Mission

To cultivate communities free from violence as we support victims & survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking.

2024
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**Mission Ambassador Toolkit**
Introduction

Dear Bridges Ambassador,

**Congratulations on becoming a Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Mission Ambassador!**

Mission Ambassadors are an integral part of Bridges' mission to cultivate communities free from violence & oppression as we support victims & survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. We are so excited that you have joined the ranks of Bridges’ distinguished team of supporters, community partners, Board Members, and staff representatives who promote the value that Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support brings to the 14 communities across Southern New Hampshire that we serve.

This toolkit provides guidance and resources that you need to excel at being an Bridges Mission Ambassador. Within this document you will find everything from sample email templates and elevator pitches to key statistics to a comprehensive overview of the services offered to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking who access Bridges services daily.

If you have questions or comments about carrying out your role as Bridges Ambassador, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our staff team.

Once again, thank you for all you are doing to increase funding for and awareness of the important work that Bridges does in the Greater Nashua & Milford communities.

Thanks to supporters like you, we can change many people’s lives in such a profound way. On behalf of the entire Bridges team, thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

Tara Levine

*Director of Development, Events and Marketing*
Mission & Values/Commitments

Mission:
To cultivate communities free from violence as we support victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking.

Values/Commitments:

Trust & Integrity:
We model individual and organizational integrity and honesty. We are open, non-defensive and accountable. We have faith in the resilience and good judgment of the people we serve.

Respect and Empowerment:
We help and encourage the people we serve to build on their strengths through our nonjudgmental support and our educational, advocacy, and outreach efforts. We respect them, knowing it is they who must make responsible decisions about their own lives.

Nonviolence:
We do all in our power to enhance the level of safety that can be threatened by domestic and sexual violence.

Empathy and Service:
In all of our programs and services we are focused on the people we serve, committed to providing compassionate care and understanding to all with a high degree of skill, expertise and knowledge.

Ethical Communication:
We are committed to treating one another with respect and to fostering a positive and safe work environment where every voice is valued. This model entails honest, direct, and kind communication among ourselves, with the people we serve, and our community partners.

Non-Discrimination Policy:
Domestic and sexual violence affects everyone in our communities. Right now it may be happening to a family member, friend, coworker, neighbor, or parishioner. It does not discriminate based on your age, gender, race, or financial status.

We are a nonprofit dedicated to helping victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support is a non-sectarian agency, and all services are offered regardless of race, gender, gender orientation, gender identity, gender expression, socio-economic status, medical condition, HIV status, marital status, age, national origin, immigration status, religion, physical, mental or emotional ability, sexual orientation, political affiliation or language.
1977: In July of 1977, the crisis telephone line goes into operation. Volunteers, working out of their homes, assist survivors 24 hours a day. This service remains in operation to this day.

1980: A small emergency shelter for abused women and their children is opened, and support groups are created to help these survivors as they work to bring about changes in their lives.

1981: The child abuse information line goes into operation. During the first eighteen months alone, over 1,387 calls were received.

1988: The agency expands services to include adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse and purchases a home, which becomes a permanent abused women's shelter with a ten-bed capacity.

1994: The agency again expands its services to encompass elder survivors of domestic violence. In partnership with the Division of Elderly Services, staff members and volunteers are trained to work with senior citizens that were neglected or living in violent households.

1998: The Success in Schools Program is designed to help shelter residents & their children recover any educational losses suffered through the abusive environment from which they fled. Additionally, the agency partners with SNHMC & SJH to create the Domestic Violence Health Initiative in an effort to provide survivors with consistent treatment in the greater Nashua Area.

2002: This year marks 25 years of dedicated services to victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the Greater Nashua area. Rape & Assault Support Services, Inc changes its name to Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support to better reflect the positive work done to assist in creating paths to healing, education and support.

2004: This year marks the inception of the Agency’s Cultural Competency project. New technology is introduced through this project, including a TTY machine, fire alarm for individuals with hearing/visual impairments, and three AT&T Language Line translation telephones. Additionally, Bridges develops a collaboration with the Southern Hillsborough County Child Advocacy Center (CAC) to provide child victims of sexual abuse with a less traumatic investigation process. Finally, the Breaking Barriers, Rebuilding Lives support group is introduced in collaboration with the Youth Council in order to provide support for child witnesses of DV & the caretakers.

2008: Bridges receives a grant to work with Catholic Charities for immigration services and to support clients in getting connected to services such as the New Hampshire Food bank, health & senior care, counseling, housing and referral services.

2010: The Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) is introduced as an assessment tool for first responding police officers in instances of domestic violence to support them in determining the likelihood of a situation becoming lethal. Upon determining that a victim is in imminent danger, the police officer will call the Bridges Support Line in an effort to best support the victim/survivor.

2011: The Transitional Housing Program is introduced through a federal grant. This program offers housing support for up to 2 years for clients who are ineligible for other programs, and includes personal advocacy, case management, and assistance with food, personal items, and transportation as needed.

2019: The Emergency Shelter is renovated to make the house into four individual apartments after research shows that this apartment style is more trauma informed. This new model also allows for Bridges to accommodate clients of any gender in need of confidential shelter.

2020: Bridges moves to a new location at 28 Concord Street. With this new space comes an expanded number of client rooms, a dedicated child room for clients to visit with an advocate while their child remains in view but out of hearing range of the discussion, and a dedicated conference room space for staff meetings.

2022: Milford ACERT is introduced in partnership with the police department, Bridges, Greater Nashua Mental Health, and Revive recovery. The Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team (ACERT) is a multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach to addressing the negative effects of childhood trauma. The core partners work collaboratively to provide assistance to families, and their children, who have had recent police involvement. This referral program is voluntary and offers connections to a variety of therapies, youth support groups, domestic violence services, athletic enrichment programs, home visiting, and many other child/family-based resources.

2023: The Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund is introduced and benefits individuals and/or their children who have experienced or been impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking in furthering their education and building self-sufficiency. This scholarship fund grants one award per year in an amount up to $2,500.

2023: New Hampshire Legal Aid (NHLA) starts a clinic at the Nashua District Court to represent clients at their final domestic violence protective order hearing. Bridges partnered with NHLA so a Bridges advocate attends the weekly clinics to provide emotional support, safety planning and offer follow-up services after the hearing.

2024: The ACERT program is extended into Merrimack. Core partnerships for this program include the Police Department, Bridges, and Greater Nashua Mental Health.
Bridges' Catchment Area:
Bridges’ catchment area falls primarily within Hillsborough County and includes 14 communities across Southern NH. These communities include: Brookline, Hollis, Nashua, Hudson, Pelham, Litchfield, Merrimack, Amherst, Milford, Wilton, Lyndborough, Mont Vernon, Windham, and Salem.

Who Bridges Serves:
Domestic and sexual violence affects everyone in our communities. Right now it may be happening to a family member, friend, coworker, neighbor, or parishioner. The clients served by Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support Services occupy all economic, political, religious, and social categories, and Bridges offers support and options to individuals who need to talk, need information, or feel alone, afraid, or hopeless.

Most of the people served by Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support Services are female, ranging in age from 3 to 72 years, and over one half of these clients are children under the age of sixteen.
Key Statistics:

1 in 4 girls / 1 in 6 boys experience child sexual abuse before they turn 18 years old.

CDC

1 in 3 women / 1 in 6 men have been stalked at some point in their lives.


1 in 5 women / 1 in 7 men experience severe physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2016

1 in 3 women / 1 in 4 men experience sexual violence during their lifetime.

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2015

the cost of intimate partner violence exceeds $8.3 billion per year

Rothman et al., 2007

Hear from Bridges’ Clients

From the moment I read about and called Bridges, I knew it was a safe environment where someone with trauma can heal and start to trust people. The advocate on the phone was so gentle and understanding as I worked up the courage to tell her why I was calling.

I thought I was the only person who felt the way that I did. Bridges showed me that I wasn’t alone and that there were people who understood how I was feeling and why I felt that way.

It felt like the obvious choice to call Bridges when I remembered something that happened to me when I was 14. I was feeling like I was the only person who had the feelings that I did and thought I was going crazy. Bridges helped me to realize that I am not alone. I am so grateful for that I can turn to Bridges whenever I need a reminder that that is not the case.

Through Bridges and support group, I discovered that I wasn’t the only one. Stories shared during group allowed me to know that there were other people who have experienced what I have. Knowing that there were people who understood made all the difference as I started to heal.
**Domestic Violence (DV):**

**What is Domestic Violence?**

A *pattern* of coercive behaviors used by *one* partner against another in an intimate/former intimate relationship to gain *control* over that person to maintain the *power* in the relationship.

This violence can take many forms. While each situation is different, *without intervention, the violence escalates over time.*

Domestic violence includes teen dating violence and elder abuse. Teen dating violence is a pattern of behaviors used to gain power and control over a dating partner. Elder abuse may include verbal, emotional, financial, and/or physical abuse by a partner, family member, caretaker, or friend.

*People of all cultures, races, abilities, occupations, income levels, ages, and sexual orientations are affected by DV.*

**Domestic Violence & Challenges to Leaving**

- Fear
- Economic dependence
- Leaving is dangerous
- Children
- Hope that the relationship will change
- Distrust of systems and others promising help
- Love
- Threats

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**Cycle of Domestic Violence**

*Tension-building Stage:* Criticism, yelling, swearing, using angry gestures, coercion, threats, blaming

*Explosion Stage:* Physical and sexual attacks, threats and intimidation

*Honeymoon Stage:*

- Apologies, promises to change, gifts
- Three dynamics keep the cycle going and make it very hard to end a violent relationship. They include *love, hope, and fear.*
  - You *love* your partner, and the relationship has its good points.
  - You *hope* the behavior will change because the relationship did not start out like this.
  - You *fear* that your partner will follow through with the threats they have made against you or your loved ones.
Sexual Assault (SA):
What is Sexual Assault?
Sexual assault is a crime of violence and control, using sex as the weapon. Any sexual activity that is forced or coerced is sexual assault.

Everyone reacts differently to sexual assault. Whatever a survivor is feeling is a normal reaction to the assault. They are not to blame for the assault. The person who committed the assault is 100% responsible.

Impact of Sexual Assault:
A victim/survivor may find that their lifestyle is disrupted. They could have anxious, chaotic feelings or feel numb. Some survivors may experience changes in appetite and sleep patterns or experience some depression or flashbacks. Some want to be left alone while others want someone with them all the time. They may have difficulty concentrating, difficulty relating to family and friends and difficulty returning to your regular routine.

A Bridges advocate can help victims/survivors of sexual assault to understand and cope with the often intense and confusing emotions associated with the aftermath of sexual assault.

Stalking:
What is Stalking?
Stalking is when a person follows, contacts, intimidates or harasses another person with the intent to make that person afraid or in ways that would make a reasonable person afraid. A stalker can be someone you know- a former intimate partner, a current or ex-spouse, a coworker, a classmate, etc. Or it can be someone you don’t know.

A stalker may choose a victim for a variety of reasons and employ several methods of following and harassing them including through technology and social media. What is most important to know is that stalking is a crime in New Hampshire. There are laws to protect victims and services available to help deal with this frightening crime.

Stalking is a unique crime because the stalker usually has only one intended victim. Stalkers are obsessed with controlling the victim’s actions and feelings. They believe that they can achieve this by threatening, harassing and in some instances, harming their victims.

Often, the victim can best assess the stalker’s potential for violence. Because no one can guarantee complete safety, the victim can best choose what actions need to be taken. Whatever steps are taken, the primary concern for everyone involved is the victim’s safety.

Bridges can assist individuals who believe that they are being stalked by advising them of their rights, outlining options, and by providing emotional support as they navigate law enforcement, court and community resources.
Crisis Intervention:
Twenty-four-hour crisis intervention and support for survivors of sexual assault, child sexual abuse, incest, stalking and domestic violence. Crisis Response advocates, who volunteer for twelve-hour shifts, offer a variety of services including:

- Telephone advocacy via the 24-hour support line
- Face-to-face advocacy (at the office in Nashua or Milford)
- Comprehensive information on available services/supports and referrals to external community services
- Support for survivors during police and legal procedures
- Support for the survivor during stays in the hospital

The 24-hour support line is staffed by the agency's staff and by trained volunteers. Each day is divided into two twelve-hour shifts. All calls go to an answering service and are responded to by an on-call advocate within ten minutes.

All survivors of domestic and sexual violence are assured of confidentiality with our advocates through RSA 173-C:1, the Privileged Communication Statute in the State of New Hampshire.

Support Groups:
Weekly ongoing support groups are offered to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. These groups create the opportunity for survivors to learn from each other while continuing their own healing journey. Some of the specific support groups offered here at Bridges include:

- Domestic Violence Survivors
- Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Survivors for Spanish Speakers
- Sexual Assault Survivors
- Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Family & Friends Support for Sexual Assault/Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivors
- Children’s & Non-offending Caregiver Support for Child Witnesses of Domestic Violence
- Children’s & Non-offending Caregiver for Child Victims of Sexual Assault
- Creative Coping
- Expressive Arts
- Thrivers

Education & Outreach:
Presentations related to domestic and sexual violence are delivered to local schools, businesses, and civic groups. Training is tailored to each audience and is compliant with OSHA guidelines and the NH Governor’s Task Force on Gender Equity in Education. Education and prevention offerings include, but are not limited to:

- Bullying
- Sexual Harassment
- Media Images & Gender Stereotypes
- Teen healthy Relationships and Dating Violence Prevention
- Domestic Violence in the Workplace
- Sexual Assault
Programs & Services

**Housing:**
Part of creating a safety plan with that victim/survivor is often working to connect them to safe and stable housing. Survivors of domestic violence must often flee their homes to escape life-threatening violence from an abuser. Housing is safety, and securing safe, affordable housing is an essential step on the pathway to a survivor’s long-term security. Bridges housing advocates follow what’s known as the “Housing First” model, an approach that assists survivors of domestic violence to find or maintain permanent, stable housing as quickly as possible, then provides the necessary support as they rebuild their lives. Some of these supports include:

- Assistance in determining eligibility for additional aid programs
- Support in managing and developing coping methods for the survivor and their child(ren)
- Support in managing expenses associated with housing
- Support groups and case management
- Connections to interpretation and translation services
- Budget planning and goal setting to assist in financial recovery and empowerment
- Referrals to community resources/services

**Janice’s House (Emergency Shelter):**
Safe, confidential shelter at a non-disclosed location meant for those who are actively fleeing dangerous domestic violence and human trafficking. Janice’s home is a comfortable home in residential environment divided into 4 apartments.

Trained advocates offer support, information, and referrals to survivors staying in the shelter, and assist clients in rebuilding their lives. Some of the ways advocates support shelter clients include:

- Risk assessment and safety planning
- Personal Advocacy
- Case management
- Assistance with food, personal items, and community resources
- Limited transportation when needed

Bridges advocates/staff are not present at the shelter 24/7 to encourage self-reliance and independence, and will work with clients to find additional housing options if the shelter is full or if they do not qualify for Bridges’ emergency shelter.

**Transitional Housing:**
Bridges’ Transitional Housing program provides support to clients from underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities or limited English proficiency, immigrants, or survivors who identify within the LGBTQIA+ community. Survivors in the Transitional Housing program are offered individualized support services as they move through temporary housing and then long-term self-sufficiency through safe, affordable, and permanent housing.

**Safety Planning:**
The immediate safety of a Bridges client is extremely important. Safety planning is making a plan for dangerous or threatening situations before they happen. Safety plans can be as simple or as elaborate as the victim/survivor needs them to be. They can address physical safety concerns, emotional safety concerns, or both.

Safety planning is highly individualized and can be complex. Bridges can assist with this. While the client is the expert of their own situation, an advocate can work with them to develop something just right for them. It is a collaborative process. The advocate can ask questions, share resources or strategies that may be options, and help the individual think through items that they may not have already considered.
Programs & Services

Court Advocacy:
Advocates offer information and assistance in obtaining protective orders and can provide accompaniment to court hearings. Advocates can administer an intake process that may qualify survivors for free legal representation at final protective order hearings. Advocates also provide support through child custody cases, divorce, criminal, and sexual assault trials.

Advocates are available to assist survivors at the Nashua, Milford, Merrimack, and Hillsborough County Circuit Courts.

Children's Advocacy:
Ongoing support of children who have been sexually abused and their nonoffending caregivers. Additionally, ongoing support to children who have been exposed to/witnessed domestic violence and their nonviolent caregivers. Support can last for multiple years, and may include:

- Serving as an educational liaison to school districts for families residing in our emergency shelter
- Offering parenting and non-violent discipline education to parents in our shelter
- Child Advocacy Center accompaniment and follow-up
- Breaking Barriers/Re-Building Lives: A psycho-educational group for children exposed to domestic violence with a parallel group for non-offending caregiver’s
- Healing Lives: A psycho-educational group for child victims of sexual violence with a parallel group for non-offending caregivers
- Teen Support Groups in conjunction with local partners
- Referrals to trauma-informed therapists

Advocates are also available to assist families when working with other agencies such as Health Care, Division of Child Youth and Families, Mental Health Agencies, Law Enforcement, Courts, the Child Advocacy Center, and Schools

Hillsborough County South Child Advocacy Center:
A child-friendly site where children who have been sexually or physically abused are interviewed by a trained forensic interviewer. The use of the CAC eliminates multiple interviews of the child which increases trauma. A Bridge’s advocate is available at all CAC interviews to provide information and support to non-offending care givers. On-going support services are also provided to families following the interview.

Hospital Accompaniment:
Accompaniment to St. Joseph Hospital and Southern NH Medical Center for every domestic and sexual violence call to their emergency departments. Advocates provide emotional support, information, and resources during evidence collection and beyond. Any individual who is accompanied to the hospital is given the option to follow-up with Bridges via a phone call or in-person at one of the Bridges offices to review services available to them and how Bridges can support them.

Cultural Outreach:
Immigrants, refugees and other non-English-speaking populations are reluctant to access services due to language barriers, misinformation regarding their rights, and fear of deportation. Bridges’ bilingual and bicultural advocacy works towards reaching a growing number of underserved individuals by eliminating service access barriers. Bridges also has a full-time Cultural Advocate on staff who coordinates cultural outreach efforts and programming and who is responsible for identifying populations that are currently being underserved.
Community Partnerships:
Bridges advocates are well-versed in the myriad organizations and supports available to help survivors. Advocates support and guide clients as they navigate this complex system and work to get their needs met. Some of the types of external referrals that Bridges advocates can provide include:

- Legal Assistance
- Immigration Services
- Health Care/Mental Health
- LGBTQIA+ Resources
- Transportation
- Food/Materials Assistance
- Childcare Needs
- Housing/Homelessness Services
- Family & Parenting Support
- Safety Planning
- Economic Empowerment
- Interpretation Services
The generous support that Bridges receives from our community allows us to carry on in the mission to eliminate domestic and sexual violence in our community and to provide a safe and empowering environment for victims and survivors. Whether it is through financial contributions, event sponsorship, volunteering, or donation of goods and services, your generosity helps thousands of women, men, and children to rebuild their lives each year.

Ways to Give:
Your gift will be used to help provide free, confidential services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking across Southern New Hampshire. Bridges could not provide these services without the support of community members like you.

Donation by Credit Card:
To make a donation via credit card, please visit http://tinyurl.com/BridgesDonation. Once on this page, you will be able to designate how you’d like your gift to be used. Designation options include:

- Where it is needed most
- Milford Office
- Housing/Shelter
- Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Education & Outreach

Make it a Recurring (Monthly) Gift:
You can join other community supporters to ensure that survivors across Southern NH always have access to free, confidential services at Bridges. Through monthly giving, you can increase the impact of your generosity by spreading your support over the year through convenient, monthly gifts to Bridges. To make a recurring donation via credit card, please visit http://tinyurl.com/BridgesDonation and check "Recurring Donation" when filling out the donation form. You can change or cancel at anytime by contacting the Bridges staff team.

Donate by Check:
Please make all checks payable to Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support. Checks can be mailed to the following address: PO Box 217 Nashua, NH 03061

Venmo:
- We also accept donations via Venmo – @Bridgesnh

Planned Giving:
The goal of charitable gift planning is to help you plan your estate and charitable giving in a way that benefits you, your family and charity. There are several ways you can make these gifts to Bridges and enjoy tax and income benefits. If you have questions, please contact us, we look forward to helping you. See the types of gifts & how they work below:

- **Bequest:** You designate Bridges as the beneficiary of your asset by will, trust or other instrument.
- **IRA Charitable Rollover (for individuals 70 1/2 or older):** You instruct your IRA administrator to distribute a gift from your IRA to Bridges. The transfers counts against your required minimum distribution (RMD). You can direct up to $100,000 to your favorite causes.
- **Charitable Gift Annuity:** You transfer your cash or appreciated property to Bridges in exchange for our promise to pay you fixed income (with rates based on your age) for the rest of your life.
- **Charitable Remainder Trust:** You transfer your cash or appreciated property to fund a charitable trust. The trust sells your property tax-free and provides you with income for life or a term of years.
- **Charitable Lead Trust:** You transfer your cash or property to fund a lead trust that makes a gift to Bridges for a number of years. You receive a charitable deduction for the gift. Your family receives the remainder at substantial tax savings.
- **Beneficiary Designation or Individual Retirement Account:** You designate Bridges as beneficiary of your bank account, life insurance policy, IRA, 401(k), 403(b) or other pension account.
Get Involved

Attend an Event:

The Bridges Open features a fabulous 18 holes of golf, raffles, and lunch. This event is held at Sky Meadow Country Club, with the option to sign up as an individual or to grab your friends, family, or coworkers to create a foursome. The price of this event includes golf cart and lunch.

To learn more about the Bridges Open, please visit www.bridgesnh.org/bridgesopen/

The 2024 Bridges Open will take place on September 12th!

Love is in the Air is a fabulous fundraising event with live and silent auctions, dinner, dancing, and revelry that combine for a can’t miss night out. The theme of the event is meant to celebrate healthy relationships and the joy and freedom to live without abuse. Early bird tickets for this event go on sale in October!

To learn more about Love is in the Air, please visit www.bridgesnh.org/LoveisintheAir/

Love is in the Air 2025 will take place on January 25th!

Support the Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund:

The Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund benefits individuals and/or their children who have experienced or been impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking in furthering their education and building self-sufficiency.

Background
Kelly Mann was a young mother of 3 children in the Nashua community who was unfortunately taken by the hands of her husband. As a way to honor her memory, Kelly’s daughters and friends formed a relationship with Bridges, and have been able to raise awareness and funds to help others who have been impacted by domestic and sexual violence. Kelly loved bettering herself through educational opportunities. Through this scholarship, her memory will live on and survivors can have the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

Scholarship Award
The Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund will grant one award per year in an amount up to $2,500. Scholarship funds can be utilized in one of the following ways:

- **Scholarship Awards:** Awards for direct educational expenses including tuition, books, fees, etc., paid directly to the institution.
- **Adjunct Assistance Awards:** Awards that assist in reducing indirect financial barriers to education including (but not limited to) childcare, transportation, or supplies needed.

Supporting the Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund
You can make a gift to the Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship Fund in one of the following ways:

- **Via Credit Card:** Visit [www.tinyurl.com/BridgesDonation](http://www.tinyurl.com/BridgesDonation) and choose "Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship" as your donation designation.
- **Via Check:** Please make checks payable to Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support Services and include "Kelly Mann Memorial Scholarship" in the memo line. Checks can be mailed to PO Box 217 Nashua, NH 03061.
Get Involved

Become a Volunteer:
Bridges relies on the support of our tireless and committed volunteer core. They assist in staffing the 24-hour crisis line, providing court advocacy, helping out at the offices, visiting schools, tabling during community outreach, and planning special events. Volunteer Opportunities Include:

Co-facilitate support groups and take calls on the 24-hour support line. Accompany and provide emotional support or resources to clients at court hearings and assist clients in seeking, filling out, and filing restraining orders involving domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Help with set up and break-down at community events and Bridges’ fundraisers. Make connections with potential clients, volunteers, and supporters by being knowledgeable about the work Bridges does to support survivors. Assist with tasks leading up to major fundraising events, including Love is in the Air and the Bridges Open.

Student interns focus their hours on Community Outreach and Development, Crisis intervention and Advocacy, or on a focused project that meets their educational requirements as well as an identified need within the organization.

To learn more about volunteering and to complete a volunteer application, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at Volcoord@Bridgesnh.org.

Board of Directors:
Bridges is seeking passionate community members to lend their expertise in supporting Bridges’ work to assist survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence in rebuilding their lives and healing from trauma they have experienced.

Making this happen for more than 2,200 people each year takes a village, and an important part of our village is the Board of Directors. The individuals who serve on the board have a critical role in providing strategic leadership to help ensure that Bridges can carry out its mission to assist some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Board members serve as ambassadors in the community, spreading the word about our work, making connections for the organization, assisting in fundraising, and providing strategic guidance for future growth. Bridges’ Board meets monthly, and it is the expectation that members will assist in one committee and fundraising activities.

All nonprofit boards have three primary legal duties, including:

**Duty of Care:**
Take care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will;

**Duty of Loyalty:**
Ensure that the nonprofit’s activities and transactions are, first and foremost, advancing its mission; Recognize and disclose conflicts of interest; Make decisions that are in the best interest of the nonprofit corporation; not in the best interest of the individual board member (or any other individual or for-profit entity).

**Duty of Obedience:**
Take care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will;

To learn more about joining the Board of Directors, visit www.bridgesnh.org/our-board-of-directors/ or contact the Executive Director at director@bridgesnh.org or (603) 889-0858 ext. 202.
3rd Party Fundraising

In-Kind Drives:
Donations of physical items can be very helpful to fulfill our program needs and offset expenses. We believe that Bridges' clients deserve the best, and accept new and in like-new condition items. The types of items we accept, specifically for our Emergency Shelter clients, include:

- Tracfones with accompanying minutes
- Cleaning products (Windex, floor cleaner, and bathroom cleaner)
- Deodorant
- Diapers (all sizes)
- Dishwashing soap
- Gas cards, phone cards, and gift cards (department stores, pharmacies, grocery, etc.)
- Hand and body soap
- Laundry detergent
- New bath towels and sheets
- Paper towels
- Full size Shampoo/conditioner
- Shaving cream/razors
- Tissues
- Toilet paper
- Toothbrushes/toothpaste
- Trash bags

Non-perishable food:
- Canned food
- Cereal
- Coffee/tea
- Grocery store gift certificates
- Pasta
- Rice
- Sugar/flour

To make a in-kind donation, please contact the Housing Coordinator at janiceshouse@bridgesnh.org.

Facebook Fundraisers:
Facebook fundraisers make it easy to support causes that are important to you, including Bridges! Supporters can set up a dedicated Facebook fundraiser at any time, such as to celebrate a birthday or to mark a moment, and tell others about Bridges in order to amplify the impact the organization can have.

Steps to Create a Facebook Fundraiser:
- On your computer, login to Facebook. Then, on the left, click Fundraisers. If you don't see Fundraisers on the left, then click See more.
- Click Raise Money & choose Nonprofit. You can either:
  - Scroll to find the nonprofit you want to raise money for
  - Type Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support into the search bar
- On the left, enter:
  - The goal amount of money you want to raise
  - The currency you want the funds to be in
- Click Create.

You'll then see a screen pop up where you can invite your friends to donate to your fundraiser, share your fundraiser in your feed, or donate to the fundraiser yourself.

If you or someone you know is interested in setting up a Facebook fundraiser, the Bridges team is here to support you! Please contact Tara Levine, Director of Development, Events & Marketing, at dirdevelopment@bridgesnh.org or (603) 889-0858 ext. 237 to learn more.
Elevator Pitches:
An elevator pitch is a short promotional speech or written blurb presented to a particular target audience (individual, foundation, business, etc.) to communicate the value of a product or service and get them to take action. In this case, the goal is to communicate the essential work that Bridges does in the community and why they should get involved.

You're encouraged to create your own elevator pitches that show why you're involved with Bridges, why others should be involved, and how they can do so. To get you started, below is a sample Elevator Pitch.

Sample Elevator Pitch:
"Hi I’m [name], a Mission Ambassador/Board Member/supporter/etc. at Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support. It’s great to meet you! As an engaged member of the Greater Nashua community, I wanted to share about the important work that Bridges does with survivors/victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Domestic and sexual violence affects everyone in our communities, and does not discriminate based on your age, gender, race, or financial status. Bridges' free, confidential services are essential as we are the only crisis center serving 14 communities across Southern New Hampshire. Your support, whether it be through volunteering, donating, or spreading the word about Bridges, allows us to do even more to positively impact many people’s lives in such a profound way.

Sample Email Template:
Dear [individual name],

Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support is a nonprofit organization with a mission to cultivate communities free from violence and oppression as we support victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. Serving Southern New Hampshire since 1977, over 2,000 survivors/victims of domestic and sexual violence access Bridges' free, confidential services annually.

Domestic and sexual violence affects everyone in our communities, and does not discriminate based on your age, gender, race, or financial status. For many of Bridges’ clients, their lives have been marked by significant and repeated trauma with someone else in control and making all the decisions for them. Bridges gives these brave people a voice and the power to forge a future for themselves, in safety and independence through offering support services including housing, court advocacy, support groups, hospital advocacy, education & outreach presentations, children's advocacy, and external referrals to community partners.

I hope you will consider joining me in supporting Bridges and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in our community. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

All the best,
[Name]
Bridges Mission Ambassador
[www.bridgesnh.org]
Additional Ways to Support Bridges:

There are many ways to help Bridges raise funds, without having to ask someone directly for money. Below are just some of the additional ways in which you can assist Bridges in continuing its success in providing quality services.

- **Thank Donors:** Make thank you calls, sign thank you letters, thank people in person and send thank you emails.
- **Make friends for the Cause:** Introduce Bridges to everybody you know. Create an elevator speech (or use the one included in this toolkit) and use it.
- **Forward Emails:** Whether it is an appeal, newsletter, or event information, it is super easy to forward emails to your email list. Emails are more likely to be opened and read if coming from someone you know, rather than directly from Bridges.
- **Bring Guests:** Bring guests to Bridges fundraising events, and Hope Tours, thus widening our circle of potential supporters.
- **Share on Social Media:** Let all of your social media followers know about the important work that Bridges does in the community, why you’re involved, and why they should be involved. Not sure what to say? You can also like, comment on, and share Bridges' posts directly to your page(s).
- **Have your Voice Heard:** Advocate for Bridges especially in times when our political representatives need to be called, to inform them of Bridges services and the need for funding.
- **Spread the Word:** Distribute posters, lawn signs, and brochures etc. promoting events.
- **Form new Community Connections:** Link Bridges with local civic groups, clubs, churches etc. that you belong to. Additionally, contact local businesses and vendors to seek in-kind donations such as supplies, equipment, technical assistance or volunteers.

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Social Media:

- **Find us on Facebook:** @Bridgesnh
- **Instagram:** @Bridges.nh
- **LinkedIn:** @Bridges: Domestic & Sexual Violence Support Services, Inc.
Hear from our Clients:
It took courage and openness on everyone’s part to create a gender inclusive support group. Bridges realized that there was a need that was not being met, but the group members had to be open for this to happen. There was a huge safety piece, but Bridges has ensured that I feel safe every step of the way.

We think of this issue affecting women and only women. I have learned that there are men who can and will understand. It helps me to relate to others and reminds me that this affects everyone no matter how they identify.

We’re all brave, but he’s brave too. Abuse isn’t just a woman’s issue. It’s a human issue.

Through Bridges I have learned to love myself. The other members of this support group loving and supporting me has shown me that I can love myself.

With every response (from the advocate I spoke to), I felt heard and understood. The responses were never over-the-top and I never felt coddled. There was never any pressure to join group. I was very nervous, but there’s been so much growth in me and everyone else around me.
Key Contact Information

Development/Fundraising Points of Contact:

Tara Levine  
*Director of Development, Events & Marketing*  
Email Address: dirdevelopment@bridgesnh.org  
Direct Line: 603-889-0858 ext. 237

Pamela Auer  
*Director of Development (Part-time)*  
Email Address: development@bridgesnh.org  
Direct Line: 603-889-0858 ext. 214

Dawn Reams  
*Executive Director*  
Email Address: director@bridgesnh.org  
Direct Line: 603-889-0858 ext. 202

Our Offices:

**Nashua Office:**  
28 Concord Street  
Nashua, NH 03064  
Phone: 603-889-0858  
Fax: 603-402-4974  
Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Mon-Fri  
Closed Wed from 3 pm to 4:30 pm

**Milford Office:**  
16 Elm St., Suite 2.  
Milford, NH 03055  
Phone: 603-672-9833  
Fax: 603-554-1214  
Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Mon-Fri  
Closes at 12:30 pm on Wed

**24-Hour Support Line:** 603-883-3044  
*Note: You do NOT need to be in crisis to call.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!