

***Bridging the Community*** meeting was held at New Garden U.A.M.E Church, 309 E. Linden Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348 on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. This is our 156<sup>th</sup> meeting with 30 attendees.

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm at Kennett Presbyterian Church, 211 S. Broad St., Kennett Square, PA 19348.**

**Rev. Beverly Bell, Pastor of New Garden U.A. M. E. led us in a prayer and offered Information about the meeting site:** After giving a warm welcome to attendees, she told us that New Garden Memorial U.A.M.E. Church had its beginnings in 1825 as the African Union Church on the border of New Garden Township; it moved to Kennett Square in 1910.

The church supported Harriett Tubman's efforts around the Underground Railroad. She shared that they have a small but mighty congregation that works inside and outside the church. She recognized Esther Rochester and Crystal Crampton, who were in attendance as strong contributors.

She reported that a bathroom was recently installed downstairs, which was needed for social and meal gatherings. She welcomed everyone to a brunch on Sunday, 9/15 after the 10:30am service, which is open to the community every Sunday. Email: [bgbell231@aol.com](mailto:bgbell231@aol.com)

Joan Holliday led everyone in a Moment of Silence in honor of the 911 victims and families and for peace in our world. She passed out seed packets as a symbol, because since the start of Bridging, the broader vision is that "We are seeds for world peace."

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

**Kate Wickersham, Jeanna Searer and Liliana Guzman** welcomed everyone. Kate shared Bridging's Framework and Jeanne shared the Guiding Principles. Liliana served as Spanish interpreter. Email: [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org), [jeannecrew491@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannecrew491@hotmail.com); [Liliana.guzman@garageyouthcenter.org](mailto:Liliana.guzman@garageyouthcenter.org)

**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 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** (Bridging the Community Facilitator) asked NEW people at the meeting, to share about why they were here and any bridges they hope to make  
Email: [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

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

**Maurice Corporal** (Community) said he is new here and has financial difficulties with a family. He lives across the street from the church and wanted to see if could get help. Email: [topsnottc.boiz@gmail.com](mailto:topsnottc.boiz@gmail.com)

**Alejandra Orozco** (CCMCHC) told us that she is the Manager of Life Skills Family Group Decision Making model and is getting the word out. This model brings together families and their support people to develop a plan to address concerns of child well-being and safety. MCHC currently receives referrals from Children Youth and Families and invites other organizations to make referrals. They help facilitate issues with a social worker for 3 sessions—pre-conference: main conference and post-conference. Email: [aorozco@ccmchc.org](mailto:aorozco@ccmchc.org)

**Rikki Bardzik** (Delaware Technical Community College) has been there for a year and one-half and works with the Open Access Program Services. She is attending to learn more of what the community would like to have available. Email: [rbardzik@dccc.edu](mailto:rbardzik@dccc.edu)

**Tina Ayala** (Realtor) told us that she is running for State Representative in the 158<sup>th</sup> District. She is attending to learn more about the community. She shared the information that Mighty Writes needs donated clothes for children birth to high school age. Email: [tayala12@gmail.com](mailto:tayala12@gmail.com)

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

**Sofia Soto** (CCMCHC) told us that MCHC also provides home visiting for child development. They have a case manager working with fathers. They are receiving referrals. They also have a lawyer that is available to help with immigration issues. Email: [ssoto@ccmchc.org](mailto:ssoto@ccmchc.org)

**Janet Zeis** (KACS) told us that 4 local Fire Companies held a food drive and collected 973 pounds of food. She also reported that Chatham Financial bought over 1,000 pounds of rice and beans and employees sorted them into one-pound bags as volunteers. She is looking for organizations that are willing to organize a food drive for Thanksgiving for the meal staples that support the turkeys that KACS provides.

Bridges Out of Poverty training will take place this Friday 9/13 at the Kennett Library Chestnut Room and a Poverty Simulation workshop on 10/25/2024 from 10am to 1pm at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 116 Lancaster Pike, Oxford, PA 19363. Contact Janet to sign-up. Email: [janet@kacsimpact.org](mailto:janet@kacsimpact.org)

**Paola Rosas** (After the Bell) told us that they will starting their after-school programming for middle schoolers at the Kennett Middle School starting September 24<sup>th</sup> for 6 weeks. They are in session Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Volunteers are needed to share a talent, skill or offer support as volunteers, who may offer any amount of time to help. Email: [paola.rosas@afterthebell.org](mailto:paola.rosas@afterthebell.org)

**Jeanne Searer** (Casa Guanajuato) told us that there will be a Fiesta at 600 South Broad Street in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month this Saturday 9/14 from 1-7pm and After Party at the Creamery. Everyone is welcome. They also will participate in Third Thursday. Dia de Muertas will also be celebrated at the same location and will take place the first weekend in November. Email: [jeannecrew491@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannecrew491@hotmail.com)

**Jim Mercante** (Community) told us that he and Joan Holliday continue to work as Co-Chairs of the Chester County Digital Alliance (CCDA) to help Chester County residents develop digital skills, as well as have access to Internet and devices. Grant proposals are being written to support digital navigators. Please get the word out that we will be looking for Spanish-speaking Digital Navigators. He also gave the example of technology---a hearing aid to be used through EarPods and a Bluetooth hook-up that would be available with one's I-Phone. Email: [vjmercante@gmail.com](mailto:vjmercante@gmail.com)

**Susan Long** (Community) told us that at the last Bridging meeting she "bridged" with Jim Mercante, who contacted RSVP Volunteers. Susan has a RSVP digital navigator by Zoom who has helped her with several digital tech issues. Email: [susandlong15@gmail.com](mailto:susandlong15@gmail.com)

**Rev. Marvin T Williams** (2<sup>nd</sup> Baptist Church) told us about the "Gospel Celebration" honoring Pyerce Oates (accomplished pianist, who started in Kennett churches at 10 years old and now is a college graduate and an organist for a church in Philadelphia.) Other choirs will be present; First Baptist Church Choir; Mt Zion AME Choir Atglen; Gwen Jones of Mt. Zion U.A. M.E. Newark DE and Evangelist Lisa Jackson. It will take place on Saturday, 10/12/2024 from 1pm to 4pm at the new Kennett Library. Tickets are \$20. Call 610-384-3243. No tickets sold at the door. Email: [drwilliams9812@gmail.com](mailto:drwilliams9812@gmail.com)

**Derrick Watkins** (Community) told us that he is 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. He also represented The **Mission Continues** organization which is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit organization<sup>[2]</sup> that aims to empower military veterans to apply their skills and leadership abilities to benefit under-resourced communities. He would be able to bring a group of veterans to our area to work on a community project. Email him for more information. Email – [dwatkins1926@gmail.com](mailto:dwatkins1926@gmail.com)

**Susan Rzucidlo** (Mayor of Avondale) told us that Mighty Writers needs three donated desktop computers. Email: [mayorsusan@avondaleboro.net](mailto:mayorsusan@avondaleboro.net)

**Joan Holliday** (Community) told us about the Kennett Community Coffee Klatch, which meets every Thursday from 10:30am to 11:45am at the Kennett Library, Oak Room. All community members are invited to learn more about the upcoming events; volunteer opportunities in the community and to make new community friends. [dochollisv@aol.com](mailto:dochollisv@aol.com)

**Nick Everhart** (member of this church and Board Member of "A Place and a Conversation") Nick was in attendance looking for potential interviewees for the podcasts he

and Nancy Nicewonger conduct for “A Place in the Conversation.” Email – [nickeverhart@verizon.net](mailto:nickeverhart@verizon.net)

**Kate Wickersham** (LCH) told us that LCH provides a safety net for the vulnerable population and offers health and social services to all community members. They take insurance and have a sliding scale fee. They are ready to give flu and COVID vaccines at their Health Clinic and the CC Health Department has several clinics in SCC. Practice. Check out their web sites and make an appointment. Remember LCH has Behavioral Health services, as well as dental, OBGYN and Family Medicine. Email - [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

**Nolan Morris** (Community) told us of his interest in Environmental Education especially about the plant community. He is open to work with any age group about nature---rivers, timber, clay etc. Email: [morrisnj1010@gmail.com](mailto:morrisnj1010@gmail.com)

**Karen D’Agusto** (Girl Scouts) told us that she is recruiting Girl Scouts. The first year is free until 9/21/2024. There is a fun movie night at the Kennett Library featuring Troop Beverly Hills on 9/25/2024 from 6-8pm. Open to the entire community.

Local Girl Scout Service Unit is having an Introduction to Girl Scouts on 10/18 from 6:30pm to 7:30pm at Mary D. Lang. RSVP at: [gsvsu610@gmail.com](mailto:gsvsu610@gmail.com)

Welcome back to Girl Scouting on Sunday 10/06 at the Brandywine Valley Red Clay Alliance Contact Karen for free tickets. Contact Tiffany Stockton at [tstockton@gsep.org](mailto:tstockton@gsep.org) or 267-965-6180. Karen’s email: [kdagusto@aol.com](mailto:kdagusto@aol.com)

**Crystal Ayala** (Early Learning Resource Center) told us that they have assistance for childcare and for qualifying families pays from 6 weeks to 13 years. They work with HeadStart’s; Early HeadStart; Early Intervention; Pre-School Special Education; Pre-K Counts and others. Please get the word out about their support for young children. Email: [crystal@cciu.org](mailto:crystal@cciu.org)

### **Announcements:**

The Chester County Bar Association is offering a \$5,000 Hon. Charles B. Smith Scholarship to a Chester County high school who plans to pursue a law-related career. Deadline is 3/23/2025. [www.chescobar.org/scholarships](http://www.chescobar.org/scholarships)

The United Way of SCC is conducting an AI Skill Athon for money prizes. Check out the registration at [www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org) and instructions. This is only being held through the month of September. Contact: [development@unitedwayscc.org](mailto:development@unitedwayscc.org) for questions.

Chester County Drug & Alcohol will host a Free Admission to Treehouse World, 1440 Phoenixville Pike, West Chester, PA 1938 on 10/12/2024 from 10am to noon. Register: <http://scheduleme.link/5753/> All children must be accompanied by an adult.

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

- Jim Mercante “bridged” with Sofia Soto about digital skills with MCH and with Susan Rzucidlo about Mighty Writers need for 3 desk top computers. Jim and Joan to follow-up.

- Nick Everhart “bridged” with Nolan about him being a guest interviewee for “A Place in the Conversation” podcast about the environment and nature.
- Kate Wickersham “bridged” with Nick Everhart about interviewing Margarita Garay-Zarco for “A Place in the Conversation.”
- Joan Holliday “bridged” with Rev. Marvin T. Williams around the Gospel Celebration buying 3 tickets. Tom Hoehle also bought 4 tickets. She “bridged” with Susan Long about the AI Skill-Athon registration and process.
- Janet Zeis “bridged” with Rev. Williams and Joan Holliday about possible organizations or companies that would manage a food drive for Thanksgiving dinner items to compliment the turkeys given out by KACS.
- Maurice Corporal “bridged” with Crystal Ayala about financial support for childcare and Pre-K Counts and Kate Wickersham around LCH services.
- Susan Long “bridged” with Rikki Bardzik around art classes at Delaware Community College and Nolan Morris about his interest in nature and ways to bring that to the community.
- Derrick Watkins “bridged” with Jeanne Searer about volunteers for Hispanic Heritage month and other Casa Guanajuato events.
- Alejandra Orozco passed out flyers about Family Group Decision Making.
- Karen D’Agusto passed out flyers to recruit Girl Scouts.
- Keith Smithyman “bridged” with Joan Holliday asking her to get the word out that he needs electrical extension cords, lights to hang in a garage to work on old cars for those in need. (The Garage does not have electricity, so will need to connect with the house.)

The attendees thanked New Garden U.A.M.E. for their warm hospitality. Five church members were present.