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## BridgeFest:

On May 7 Bridges held BridgesFest at The Morris Museum. The goals for the evening were to get together with fellow Bridges supporters for a fun evening, and to raise some funds for the people we serve. BridgeFest featured over 80 beers for tasting, a food truck and catered food, live jazz, a wine pull, and a silent auction. The beer vendors were present to discuss the beers and provide tasting tips. Thank you to everyone who came out and supported Bridges, and a special thank you to our sponsors: Ginger & Geoff Worden, The Carvel Foundation, Coni Frezzo & Ed Sannini, Investors Bank, Select Equity, The MCJ Amelior Foundation, Breakthru Beverage, Dun & Bradstreet, PIMCO, PM&Co, ShopRite, Optum, and The Wine Library.



Ginger Stearns, one of our event chairs,  
with her husband, David.



Fran Foussianes and Jon and Laura Kessler enjoy BridgeFest.

### **Our Project Connect Interns:**

In May we said goodbye to four wonderful interns who have been with us at Project Connect since January. Each of these young people has made a real contribution at Project Connect; they worked with clients to create effective resumes, taught clients how to use email and conduct an online job search, helped with business and interview etiquette, conducted mock interviews, and so much more. They have been a huge help to our clients and to all of us at Project Connect. All four worked hard, and were fun to have around!



Pictured (L to R): Project Connect interns Lucia Pena, Charles Franchino, Catherine Dzata, Anah Ukpere

Lucia and Anah are entering their 2nd year in the Masters of Social Work program at Rutgers University. Charles just received his Bachelors in Sociology from The New School in NYC. Catherine is entering her 2nd year MSW studies at Seton Hall University. We wish them all the best as they continue their studies towards masters' degrees in social work, and beyond.

## Annual Meeting:

Bridges' annual meeting was held June 7 at the Summit First Aid Squad. The evening was a recap and celebration of a successful year, and a number of people who have made important contributions were recognized. Nine high school students were awarded Bridges Founders' Award, which is given to high school juniors or seniors who have faithfully supported Bridges' work and who have proven themselves to be friends to the homeless. This year's award recipients were: Lorenzo Beer, Oratory; Caroline Deumling, Corpus Christi Church of Chatham; Samantha Gargiulo, First Congregational Church of Westfield; Paul Malatesta, Stanley Congregational Church of Chatham; Malcolm Mead, Delbarton School, Connie Pullan, Summit High School; Carmen Ruiz, Oak Knoll School; Anthony Smith, Oratory; Steven Zoughy, Cranford High School. Thank you and congratulations to all!



This year's Founders' Award recipients (L to R): Anthony Smith, Lorenzo Beer, Bridges' Dan RosenHanst, Caroline Deumling, Samantha Gargiulo, Malcolm Mead, Connie Pullan, Steven Zoughy. Missing: Carmen Ruiz.

In addition, several exceptional Core Volunteers were recognized. Core Volunteers go on Runs regularly, and arrive before the Bridges truck to spend time talking with people on the street. They develop real friendships with and are critical to the relationships that Bridges has with the people we serve on our Runs. These Core Volunteers were recognized for their extraordinary commitment to Bridges: Debbie Abbattista, Yve Cohen, Jordan Fried, Joan Oslzewski, and Al Schweiker. We are so grateful for the many contributions of these committed volunteers.

Two more outstanding volunteers were recognized: Jean Trees and Anna Velez spend two long days every week in Bridges' basement, organizing the tons of items that come in and coordinating all items to go on the truck before every Bridges Run. In addition, they work with people who

come in on Fridays for showers, lunches and clothing, when Bridges opens its doors to local people in need. We don't know what we'd do without Jean and Anna!

We also recognized our outgoing board members and chair for their wonderful service and welcomed new board members. We know that 2016 - 2017 will be an exciting and productive year at Bridges!



From L to R: Outgoing board chair Amanda Parrish Block, returning board chair Pam Gumport, and Bridges' treasurer, Kathy McHale

## **WE ARE FOREVER**

### **Images through the eyes of homeless photographers:**

Beginning last autumn, Bridges brought homeless photographers and professional photographer Akintola Hanif together to capture images as seen through the eyes of the homeless. The project, "We Are Forever," (a title chosen by the photographers) culminated in an exhibit of approximately 20 curated photographs, which were on display at the Gallery Aferro in Newark through June 11. All photographs are on sale through the Bridges website, with the proceeds going to the photographers.



Photographer Phil Lee stands beside one of his displayed photographs

The catalyst for this project was a similar project in Paris, France, which received international publicity. In June 2015, Bridges received a grant from the Arts Council of Newark to give digital cameras to people in Newark who are homeless so that they could express their world through photography. The ultimate goal of the project was to give voice to homeless people in Newark. For six months the homeless photographers and Akintola Hanif worked together, with Hanif providing leadership and mentorship to the novices. Lois Bhatt, Executive Director of Bridges noted that, "The interaction between Akintola and the photographers was genuine, respectful and inspiring."

The gallery reception was a well-attended, festive event; look for a local Summit reception and show of these works some time in the fall.



Attendees at the opening reception for "We Are Forever" at Gallery Aferro, Newark

## **Summer Runs**

If you find yourself with some free time this summer, please consider signing up for a Bridges Run. We are always in need of more lunches and Run volunteers in the summer, when many of our regular Run groups don't meet. We'd love to have you join us or make lunches - please visit the Run schedule