting with 25 attendees.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm featuring New Garden Memorial U.A.M. E. Church located at 309 E Linden St, Kennett Square, PA 19348. Thank you for volunteering your organization, Esther Rochester.

Email: erochester024@gmail.com

Information about the meeting site: Rev. Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins (Pastor Ace) has been at First Baptist Church of Kennett Square for three months as the “Intentional Interim Pastor.” He is very excited that we are here. Nancy Nicewonger and Nick Everhart welcomed us as well.

Pastor Ace came to serve and extend the good work that the former pastors had started. First Baptist Church began to distinguish itself as a church that also worked beyond the church walls making community connections. JAM is their preschool, which is incredibly inclusive. Mid-Day Miracles, Pastor Dan started, meets at noon 5 days a week and in the evening to help with sobriety. Dave Haradon asked what Pastor Ace meant by “intentional interim pastor.” He said that it is an active pastor and a coach to a church team, to work through the stages of recruiting for a permanent pastor. He served for 25 years as a military chief officer pastor, served a 1,200-member congregation and many more roles. He serves as Mayor of Collegeville. Email: revace@ksqfbc.com

Minutes of *Bridging* meetings are posted on the web site: www.bridgingthecommunity.org 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 had **Pastor Ace** lead us in a moment of thanks, then shared Bridging’s Framework and shared the Guiding Principles. Email: kwickersham@lchservices.org, jeannecrew491@hotmail.com, aldstad@gmail.com

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

Living Philosophy: 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.

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

Kate Wickersham, our Bridging the Community Leader asked NEW people at the meeting, to share about why they were here and any bridges they hope to make

Email: kwickersham@lchservices.org

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

Thalia Medina (CCMCHC) told us that they help with Snap Benefits. There is a need to go into the homes and provide the Parents as Teachers curriculum. This helps parents become more involved in their children's lives, help with clothing, and rent. We focus on the kids but also the whole family, there are families with no relatives here. Loves seeing the kids grow. Flyer- 7/29-8/8 Kindergarten transition program at Mary D Lang Kindergarten Center from 9-1 and will ride the bus, breakfast and lunch provided. If interested call 610-344-5370 x. 122. Email – tmedina@ccmchc.org

Racquel (Community Member) – lives in the Kennett Borough – wanted to see what is going on. Email – not provided

Derrick Watkins – interested in serving the community. Moved to Lansdale and is currently a schoolteacher, military, 20 year teacher, started a business in Virginia Beach – works with organizations (specifically United Way) to help them secure grant funding to keep them financially stable. Wants to take people from homelessness to homes, wants to help get rid of people's debt. Email him for more information. Email – dwatkins1926@gmail.com

Rana Sakar (Kennett Library Assistant) – this is her second meeting. Leads health awareness through the library but also attends from the heart. Organizes "Live Better" at the Kennett Library. Anyone interested may join in the planning process on the first Thursday of the Month 10-12pm. July 27th – will be talking about substance abuse (smoking, alcohol, opioids). Please share and join. July 29th will share a movie about childhood trauma, movie will be about recovery. August 3rd about women's health. Open and free to everyone.

[Education & Resources on Substance Use Disorder - LibCal - Chester County Library System](#)

["Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope" film screening & panel discussion - LibCal - Chester County Library System](#)

In August – women's health

[Intergenerational YoQi with Jan - LibCal - Chester County Library System](#)

[Menstrual Health and Medicinal Plants - a library talk and a garden walk - LibCal - Chester County Library System](#)

[Milk & Cookies: Q&A Session On Lactation - LibCal - Chester County Library System](#)

Email: rsakr@ccls.org

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

Janet Zeis (KACS) told us that she wants us to visit the Farmers Market from 3-6pm, every Friday. KACS and Home of the Sparrow is hiring, please see her if you're interested. Join for Bridges of Poverty training on September 13th from 9-12:30pm for an in-person workshop. Email janet@kacsimpact.org

Susan Rzucidlo (Mayor of Avondale) told us that they are working to make Avondale better – please let her know if you need anything. They will have an ADA approved playground, first ever, by the end of the year. Email – mayorsusan@avondaleboro.net

Jim Mercante (Community Volunteer) told us that he is on the Advisory Board of MCHC and learned that their clients struggle with transportation for appointments and workshops. He is in conversation with Tim Phelps – they talked about some creative ways to use TMAC – if anyone has events that are transportation hindered, please let Jim Mercante know. As for becoming digitally literate, please connect with Jim or Joan Holliday if you have a smart phone and would like to learn how to use it better. Email: vjmercante@gmail.com

Joan Holliday shared the information that Pastor Dan Nicewonger had passed on. He was the first to suggest this location for the July meeting. Please share a word that reminds you of him and write it on the chart pad at “bridging” time. She also reminded attendees that the Artelo boutique hotel will have an Open House on Thursday, July 11, 2024 from 6 to 8pm. All fourteen rooms will have murals painted by 14 different artists, celebrating community diversity. Come meet the artists and enjoy the artwork! Email - dochollisv@aol.com

Nancy Nicewonger (Caring Conversations) – created a book about the conversations you should have before you die or are going through difficult times. The book is on Amazon. She and Nick Everhart bring people together through a podcast called, “A Place in the Conversation.” Her full-time job is at First Stop in Philadelphia, which provides education for Early Learning teachers. Email – nnicewonger@gmail.com

Nick Everhart (member of this church and Board Member of A Place and a Conversation). Nick read the mission statement. Held a lot of these conversations with many organizations. Wants to give everyone a voice. He is looking for persons or organizations to interview for the podcast. Email – nickeverhart@verizon.net

Bob George (Kennett Highschool Alumni Association) told us that he is the President of the Board. They give out 4 scholarships. They support the arts and theater. The Alumni cares about Kennett. We must get the kids right and then they will take care of the community. Support and help do more for the students. \$10 to become a member friend. Email – georgert@gmail.com

Jeanna Searer (Casa Guanajuato) – 600 S. Broad Street – July 27th – will have vendors and many other things. September 14th Mexican Independence Day – pictures and all kinds of things. Day of the Dead 11/1-2 will hold workshops. New members are coming in but also always need new members. Email – jeannecrew491@hotmail.com

Brett Dolente (Legal Women Voters of PA) – will be at the library on Tuesdays – ask where the voter lady is! Email – brettdolente@gmail.com

Dave Haradon (Longwood Rotary Club) – service above self – three rotary clubs in the area. Each club meets at different times. They are building a new playground! Please get in touch if you want to join. They have money, energy and fun! Email – daveharadon@gmail.com

Molly Hampson (Mighty Writers) told us to save the date for New Garden Township Community Day Saturday October 5th – if you would like to be a vendor, please let Molly know and save the date. Email – mhampson@mightywriters.org

Kate Wickersham (LCH) She told us that LCH turns no one away, insurance or no insurance. LCH provides quality care for anyone interested in attending. Fundraiser will take place on 9/19/2024 Paradox Vineyard – fun night with salsa lessons, taco truck, wine tasting, something fun this year. LCH needs funds for supplies; for diabetes strips and health care screenings. August 4th -10th – National Health Center Week – share your organization’s information so LCH can then share information at their fair on August 1st. Email - kwickersham@lchservices.org

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

- Jim Mercante “bridged” with Nick Everhart providing 5 names of persons who are podcast possibilities for “A Place in the Conversation.” Jim also “bridged” with Susan Long, who he will connect with RSVP Volunteers to help her with her smart phone
- Dave Haradon “bridged” with Kate Wickersham and has two good sources for LCH.
- Kate Wickersham and Molly Hampson “bridged” about the LCH community event, and Mighty Writers will participate.
- Nick Everhart “bridged” with Molly Hampson about Mighty Writers.
- Susan Rzucidlo and Dave Haradon bridged about the playground and talked about the foam later.
- Derrick Watkins “bridged” with several non-profits about financial stability consultation.
- Joan Holliday “bridged” with Racquel, who would like a salt water public pool in Kennett giving her contact information for Kennett Borough Council President. She also “bridged” with Bob George to become a KHS Alumni Friend. Joan took a video of Derrick and Susan for the website. Joan will “bridge” Derreck Watkins with Terry Vodery, CEO of United Way of SCC.
- Jeanne Searer shared about KACS reusable bags at the Farmer’s Market – color the pictures on the bag and continue to reuse them please!
- Rana Sakar “bridged” with First Baptist Church about substance seminar. She “bridged” with Derrick Watkins about veteran’s mental health. Talked about transportation with Jim Mercante. She “bridged” with Nick Everhart about using the library AV room for the podcast and will try and get it approved.

"Words that describe Dan Nicewonger as his spirit lives on:

Committed friend; Passionate; Kind; Happy; Grateful person; Caring; Servant; Faithful; Leader; Encourager; Activator; Community organizer; Community promoter