

Bridging the Community meeting was held at Friends Meeting, 125 W. Sickle Street, Kennett Square, PA 19348 on Wednesday, March 11, 2026, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. This is our 164th meeting with 28 attendees.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at The Kennett Borough building, 600 S. Broad St., Kennett Square, PA from 7:00 to 8:30pm. July is traditionally a picnic, and a site is being planned by the Core Team.

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 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. Thanks to Kennett Meeting for hosting this meeting.

**Jessie Cocks, member of Kennett Friends Meeting gave us information about the site and the Quaker process:**

The downstairs has held meetings that helped create the affordable, preschool, Tick Tock, Early Learning Center and helped various churches getting their start. Quaker meeting uses Faith and Practice as queries about how to do meetings and peace and justice to guide every month. She said every Quaker meeting you go to is different. This Friends Meeting is probably more radical than the other area meetings. They sit in silence together, and anyone can get up and share their vocal ministry.

Kate Wickersham facilitated the meeting with Nefta Erroa. Kate and Nefta presented the overall framework of Bridging and the Guiding Principles:

The Framework for Bridging: Ground: Come from the heart; Goal Build Community; Instrument: Each person has a role to play; Vision: "Kennett Square every day a better place to grow up and grow old." place to grow up and grow old."

**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 group then engaged a Moment of Silence "in the spirit of peace."

Kate explained that her T-shirt was worn in honor of her friend on Jeopardy tonight.

Kate introduced members of the Bridging the Community meeting Core Team: Joan Holliday, Esther, Rochester Tom Hoehle, Tina Skinner, Nefta Erroa. They are always welcoming volunteers to serve on the Core Team

## **New Attendees Introduced themselves and made their requests or shared their offerings:** (Contact emails at end of the minutes)

### **NAME: Richard Gaw**

Long time editor for the Chester County Press, came for his first meeting. Said he'd like to do a short presentation. He said he has always been impressed by how connected Kennett Square is. Came to represent Mural Diaries, a group of local writers, who have sponsored and appeared at four different fundraising events of the spoken word. They have raised over \$6,000 for Kennett Area Community Services; the Delaware Institute for the Arts in Education; Yorklyn Center for the Creative Arts; and the Sharing Our Legacy Dance Company at the University of Delaware. He wants to partner with more organizations. The writers work as volunteers, donating their talents and providing an inspiring evening of spoken word.

### **NAME: Liz Lawson**

Came to the meeting on the referral of Rhonda. She is with Kennett Presbyterian and does a lot of work with mission partners. Feels connected to a lot of the local missions.

### **NAME: Sharon Dickinson**

Works for Home of the Sparrow Supportive Housing, helping single women connect with resources and partnerships for stable housing for up to twelve months to help them become able to pay their own rent, and offer social services. She said she is more familiar with West Chester but is not familiar with the Kennett area. Looking to connect with resources in southern parts of the county.

### **NAME: Hal Cohen**

A volunteer with the American Red Cross, working in community engagement. There are a lot of opportunities they offer to communities — education for children, smoke alarm installation, safety programs and presentations. They want to engage more in the community. He is available and encouraged people to reach out to him. He works with the shelter program to help people displaced by emergencies. One attendee reminded him that they offer an educational babysitting program. They also offer first aid and CPR presentations.

### **NAME: Delphina Castro**

Program Director of Young Moms came to her first meeting, hoping to connect with people and be involved in the community!

### **NAME: Norah Roth-Moore**

Member of Emerging Abundance Farming Collective. She invited anyone interested in growing food for the community and their families. Open garden sessions the first and third Sundays starting March 15th 10-12. Spring gathering March 28 at 3 pm. Located at Spar Hill Garden Preserve 434 Burnt Mill Road, Chadds Ford

### **Other Attendees shared their opportunities, needs and offerings:**

#### **NAME: John Eppinger**

He grew up in the eastern part of the county and moved back after many years of regional and district volunteering with Scouting America. . Still involved in Scouts, he wants to be involved locally, and he praised the seamless integration of girls into the scouting program and concerns about policy changes in the future.

#### **NAME: Rana Sakr**

Member of Kennett Square Presbyterian. They are launching a Moms and Tots program for the broader community on Wednesdays at 9 am at: 211 s. Broad St, Kennett Square; a free program to support moms with young toddlers.

#### **NAME: Pam Eppinger**

She promoted hiring a young man that she has worked with, who is starting a business to start handyman services, with a niche in people older, disabled, or in need. Also added that she has a contact who provides senior services.

#### **NAME: Jessie Cocks**

1) Brandywine PRIDE meeting this Monday, March 16 at 5:30-7:30 at the Kennett Collaborative Office. There will be a picnic Saturday May 30th at Anson B Nixon.

2) She invited everyone to the "Welcoming the Stranger" Lenten series offering dinner, singing, and an educational program with a family presenting their experience of a loved one being deported by ICE. Meetings began March 2 and continue on the 23rd at Oxford Presbyterian Church, March 30 at Episcopal Church of the Trinity in Coatesville. They are seeking hosts for future meetings.

3) Community Rising meets the third Sunday of every month (except holidays) from 2-4 pm at Kennett Meeting, offering a chance to build community with others who want to create positive change.

4) An AARP Tax aid will be at Kennett Friends Meeting March 12 from noon to 6. More info is available at [www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp-taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp-taxaide)

#### **NAME: Tom Hoehle**

Shared an opportunity to write letters of encouragement to people in ICE holding facilities via an attorney working with detainees. Letters can be addressed to HIAS PA, P.O. Box 8688, Philadelphia, PA 19101 c/o (name the person in deportation.) This is an opportunity to help someone out, offer encouragement. It's a great opportunity to get involved, he said.

**NAME Trevor Pruitt**

Resident told us that he is launching a pilot program called "plant nerd and clinical herbalist." He is offering a seven-week herbal intensive online training starting April 19th from 5-7 pm to explore the creation of ethnobotan. Also, a garden party will be scheduled later.

**NAME Joan Holliday**

Announced there will be a new Bridging the Community meeting for West Grove area on March 26, 2026, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at Penn Township Building. April and May meetings are also planned for the third Thursday. She also gave 3 books of "The Kennett Story: Shaping Our Future One Child at a Time" to new Bridging attendees.

**NAME: Cierra Walker**

She is a business owner created a pilot program Coatesville Voices, a collaborative mutual aid program where meetings are held to support each other. They have an opportunity to go countywide and need funding. I have never asked for funding before, she said.

**NAME: Karen D'Agusto**

1) She is a Board member of the previously called Kennett Senior Center, now called the Gathering Place. They are planning a fundraiser, a Casino Night April 25th at The Gathering Place and they are looking for sponsors interested in advertising to people over 55 and selling tickets.

2) Karen has postcards for mailing to Fetterman and McCormick to protest ice raids and troops and to support due process in Pennsylvania. She asked everyone to take two to mail.

**NAME: Irene Miller**

Said she holds concern for the aging population at the Friends Home in Kennett where she lives. She said no one comes to visit. It takes a little heart or faith or if you want to give a lecture. She said that they are dying for anything intellectual. Just say you want to visit. The residents spend too much time alone in their rooms.

**NAME: Kate Wickersham**

Representing LCH, talked about nutrition classes partnering with Penn State for individuals 5-19 years of age or adults with children at home. Starting in April, virtual classes every Wednesday beginning April 29 4:30-5:30 pm. If you are interested or know someone who might be, it's a great opportunity to help you make healthy meals.

**Name: Nefta Erroa**

He is a part-time digital navigator with RSVP Volunteers in the Kennett area. He invited people with any questions about how to use their laptops or phones and build digital literacy. He said his services are free to people in the Kennett Square area, funded by a grant. Call if you have any questions.

**The attendees then mingled and the following Bridges were made:**

Hal Cohen said he and Kate met at the time of the Oxford fire. The Red Cross tries to manage the chaos, and he spoke to Sue, the mayor at Avondale, about sheltering, and he would like to offer education and smoke alarm services in town. He also will be meeting with LCH

Jessie bridged with Emerging Abundance, the Kennett Square Presbyterian as a possible site for Welcoming the Stranger, and the Southern Chester County Rapid Response Network.

Karen D'Agusto "bridged" with Sharon from Home of the Sparrow and shared fundraising ideas, including Fulton Bank programs that might help others. And she handed out postcards

Joan Holliday "bridged" with Richard Gaw, who made with five non-profits that he hopes the Mural Diaries will work with. He also agreed to have Joan interview him for a news article in the Daily Local. She

Pam Eppinger with Sierra about grant writing, and LCH about dental health

Sharon Dickinson said there was a lot of information, and she "bridged" with Kate Wickersham from LCH; Nefta Erroa, Delphina Castro, Derrick Watkins and their five-year subsidies to buy houses.

Cierra Walker said "I am completely overwhelmed and thankful. Derrick Waltkins, Pam, Eppinger Sue Rzuidllo, and Kate Wickersham — everyone had ideas about how to look for grants, or even to help with writing them."

Susan Rzucidlo “bridged” with Nefta Erroa, who is going to help her with her phone and computer. She also “bridged” with Cierra Walker; Trevor Pruitt; Hal Cohen and Kate Wickersham.

Rana Sakr bridged with Dephina Castro from Young Moms to help caregivers grow self-care life skills and teach them to their children. Rana said she will bring the Franco Network, a French-speaking group, and will take Scrabble the Friends Home.

Nefta Erroa said he bridged with plenty of people but didn’t save the names.

David Nuttall said he got around and bridged with Nefta Erroa, Karen D’Agusto, Nora Roth-Moore, Rana Sakr, and Trevor Pruitt

**NOTE: There will be a Volunteer Fair at The Kennett Library on Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup> from 10am to 1pm. Contact Carol Crane if you’d like to have a table at: [ccrane@ccls.org](mailto:ccrane@ccls.org)**

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**Minutes submitted by Tina Skinner**