

Bridging the Community meeting was held on Zoom with the Kennett Library as the host on Wednesday, January 08, 2025, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. This is our 158th meeting with 25 attendees. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm at the Kennett Library, 320 E. State St., Kennett Square, PA 19348.

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 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 facilitated the meeting.

Joan Holliday shared the framework. The motivation starts from coming from the heart and wanting to contribute to the broader community. The way we do this is adopt a community role that takes its direction from the Vision: "Kennett Square: Every day a better place to grow up in and grow old in" and our living philosophy: peaceful, progressive, inclusivity. Email: dochollisv@aol.com

Jeanne Searer went over the Guiding Principles. Email: jeannecrew491@hotmail.com

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

Participants reflected on the framework and principles and said that they see that the people attending the meeting are "coming from the heart." There is a sense of empowerment that occurs once one sees the possibilities of bridging and not being alone in one's work. There is a spirit of inclusivity that the living philosophy reflects.

Kate explained Zoom etiquette and the Bridging process, which would happen in the moment on Zoom and not at the last part of the meeting, as we do in person.

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

Kate Wickersham: Facilitator shared that Kennett Library is hosting a Volunteer Fair on Saturday, March 22nd. Contact Carol Crane at: crcrane@ccls.org to sign-up for a table or volunteer.

Esther Rochester (Community) said that she lost her Reading teacher in preparation for her GED. She would like help with reading and math and could meet on Friday mornings from 9:30am to 11:00am or Saturday mornings. Email: Erchester24@gmail.com

BRIDGES: Jeanne Searer has a teacher friend who just retired so will ask if she could help.

Joan Holliday will talk to Filomena Elliott at the Kennett Library to explore possibilities.

Liliana Guzman at The Garage said they have math tutors that she could explore.

Crystal Ayala told her that the Oxford library has GED classes.

LaNisha Cassell (Voices Underground) started at Square Roots Collective Underground Railroad Initiative. She provides storytelling programs locally for racial healing. There will be a Voices Underground free program in collaboration with Kennett Library on Saturday, January 18th at 10am in commemoration of MKL Day. It's a story time for 5–10-year-olds and their families. In addition to the story, they will giveaway copies of the book, have a craft, and a snack. Registration is on Eventbrite. Email: lcassell@ksqroots.com

Jim Mercante: Working on “Internet for All” with digital access, devices and literacy with Joan Holliday and the Chester County Digital Alliance. Does anyone want to be trained as a volunteer to be a digital navigator? There is training through RSVP Volunteers, and one could do training by Zoom if preferred. Email: vjmercante@gamil.com

Tom Hoehle (Community) said he had an idea for Esther Rochester’s desire to have a GED tutor. Are there any high school students at The Garage Community & Youth Center who would like to engage this process as a volunteer project? To discuss with Lilianna Guzman. Email: tomhoehle@yahoo.com

Rana Sakr (Live Better) told us that she has developed, along with a committee, health programming to educate the public and empower them to make better health decisions/health literacy at the Kennett library for the past year. She is now an independent community health coordinator, who will continue to provide services at the Kennett library and extend her consulting services to other Chester County libraries.

At the Kennett library there is a Live Better committee meeting every first Thursday of the month at 10am. (The next is 2/6/25 at 10am) All are welcome to bring new ideas and programs. She is especially interested in exploring how to address the challenges of good nutrition and will meet with collaborators in March 2025 to develop programming. She connects with the idea of health navigators and would like to explore how to implement. Email: rana.sakr.salem@gmail.com

Sara Wein (NAMI Chester County) told us that this is an organization that provides support to individuals and families who experience mental illness. They want to expand into Southern Chester County. They are offering at the Kennett library a “Family to Family” eight- week sessions, starting Wednesday, January 22 from 6pm to 8:30pm. It ends March 12. NAMI offers virtual and in-person support group. They are taking registrations. Email: swein@namichescopa.org

BRIDGES: Tyra Reeves and Laura Gonzalez would like to “bridge” with NAMI

Cristian Luna Valente (LCH Health & Community Services) told us that LCH. 732 W. Cypress St., Kennett Square, PA will be having a ribbon cutting on Thursday 1/20/25 with a new pharmacy opening at 5:30pm Everyone is invited. Board of Directors meeting to follow at 6pm and open to the public. Email: clunavalente@lchservices.org **BRIDGES:** Dave Nuttall and

Anabel Ocegüera will be attending. Dave asked if the pharmacy will be opened to the public. Kate explained that initially it will be for patients. LCH takes all insurances, Medicare and Medicaid and has a sliding scale fee for those who cannot pay. It helps if an insured person becomes a LCH patient because it helps subsidize those who have no medical insurance. Dave considering this option.

Debbie and Adrian Burston (Underground Railroad) told us that 723 E. Baltimore Pike, Kennett Square, PA 19348 (near the Fairfield Inn hotel) is going to be renovated. It is at the Gateway of Harriett Tubman and the Brandywine Scenic Highway. This site housed 2,000 runaway slaves seeking freedom. They are seeking grants and are receiving support from Kennett Township and other organizations. They are pleased that this is becoming a reality and will be a "Forever House." Email: dlburston@gmail.com

Crystal Crampton (President of the Underground Railroad; life-long member of New Garden Memorial church and board member of KACS) told us that she appreciates Debbie and Adrian Burstons' role in helping, as well as John Haedrich, who helps with grant writing. She promoted the KACS capital campaign for a new building on Cypress Street that will support all of SCC for food and social services. She spoke about the value of history and giving more attention on the UGRR. Email: crampton.crystal@yahoo.com

Chad Thomas (CC Hospital) said that CC Hospital is also hoping to expand more services in SCC. There will be a Clinic event in Coatesville on Monday, January 13th with a \$10 GIANT gift certificate. There will be a Clinic in Kennett on February 24 in English and Spanish. He will recruit at Kennett Area Community Services. **BRIDGES:** Crystal Ayala; Crystal Crampton and SILO in SCC would like to explore ways to help CC Hospital expand into SCC with Chad.

Tyra Reeves (Founder of *Just My Reflection*) in honor of her son, Jordan Michael G Reeves Foundation. They hold a support group – every third Thursday of the month. Join this month's Wellness Group, which deals with grief related to loss on Thursday, January 16 from 6:30pm to 7:30pm at the Galilee Union American Methodist Episcopal Church in Avondale, PA., 311 E. Third St. Avondale, PA 19311. Special Guest is Kathy Hrenko, an Art Therapist ATR-BC. She said they are also looking for sponsorships. Email: Tyrareeves@justmyreflection.org

Edie Burkey (President of Kennett Community Grocer) told us that their plans to have a store at 600 S. Broad did not work out. They are looking at several other options, one being that Kennett 460 members would combine with West Chester's new food co-op for a year or so and then determine if having a store in Kennett area is desired. The Board is still looking for a suitable site in the Kennett area along the Baltimore Pike corridor. If anyone has a possibility, please contact Edie. Email: eburkey@comcast.net

Joan Holliday (Community) reminded the group that we have two active Human Need life-lines available to us thanks to the work of Chester County Department of Human Services. Dialing 211, you will learn about resources available to meet human needs and dial 988 for Crisis. The term "crisis" is intended for however you experience a crisis. Get the word out to your clients and employees to draw on the help of these resources. Email: dochollisv@aol.com

Anabel Oceguera (CCMCHC) told us that since 1991 they continue to provide their services to prenatal clients through Healthy Start. They also have a Kindergarten Readiness program and the Family Center and help with signing up for medical coverage for families. Email: aoceguera@ccmchc.org

Jeanne Searer (Community) told us that there will be a MLK Eve service on Sunday, January 19, 2025, at 4pm at **St. Michael's Lutheran Church**, 109 e. Doe Run Road, Unionville, PA

19375. The Kennett Community choir along with high school students from Unionville and Kennett and the Mt. Horeb Guatemalan choir will be singing, Several faith communities will be represented in the service. Everyone is invited. Email: jeannecrew491@hotmail.com

Natalia Santiago – Kennett Collaborative/Square Roots - Voices Underground, Kennett Trails Alliance. The Three King's Day event at the Creamery that had live camels was well attended and enjoyed by many Latino families. Kennett Collaborative helps nonprofits through events at the Creamery and wants all cultures to feel welcomed. Email: nsantiagovazquez@ksqroots.com

Crystal Ayala (Chester County ELRC) In attendance but did not speak. Her agency helps with financial support for day care for low-income. Email: CrystalA@cciu.org

David Nuttall (Friends Meeting) told us that they have Kennett Friends Fund for Immigrant Support <https://kennettfriends.org/friends-for-immigrant-support/> This is intended to meet the need when an immigrant doesn't fit into any of the non-profit requirements for service. He also spoke to the importance of supporting our immigrants, beyond their status, as they are victims of a broken immigration system. He is attending monthly meetings organized by Leah Reynolds, CEO of KACS to develop approaches to provide support with the actions that will be taken by the new administration. Email: barbdave1@msn.com

The last ten minutes of the meeting was devoted to talking about the difference that attending a Bridging the Community makes in one's work and community life.

David Nuttall from the community spoke about how in one meeting, he is brought in contact with a host of organizations. It is not only very efficient, but it also helps him experiences a "sense of community" when we promote "bridging."

Kate Wickersham from LCH said she feels more a part of the broader community after attending a Bridging meeting and has developed caring, community relationships because of Bridging. She admits it is difficult to come out to an evening meeting, yet always leaves feeling, "It was worth it."

Joan Holliday said that Bridging helps her experience the evolution of the community and the emerging new faces and voices. She is happy to refer people to resources, in the time between meetings, because she has learned about the resources at Bridging.

Tyra Reeves "bridged" with Kathy Hrenko, art therapist, at the meeting in November 2024 and now Kathy will be the Presenter at Tyra's next Wellness Group meeting. This is an example of how organizations can leverage each other's strengths and contributions.