Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc.

GuideStar Nonprofit Profile Charting Impact Report * Last Updated on 05.16.2017

This report represents Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc.’s responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47 West Street , Boston, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.bridgeotw.org">www.bridgeotw.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mission:
Bridge Over Troubled Waters’ mission is to enable high-risk, runaway and homeless youth to achieve healthy and productive adulthood through prevention, intervention, and education services. Serving 2,500 youth ages 14 to 24 each year, Bridge offers a comprehensive range of emergency drop-in services and overnight accommodations, health care, mental health counseling and risk-reduction, education and career development, and long-term transitional housing. Bridge is the only agency in the Boston area to provide a continuum of age-appropriate services for who are homeless and on the streets due to issues of abuse and neglect over which they have had no control.

The content of this Charting Impact Report is the sole product and responsibility of Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc.. This report does not in any way represent an endorsement from Independent Sector, BBB Wise Giving Alliance, or GuideStar, nor does it represent fulfillment of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance’s Standards for Charity Accountability. For more information on Charting Impact, visit www.guidestar.org/chartingimpact
1. What are we aiming to accomplish?

Bridge takes runaway and homeless youth in the Boston area and helps them to become healthy, confident young adults with the resources they need to pursue their dreams. We find them on the streets, or they find us, and we first give them stability and safety by providing shelter and housing. We assign each youth a counselor and a case manager. We help them to identify their goals and the services they need to achieve them. In addition to housing, meals and clothing, Bridge provides counseling, health and dental care, job readiness, help finding employment, life skills, GED classes, college guidance including financial aid, and help transitioning to independent housing. A youth may come to Bridge as a homeless, high school dropout with no work history and untreated mental health or substance abuse issues and leave Bridge 1-3 years later with a job, a college credential, an apartment, money in their savings account, and the confidence and skills to pursue their goals. In short, we give youth ages 14-24 everything that good parents would give them: shelter, safety, support, nurture, structure, encouragement, knowledge and skills, help finding a job, help getting into--and affording--college, and access to health care and counseling as needed. Positive outcomes for Bridge are happy, healthy young adults who have the confidence and tools to achieve the lives they want. Typically, they are also grateful and ready to start giving back, because their lives have been touched along the way by many other giving people. There will always be young people who find themselves on the street and in need of help--either because of a system or family breakdown, or their own choices. Bridge seeks to find these young people and give them a second--or third or fourth--chance to discover all they have to offer and all they can accomplish. Over the next five years, Bridge seeks to (1) expand capacity by creating more transitional and affordable housing and (2) improve programming and partnerships so that every youth who comes to Bridge gets the very best in care, counseling, case management, health care and employment and education services. We find them as depressed and desperate homeless youth who don't know where their next meal will come from. We release them as confident and capable young adults who know where they are going and how to get there.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?

To meet the complicated and various needs of homeless youth, Bridge has developed--and continues to refine--a proven strategy over the past 43 years. The first thing a homeless youth needs is a safe place to spend the night. They need stability and safety, so they can begin addressing the issues that led to their being homeless. We provide emergency shelter and transitional and affordable housing. When a young person knows that they have a safe place to spend their nights, they can begin thinking about their situation, and what they need to change it. They also discover they are not alone, and that their situation is not unique and not hopeless. They become part of a family with other youth who are a little further down the road: working, saving money, getting their GED, seeing a counselor. The path before them has been paved and is well-trodden. They are also surrounded by caring, highly trained adults who believe in them and will give them the love and structure and resources they need. They learn to live in community with others and to follow rules. They learn to make good choices regarding money, work, relationships, health and education. Around them are examples of success and failure. They discover that they have choices, and control over their situation. They need to be willing to accept help and to help themselves. By providing just about everything they need under one roof, Bridge becomes a temporary home and family to young people who usually have not had a positive experience at home, at school, with peers, with adults, or with agencies of any kind. Their world gets reshaped from one that discarded them into one that cares about them and believes in them. With care and structure, counseling, and access to health care, education and employment opportunities, these young people begin to discover their own gifts and abilities, and to believe in their own dreams.

3. What are our organization's capabilities for doing this?

Bridge's 43 years' experience in serving homeless youth in the Boston area gives our organization three invaluable assets (1) a wealth of collective wisdom in how best to help homeless youth overcome trauma and adversity and achieve health and self-sufficiency; (2) credibility among homeless and street youth, who believe we can help them and are thus more willing to
seek us out and come to us ready to be helped; (3) a reputation in the Boston area as the organization that helps homeless youth, which helps us find and retain youth-serving partners, funding sources, and quality staff, board members and volunteers. Bridge’s programs have been refined over the years, and continue to be improved, so that our youth get the best possible services. Our staff is highly trained and dedicated, and our Board is very involved and offers many resources beyond just finances. Bridge has good fiscal discipline and takes a long-term approach to fundraising, budgeting and developing and running programs. Bridge has partnerships with premier organizations, such as the Borum in health care, Tufts in our dental clinic, and Boston College’s Graduate School of Social Work in counseling, to name just a few. In addition, some of our supporters have been contributing to Bridge for decades, and these partners give us stability from year to year, and a base of support to take risks when we need to launch a new program or expand an existing one. Bridge began in 1970 with the nation’s first medical outreach van, which soon became a national model. In 2011, Bridge opened the Boston area’s only youth-only shelter. For 43 years, Bridge has been an innovator in serving homeless youth, and our current staff and board intends to continue to strive for excellence, because the young people we serve deserve the best.

4. How will we know if we're making progress?

Bridge measures success using quantitative data such as the number of youth served, and the number who receive various services such as shelter, housing, health care, dental care, counseling, meals, GED classes, life skills and job readiness workshops, college assistance. We also measure GED graduates, and college enrollments and graduates, jobs obtained, etc. In addition, we measure the progress of individual clients using ‘best practice’ assessments, such as • ANSELL-CASEY LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT. • SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUBTLE SCREENING INVENTORY-3 (SASSI-3) • BASIS-24. (Gives an overall score and scores for six subscales for the following domains of psychiatric and substance abuse symptoms and functioning: Depression and Functioning, Relationships, Self-Harm, Emotional Liability, Psychosis, Substance Abuse). • TESTS OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (TABE) • MASSACHUSETTS ADULT PROFICIENCY TEST (MAPT) We also keep our pulse on the satisfaction of the youth we serve by providing and encouraging the use of forums for youth feedback, including group, one-on-one, and anonymous. Recent examples of using key indicators, data and feedback to make adjustments or improvements to programs include: (1) Increasing outreach staff and hours in response to data from the city’s annual homeless survey, plus our own data, that showed an increase in the number of homeless and runaway youth in the Boston area (2) Increasing counseling staff as a result of data that showed an increasing percentage of our youth were facing serious mental health and substance abuse issues; we also now assign, at intake, every youth to a counselor. (3) Adding classes--and teacher training--for students with learning disabilities after recognizing that many of our youth dropped out of high school because of undiagnosed and unaddressed learning disabilities (4) Securing 3-years of funding to build and open the youth shelter, in response to city data and feedback from youth about their experiences at area adult shelters that are not equipped to address the unique needs of homeless youth and young adults (5) Developing a College Pathways program in response to a national survey that showed that 80% of GED graduates drop out of college in their first semester. Adding a financial aid component to this program in response to survey by the Bill Gates Foundation that showed that finances were the primary reason for college dropouts. (Our own data supported both of these surveys).

5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?

Since opening the youth shelter in 2011, Bridge has learned that most youth require more than emergency shelter; they need 3-9 months of stable housing in order to get other services such as counseling, and in order to find employment and save enough money for an apartment. As a result, we have changed our plans from expanding shelter capacity to creating more transitional and affordable housing. Progress toward this new goal in the early stages of planning, exploration, and discussion with potential partners and funding sources. Entering the housing “business” would represent an entirely new channel for Bridge, but it may be the next logical step in meeting our mission of helping homeless youth become self-sufficient adults. Our new College Pathways program has met with demand far exceeding expectations, so we are working on putting more resources into developing that program. We have also had to adjust our 14-24 age range, recognizing that we will be offering support to some college students for several years after they no longer access any of
Bridge's other services. Bridge is also in the discussion stages of how best to help youth obtain living wage jobs, either through our own programs and partnerships with employers, or working with other agencies who are already providing these services. We have an executive director and board who are constantly monitoring and evaluating Bridge's programs to ensure that they all work towards our ultimate goal of stabilizing homeless youth and equipping them to become healthy and productive adults. In recent years, new programs such as the shelter and the college pathways program, and expansions to other programs such as outreach and counseling, have proven to be very successful. But every success has led us to new challenges, to do even more, and to get even better.