

Bridging the Community meeting was held at the Kennett Library, 320 E. State St., Kennett Square, PA 19348 on Wednesday, March 12, 2025, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. This is our 159th meeting with 38 spirited attendees. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, from 7:00-8:30pm at the Kennett Area Senior Center.

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** facilitated the meeting. **Lou Florence** shared about The Kennett Library. All are welcome, the library has your back no matter what and the library is here for you. Their mission is to serve the community. **Email:** [lflorence@ccls.org](mailto:lflorence@ccls.org), [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

**Kate Wickersham** led us in a moment of reflection. Kate 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:** [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

Jeanne Searer went over the Guiding Principles. Email: [jeannecrew491@hotmail.com](mailto: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 how open the meeting is, coming from the heart and how welcoming it feels at Bridging. There was reflection on returning to Bridging and the power of the guiding principles.

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

**Judy Fishkind** (Community Member) - Moved here recently – wanted to know more about the community. Did recently write about the library – Heard about us on Facebook. Email: [judy.b.fishkind@gmail.com](mailto:judy.b.fishkind@gmail.com)

**Todd Fishkind** (Community Member) – newly retired and wanting to connect with the community. Two weeks ago, he started the Romeo Club (Retired Old Men Eating Out) which meets on Tuesdays at 10:30AM at The Market at Liberty Place for men to socialize and have a place to go. A great group to have in the community. Check out the Face book page. Email: [judy.b.fishkind@gmail.com](mailto:judy.b.fishkind@gmail.com)

**Betsy Ballard** (Community Member) – Retired Mom who saw about Bridging on FB and then went to the website – wanted a group to connect, volunteer and maybe something that meets more often. Email: [joyfulspirit2007@yahoo.com](mailto:joyfulspirit2007@yahoo.com)

**Chelsea Wirth** (Community Member) – Local Mom with 3 Kids – Volunteers often and wanted to meet and connect with different energies in the room. Email: [wirthmomchels@gmail.com](mailto:wirthmomchels@gmail.com)

**Meg Patterson** (Community Member) – moved here 2023 – Seeking employment – looking for a new job and came to see what this group was about. Email: [mpattersonas@yahoo.com](mailto:mpattersonas@yahoo.com)

**Christina Johnston** (Friends Home Marketing) – nonprofit looking for volunteers and how to get people involved with their residents. Email: [CJohnston@fhkennett.org](mailto:CJohnston@fhkennett.org)

**Sarahi Gutierrez** (Maternal and Child Health Consortium) – home visiting programs – soon will be able to provide doula services – always looking to connect with others. Email: [sgutierrez@ccmchc.org](mailto:sgutierrez@ccmchc.org)

**Joan and Kent Spinger** (Community Member) – 20 years in education and health care and now retired. Wants to help the community. Email: [joanspringer81@gmail.com](mailto:joanspringer81@gmail.com)

**Daniel Embree** (Kennett Collaborative) – hold many events in Kennett. He is here to learn about the community and what is happening. Working on changing over the spring planters in town. Ready for spring! Email: [daniel@kennettcollaborative.org](mailto:daniel@kennettcollaborative.org)

**Nanci Hersh** (Community Member) - Working with different materials, working with different projects and people. She was working with bringing art to Delaware. She is now back in Kennett and would like to connect. Email: [nancihersh@gmail.com](mailto:nancihersh@gmail.com)

**Dirya Desai** (Community Member) - Looking for volunteer opportunities for her and her children. Looking at the Library and Senior Center. Read the minutes and felt like she knew people from the minutes. Email: [desaifamily001@gmail.com](mailto:desaifamily001@gmail.com)

**Carol Crane** (Kennett Library) – runs the Volunteer fair and all volunteers. Volunteer Fair happens twice a year – 3/22/2025 10am – 2pm, open to public. 40 people coming right now and talk with the community and work on getting volunteers. Email: [ccrane@ccls.org](mailto:ccrane@ccls.org)

**Elena Hadley** (Community Member) - came here 7 years ago to train horses – managing Brandywine Creek. Trying to spend more time in town. Wants to keep the community resilient and strong. Email: [ehadley@brandywine.org](mailto:ehadley@brandywine.org)

**Tina Skinner** (Community Member) - Career in writing and editing. Ready to connect with the broader community and looking for venues to engage. Email: [Tina.Skinner@rocketmail.com](mailto:Tina.Skinner@rocketmail.com)

### **Other Attendees shared their needs and resources**

**Jim Mercante** (Community) – working for 4 years on digital equity. Pleased to announce \$75,000 grant from Longwood Foundation and able to hire two part time digital navigators for helping with the internet and all that comes with that. 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](mailto:vjmercante@gamil.com)

**Lou Florence** – Spring at the Library – Meadowitos (Pollinator Gardens) will be installed at the library. There is a large one at Kennett YMCA. Need volunteers to tend and help with gardens. New project (not quite ready) Tree Share – as you look at all the tree seedlings in your yard, dig them up, repot them, hold them and then come to the Kennett Library on Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10am to noon to offer to someone who would like to plant a tree in his/her yard. Seed library is up and running and please know you can start a garden with just three seeds. Lou has a need for help packaging seeds. Email: [Lflorence@ccls.org](mailto:Lflorence@ccls.org)

**Trevor Pruitt** (Clinical Herbalist/Mental Health) – 3/30 Event. Working on an event for the summer to be more integrated with mental health and access to nature. Looking for some leads about large kitchens in West Grove/Landenberg area. He has a Community Herbal Garden. Email: [trevorpruitt@gmail.com](mailto:trevorpruitt@gmail.com)

**Cierra Walker** (Recovery Coach) – Coatesville Events – Coatesville Voices March 19<sup>th</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm – Wants to focus on Community Capacity Building (hopefully will have childcare) gathering for Coatesville to find out what they need. Black Women of Chester County – Learn how to bring in healing through moving our bodies. First event is April and will be doing a “Walk it Out.” Book club held at the Library – focus on Queer authors. Last time Cierra attending a bridging meeting she wanted to find a space for Queer recovery support meetings and she bridged with Susan, who offered her a free space with a key and had their first meeting in December and are still going strong. Email: [cierra89walker@gmail.com](mailto:cierra89walker@gmail.com)

**Tina Skinner** (Community Member) - Women in Recovery – Need help with gardening/looking for volunteers. This non-profit is in Wilmington, DE. Email: [Tina.Skinner@rocketmail.com](mailto:Tina.Skinner@rocketmail.com)

**Joan Holliday** (Bridging Community) – the Kennett Community Grocer – wonderful concept, you are a member and they’re promoting healthy locally grown food. Need to have 400 members to open. They will meet on April 10<sup>th</sup> from 7-8:30pm at the Kennett Area Senior Center. Anyone may attend to learn more. Need more membership. They will do education on nutrition too. Joan also announced that every Thursday in the Library, Kennett Community Coffee Klatch meets from 10:30am to 11:45am. Email – [dochollisv@aol.com](mailto:dochollisv@aol.com)

**Daniel Embree (Kennett Collaborative)** - Kennett Square Memorial Day Parade – if you would like to be involved – go to their website [memorialdayparade.com](http://memorialdayparade.com). Email: [daniel@kennettcollaboarative.org](mailto:daniel@kennettcollaboarative.org)

**Molly Hampson (Mighty Writers)** – looking for camp space for younger kids from Mighty Writers this summer. Email: [mhampson@mightywriters.org](mailto:mhampson@mightywriters.org)

**Laura Wiechecki** (County) – free resources open to all related to Narcon and other first aid items. She has a ton of free resources. If you want to learn more about anything – please let her know. Also, with Master Gardeners. Master Gardner is a national organization. It is a group of very enthusiastic gardeners. Participating in the Mushroom Festival. Email: [lwiechecki@chesco.org](mailto:lwiechecki@chesco.org)

**Jeanne Searer** (Community) – 4/12 – Casa Guanajuato (a non-profit that promotes culture through events and education) There will be a cultural Tenochtli Dance Troupe at the Kennett Highschool – April 12, 2025 1pm English and 6pm Spanish. Beautiful dances and now working to raise money for the dances. Tickets are \$20. Email: [jeannecrew491@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannecrew491@hotmail.com)

**Kate Wickersham** (LCH) – Health and Social Services in three locations in SCC. In Kennett, 731 w. Cypress St. They serve the underserved, take all insurances and have a sliding scale fee. Bi-lingual Services include--Primary care, pediatric, OBGYN; and behavioral health with individual and group therapy. They opened a pharmacy and are thrilled to share! Young adults group therapy in Kennett is Tuesdays at 4pm. **Email:** [kwickersham@lchservices.org](mailto:kwickersham@lchservices.org)

**Chad Thomas** (Penn Medicine) – wanted to thank LCH, KACS and Library – recruited 33 people for heart healthy screenings and wanted to thank that they were able to help. Email: [Chad.Thomas@pennteam.upenn.edu](mailto:Chad.Thomas@pennteam.upenn.edu)

Rana Sakr (Live Better) was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following links to check out for community resources:

<https://ccls.libcal.com/event/13682144>

food access panel discussion

<https://ccls.libcal.com/event/12892680>

mental health for youth movie screening and QnA

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

- Molly Hampson and Susan Rzucidlo – “bridged” about Summer Camp at Avondale Borough Building or having it at the Garage (for their bathrooms) and then using the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Park. We’re more than welcome to use the Avondale Park across the street. Susan will reach out to Zion Church and one more.
- Molly Hampson and Sarahi Guterrez – “bridged” about using space at Mighty Writers for a coworker to have a space to help families with medical forms.
- Molly Hampson and Joan Springer – “bridged” about Joan volunteering at Mighty Writers.

- Nick Everhart “bridged” with Christina Johnston (Friends Home) and Todd Fishkind – he will be recording them for a Podcast on “A Place in The Conversation.”
- Lou Florence “bridged” with Susan Long about all the nature projects at the library and she will volunteer with the Meadowitos.
- Danielle “bridged” with Christina Johnston for Friends Home for Senior Living Guide Photos. And Derrick Watkins to come in for Art and Music
- Joan “bridged” with the Springers about becoming volunteers for digital literacy tutoring. Bridged with Lou Florence about interviewing her for a SCC Weeklies article and with Carol Krane about the library’s volunteer fair on 3/22/25 from 10 to 2pm.
- Jim Mercante “bridged” with Dirya Desai – her son wanted to volunteer in digital literacy tutoring.
- Jeanne Searer “bridged” with Dirya Desai – her son wanting to volunteer for Casa Guanajuato
- Community Food Advocate from Chester County Foodbank and Crystal Ayala ([CrystalA@cciu.org](mailto:CrystalA@cciu.org)) from CCIU “bridged” about distribution center. Food prep and workshops. Jeanne Searer “bridged: and connected too. Having enough food is tough right now.
- Derrick Watkins – He has a company and works with nonprofits to be self-sufficient – Helps them define their vision and how to get there. Will be reaching out.
- Kate Wickersham “bridged” with Kathy Hrenko ([khrenko@comcast.net](mailto:khrenko@comcast.net)) for helping with Art Therapy
- Kate Wickersham “bridged” with Meg to link up with LCH’s social work services to receive support in finding a job.
- Laura Wiechecki “bridged” with Cierra Walker and her work in Coatesville and public spaces and Trevor with commercial kitchens.