The Need

With state and federal budget cuts, Bridges must raise a total of $170,000 to ensure that the Milford office remains open and operating through June 30, 2013.

While public funding has dramatically decreased, demand for services continues to rise. Without community support and the willingness of the private and public sector to provide critical financial resources, Bridges in Milford faces an uncertain future.

To address the ongoing funding dilemma, Bridges has embarked on a three-year campaign to raise $500,000 by June 2015 (please refer to budget detail for additional information).

Year 1 = $170,000 (ending 6/30/13)
Year 2 = $165,000 (ending 6/30/14)
Year 3 = $165,000 (ending 6/30/15)

Bridges’ ultimate funding goal is to create a permanent endowment fund to sustain the annual operations of the Milford office in order to provide uninterrupted service, support and intervention to all the citizens in the Souhegan Valley.

Who We Are

Bridges is a nonprofit organization that provides free and confidential services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, teen dating violence, child sexual abuse, and stalking.

Our mission is to eliminate domestic and sexual violence and provide a safe, empowering environment for the victims and survivors. Domestic and sexual violence affects everyone. Right now it may be happening to a family member, friend, coworker, neighbor, or parishioner.

It does not discriminate based on age, gender, race, or financial status. Clients served by Bridges come from all economic, political, religious and social backgrounds -- the majority are female and more than one half are children under the age of 16.

About The Rosebush Fund

Domestic and sexual violence are cyclical, often repeating for generations in families. This fund is named after Theresa Rosebush, a woman who experienced violence in her life but in the end broke the cycle of violence.

Her daughters, two of whom live in the Souhegan Valley have partnered with Bridges to create this fund in her name. This fund is in memory of Theresa, but in honor of all victims and survivors of violence.

This fund represents hope, love and proof that the violence can end.

The funds raised through the Rosebush Fund will be kept in an endowment, with the growth providing ongoing funding for a sustainable Milford Office and beyond.

“I got involved with Bridges, because “home” should be someone’s safe place, it always was for me. I just can’t imagine being scared to go home.”

Brian McEaigan, Board Member and Financial Advisor, Edward Jones

The need has never been greater -- the time to act is now.

Your gift to the Rosebush Fund will have an immediate and positive impact on thousands of victims and their families who rely on our services to help them learn new behaviors and responses, start the process of healing, and begin a future without violence.

How You Can Contribute

Cash or Stock
Giving cash is as simple as writing a check, charging your credit card, or wiring or transferring funds electronically. Stock gifts are easily arranged through your broker.

Pledges
A pledge allows you to make a major gift over as many as years as you would like. Bridges will send you pledge reminders according to the schedule you request.

Matching Gifts
Some companies match charitable gifts given by their employees. Forward your company’s matching gift form with your gift. If your company or organization does not have a formal program, ask them to consider matching your gift.

Planned Gifts
Gifts include bequests, charitable gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, life insurance.

As a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, your gift is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. For more information on how you can support the Rosebush Fund, please contact: Bridges Development Office, 33 East Pearl Street, Nashua, NH 03060, 603-889-0858.
What We Do

In 1977, a group of women in the greater Nashua area founded Rape & Assault Support Services, Inc., to respond to domestic and sexual violence in surrounding communities. In 2002, the agency adopted a new name, Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support Services, to better reflect and communicate the positive work by tireless advocates to help educate, nurture healing, and assist in the rebuilding process for all those affected by violence.

Spanning Southern New Hampshire with offices in Nashua and Milford, Bridges strives to make communities a safe place to live and work by offering support and options to individuals in crisis. Crisis intervention services include a support line, in-person advocacy, crisis counseling, court advocacy, hospital accompaniment for sexual assault, evidence collection kits, police advocacy, emergency safe housing, transitional housing, support groups, and education and outreach to both women and men. Access to these services is provided through a crisis intervention support line 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year. The core goals of Bridges are to:

- Provide crisis intervention and support to survivors of sexual assault, child abuse, stalking and domestic violence
- Reduce the incidence of sexual assault, child sexual abuse, stalking and domestic violence
- Educate the community about the issue of sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence and the services Bridges provides
- Cooperate with area police departments and state police officers in their efforts to aid survivors
- Cooperate with the County Attorney’s office in making the court experience as easy for the survivor as possible under the circumstances
- Protect and increase the rights of survivors of sexual assault, child sexual abuse, stalking and domestic violence and to assure that survivors are treated with compassion, dignity and justice

Why You Should Care

Bridges in Milford is a community resource that has become a safe haven for thousands of individuals and families from around the region. If the Milford office closes, it will have a major impact on domestic and sexual violence survivors, as well as on court and law enforcement personnel who are not trained social workers.

As a mother of a young child victim, who had been repeatedly sexually abused by his father, recalled, “Knowing that Jennifer (Bridges advocate) is in the courtroom has helped me to stay calm and not be so scared. At our trial, which lasted four days, she was there every day. I can’t explain the value of knowing someone was there who believed me and was emotionally supportive when it seemed like everyone else was gone.”

Milford District Court Judge Martha Crocker said Bridges makes it much easier for people in a difficult relationship to decide if they need outside help. “It would be a real shame if this office closes,” Crocker said. “We always make information on Bridges available to those filing a petition (for a restraining order), and a large majority take advantage of it. They appear more self-confident than those who don’t know the system. It’s very apparent to me that meeting a representative from Bridges will help them focus, so when they come to court their thoughts are very well organized.”

If the Milford office closes, it will also mean some victims, especially those in rural areas, will stay longer in abusive relationships because those seeking support and services will have to drive to Nashua, a 20-30 mile trip one way. The Nashua office is too far to travel for some people who live in outlying areas without public transportation. “I hate to think of what will happen to those who have no transportation at all or who will not come to Nashua, because it is just too daunting” said Dawn Reams, Bridges Executive Director.

“The bridges are critically important in dealing with “the problem of violence behind closed doors,” and closing the local office would add a “geographic hurdle,” that for some would be an insurmountable obstacle to getting help.”

Sylvia Gale, Bridges’ Board member and longtime child protection advocate

The Milford Office

The Milford office, which opened part-time in 1996, serves the Souhegan Valley and the towns of Amherst, Milford, Hollis, Brookline, Wilton, Jaffrey, Merrimack and part of Mont Vernon. Milford education and outreach programs include two weekly support groups that serve domestic violence victims and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse.

Bridges secured federal funding in 2001, which allowed us to open the office full-time beginning in 2002. Since this time, the number of survivors seeking services out of this office has continued to climb in alarming numbers. Bridges Milford office is an essential resource for survivors living in the Souhegan Valley.

In fact, in 2011 the Milford Office staff worked with more than 25% of the survivors served by the entire agency. Out of 20 agency staff, the Milford Office staff consists of one full-time Program Coordinator and one full-time AmeriCorps court advocate. These numbers tell us that the Milford Office needs to remain open, and grow in the future.

Unfortunately, Bridges lost federal funding to support the Milford Office and in 2011, the community rallied around Bridges and raised the funding necessary to keep the office open through 2012. Special thanks those who assisted us in these efforts: Milford Hospital Association, Kalsey Foundation, Keyes Foundation and Milford Rotary.

In addition to the crisis intervention services, and court advocacy provided to Souhegan Valley residents, Bridges provides services to children and education and outreach in the schools.

Children’s Advocacy — Bridges is well known in this community and the state for providing state of the art quality programs for survivors. In fact, in 2010, Bridges Children’s Advocacy Program was named by the Department of Justice, to be recognized as an exemplary program for survivors. The executive director was honored at a White House reception, where Bridges was recognized for its work with child victims.

Advocates provide support to children, teenagers, and their caregivers who are experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence. Advocates work closely with families in cases of exposure to domestic violence in child sexual abuse cases, and in our emergency shelter program. Advocates work with caregivers to promote their children’s safety and to access the most appropriate services for the family. Advocates take the lead role in coordinating services for the child. Advocates are available to assist families when they are working with other agencies such as Health Care, Division of Child Youth and Families, Mental Health Agencies, Law Enforcement, Courts, and Schools.

Education in the School — If the Milford office closes, the community will lose a vital educational resource. Each year, almost 700 students benefit from school programs like the “Rights, Respect, and Responsibility” curriculum which focuses on healthy elements of relationships and identifying destructive behaviors of unhealthy relationships.

Other Bridges programs include “Bully Proof” and “Quit It.” These curricula are nationally known bully prevention resources. All three presentations offer an opportunity for students to come away from the classes with positive and proactive steps which they develop through the workshops. As active participants in the process, students have a much greater investment in learning the tools to ensure a lifetime of healthy relationships.

As an integral component of outreach efforts, Bridges educates school personnel to enable them to identify possible cases of child sexual abuse and to familiarize them with the proper procedures to follow as well as to communicate with students about the prevalence, possibility, and prevention of sexual abuse.

“People ask me why I got involved with Bridges and the domestic violence movement. I wish I could say it was because I was committed to the idea of helping the cause from the start. But I can’t say that...I got involved because my brother was murdered by his friends abusive ex-husband. Please don’t be like me; recognize that this is an issue that affects us all. We need to pay attention to it now, not when it’s too late.”

Jeff Allan, Bridges Board President and VP Human Resources, Stonyfield Farm
I haven’t spoken of these tales from that house until now. Reliving the events is painful, almost unbearable. I tell them now in hopes that people will hear our story and be empowered to break the cycle and LIVE a normal healthy life. I tell them now to bring new awareness and compassion to those living the life I had put behind me nearly 25 years ago.

72 Perkins Ave was a house where blue lights were as common as evening lamps. The “Rosebush” girls were the masters of the secrets within those walls. You see, our dress rehearsal for Halloween was 24/7, 365 days a year. Good grades, nice clothes, athletic talents, and happy go lucky smiles were merely costumes masking the nightmare that we lived at that address. To the naked eye, we were a successful, upper middle class family living a normal life. Verbal, physical and sexual abuse didn’t happen to families like ours.

Everyone still in their pajamas, we were almost out the driveway when the log came through the windshield, narrowly missing my sister, as my mother was yanked from her seat by our stepdad’s hands. When most children were sleeping safe within their beds, our alarm clock would go off in the middle of the night with explosions and without notice. Dresser’s pushed to floor, jewelry boxes flying across the room smashing above our heads, and my mother screaming was the alarm that would awaken us. His wrath was horrifying. The terror was unimaginable. Cops became familiar faces in the night as WE were escorted with our belongings to relatives’ homes seeking safety. Why did he get to stay? What did we do wrong? The nightmare didn’t end there. Gifts, apologies, promises of change and guilt would lure us back like a hungry fish to a worm on a hook.

We missed our beds, our familiar surroundings, and as strange as it sounds, we missed our life. It wasn’t so bad, right? It could have been our fault? We should have washed the dishes better, or mowed the lawn in the right lines. Four hours or more in the corner and beatings were merited by our inability to do things correctly. The sexual abuse was one that could not be rationalized. We just
blocked it out and pretended it wasn’t happening. Who would believe us and the embarrassment would be too devastating.

After a family intervention, our mom getting cancer, as well as having a nervous breakdown, all three of us girls were moved to different homes. I remember wanting to crawl into a hole never to come out. Our secret, our dress rehearsal was over. EVERYONE knew, teachers, friends, and the entire town. The “Rosebush” girls weren’t so pretty after all.

My mother’s last night with my stepfather was anything but a candlelight dinner. It entailed hiding in a closet as he raced through the house, searching for her, gun shots echoing the hallway. She later told me she urinated in that closet waiting until morning to leave after she heard him go to work. An organization such as yours, Bridges, took my mother in. The organization educated her, empowered her, and eventually gave her the confidence and tools to earn her nursing degree. SHE WAS FREE. Free from his lies of her “inability to make it without him.” She did it. Not only did my mom escape the abuse, she empowered others by speaking at events such as my university where I was so proud to be audience to.

As for us girls, we are not without scars. They are our badges of compassion, strength, and love. Some would think opposite, negative if you will. Not me, not us. We were not victims of abuse or survivor’s of it. We conquered it. I am a better mom, wife, and friend for it. My children are loving, smart, happy and truly wonderful people. I thank God their life is what I always wanted mine to be growing up. I thank God I have a healthy loving marriage and that my husband knows I am the boss 😊

Lastly, I thank God I broke the cycle with years of counseling, organizations like Bridges, and with people such as YOU all. If our mom were here, she would be so honored to be part of this Fund. This Fund, YOU, represent the “Rosebush” logo of compassion, love, strength, and hope. With this fund, you give refuge to those that are experiencing the same familiar faces in the middle of the night and the lights that lit 72 Perkins Ave.

~Jennifer, Karen and Lisa
A FEW FACTS ABOUT BRIDGES

Bridges holds as its mission, a commitment to eliminating domestic and sexual violence, and to providing a safe, empowering environment for the victims and survivors.

⇒ Bridges Milford Office provided services to 741 victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and stalking from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

⇒ Bridges Milford Office provided Education and Outreach services to 680 students and community members from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

⇒ Bridges provided 1 woman and her children from the Souhegan Valley with 24 nights of housing in our emergency shelter from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

⇒ Bridges Milford Office provided 19 women and children peer support groups for sexual and domestic violence, and child witnesses of domestic violence from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011.

⇒ Bridges provides services to victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and stalking 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

⇒ Bridges is one of fourteen Participating Member Crisis Centers of the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

⇒ Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support serves the following cities and towns: Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, Salem, Wilton, Windham, and Lyndeborough.
Stories and Testimonials

A card from a survivor on the occasion of her 25th birthday…

“You are a saving grace, if it was not for you all I am uncertain if I would be celebrating my 25th birthday today. I have pink back in my cheeks and hope in my heart again. All of this would not be true if you hadn't unlocked the doors and allowed me in. You are showing me I am worth something...that I am beautiful inside and out. You will never know how much you have all impacted my life. I will forever be grateful for each and every one of you. Forever with love, ~B”

An Easter thank you card…

“Thank you so much for the Easter basket for my son. It made him SO happy!! I can’t say thank you enough for everything you have done for us this past year. It truly has made such a difference and been a huge part of our journey getting back on our own two feet. You are all definitely all meant to be doing what you’re doing because it’s not just a job to you ~ your heart is in it AND we feel it. We feel very loved and supported by each and every one of you. Thank you again with all of our hearts.”

A thank you from a girl who was sexually abused by her father, whom she was living with…

“I love that you are concerned about me. I love that you came here with me to be interviewed. I was so worried I wouldn’t have anyone to talk to. I REALLY wanna go to my Mom’s, and live there! NO ONE understands how I feel! Everyone treats me like I’m 3 inches tall! No one cares. Until now, I finally met someone today that does. Thank you.”

An excerpt from a letter to the Senate from a Mother of two sexually abused children…

“As time has passed, my advocate and Bridges have continued to show support for me at my multiple court dates, which have been beyond stressful. Knowing she is in the courtroom has helped me to stay calm and not be so scared. At our trial, which lasted four days, she was there each and every day. I can't explain the value of knowing someone was there who believed me and was emotionally supportive when it seemed like everyone else was gone. Through these difficult years, Bridges staff remains available—always willing to listen, educate, and support. These advocates helped me to apply for a program to assist in payment for therapy services for my children, organized a Christmas sponsor so my children could receive Christmas gifts this year, as well as provided ongoing support in navigating the frustratingly complex legal system and providing referrals as needed. Without the services of Bridges to help me to advocate for my children and me, on every level we have needed, I do not know how we would have made it through these times”.

A thank you note from a Janice’s House guest…

“I would like to personally thank you all for everything that you have done for me and my daughter over the last months. I really do not think we would have been able to get through this without all of your help. It’s nice to know that there are still kind people in the world. It gives me hope.”

A thank you note from a domestic violence survivor…..

“I can’t thank you enough for all that you did for me- A TOTAL STRANGER! I don’t know how I would have gotten through this extremely difficult time without you! Thank you so much for listening without judgment. You really made me feel at ease and good about the decisions I have to make for me and my children. There should be more people in this world like you! I am so happy and lucky to have met you all. Love.”
A thank you from a sexual assault survivor…

“There are no words that can tell you how much you all mean to me. You saved me, really saved me. After my assault, I just wanted to die. I was so embarrassed and scared and shameful. I truly wanted to go to sleep and not wake up. From the first minutes in the hospital, you all have been so kind, caring, compassionate and truly understood what I was feeling…. Still do. It has been years now, and you still support me, even after the trial. There are no words.”

No More

A true story…

There are always experiences in life both good and bad that shape the person they are meant to become. These circumstances cannot always be predicted but ultimately paint your picture.

For me it was my freshman year in high school when I began my never ending roller coaster ride. It was supposed to be a year for a fresh start, new friends, new teachers and a new school. That was not the case for me. A slap hits my face, a punch lands in my stomach, a bruise to the head is a tattoo of what was my life then.

The young woman I am today knows I was a victim of domestic violence. It was a year of being broken down into tiny bits and pieces. I was beaten down emotionally to the point where there was no bright side, no future.

Through court dates, restraining orders and the support of teachers, family, and Bridges, I eventually found my way out to a whole new me. I learned who I am and who I was meant to become and my experience allowed me to find my strength.

As the emotional pain faded and the scars began to heal, I realized the experiences I had been through could help change the lives of other victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a growing social issue that needs attention.

I have used my story to help others find light and hope when they do not believe they can stop the abuse. I help to bring awareness to an important cause while also raising money that would ultimately help others in need. I was able to develop a new picture of me that a short time ago I could never imagine. Recently, I was named a local representative for the MISS NEW HAMPSHIRE TEEN USA pageant. I was awarded the “Granite State Teen USA 2012” title this past April.

In November 2011, I will take part in the 2012 search for MISS NEW HAMPSHIRE TEEN USA. I am working on fund-raising projects where a portion of all my proceeds will be donated to Bridges. Growing up in Nashua, I have felt a great deal of support from my community. I am thrilled to represent the state of New Hampshire and continue to give back to an organization that saved me. This is also my opportunity to be a role model to young girls trying to accomplish their dreams.

My goal is to increase awareness of domestic and sexual violence across the state, an issue that many teens are still uninformed about. The Miss Teen USA organization is an outstanding way for young women to make a difference. I am being given a stage to further educate people on the fight against domestic violence. I feel strongly that I can be a mentor to young women.
Yes! I would like to make a tax deductible contribution to the Rosebush Fund

I would like to make a one-time donation in the amount of: $_____________

I would like to make a donation each year of this 3-year campaign, in the amount of $_________ x 3 years totaling $_____________

I would like to make a recurring donation of $_________ once per □ Month  □ Quarter  □ Year totaling $_____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card Number</th>
<th>Expiration Date</th>
<th>Security Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name
___________________________________________

Address
___________________________________________

City, State, Zip Code
___________________________________________

Telephone      Email
___________________________________________

Make my gift □ In honor of  □ In memory of: _______________________________

□ Please keep my gift anonymous

☐ Pledge  ☐ Check enclosed (to Bridges)
☐ MasterCard  ☐ Visa
☐ American Express  ☐ Discover

Bridges  * 16 Elm Street, Suite 2  *  Milford, NH 03055  *  603.672.9833  *  www.bridgesnh.org