

Bridge Communities  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Over 160 Homeless Children Served by Bridge Communities

**Bridge Communities releases its 2009 Annual Report**

During the year ending December 31, 2009, Bridge Communities, housed and served 163 DuPage homeless children through our Transitional Housing Program. Bridge Communities is the largest service provider for homeless families in DuPage County. A safe home paired with support services was provided for 103 families resulting in nearly 70,000 nights of housing.

A home is just the beginning to what Bridge Communities provides when a homeless family walks through our door.

Beyond the safety and stability that a home provides, Bridge Communities strives to help each family achieve long-term self sufficiency. Our goals focus on improving each family's education and earning potential, reducing or eliminating debt and teaching each family to maximize their household resources. All of these goals are achieved through personalized volunteer mentoring partnered with expert case management – and supported by nearly 2,000 financial and volunteer supporters.

During the two-year Bridge program children receive mentoring and tutoring to help them catch-up to their peers academically and socially. Donated automobiles are often provided to families who need transportation to work and school.

In Bridge Communities' 2009 Annual Report, Bridge reported a 15% increase in the number of calls received from persons experiencing a housing crisis. Bridge recorded 1303 calls in 2009 compared to 1131 calls the previous year. "The new face of homeless is a family with children," says Joyce Hothan, executive director. "We work, primarily, with single moms who are struggling to get back on their feet and provide for their children."

Bridge Communities partnered with DuPage County Housing Authority Howlett Initiative to provide subsidized housing vouchers for graduates. Additionally, three graduates closed on new condominiums through our Shared Equity Homeownership Program. Hothan states, "It is important for us to develop a successful exit plan for our families. We want to see them maintain permanent housing and employment. Our goal is to create a system that creates long term self sustainability."

Exit surveys show that Bridge Communities' families consistently reach their goal of self sufficiency and permanent housing. Surveys from former clients show that in 2009, 100% of families who graduated one-year earlier were still in stable housing. In addition, 88% were able to maintain stable employment and 66% had not increased their level of debt.

Bridge Communities has become the areas largest provider of housing for homeless families. The Program includes 14 Transitional Housing Program apartment buildings scattered throughout DuPage County that houses approximately 76 families on any given day. Its annual budget of more than \$2.4 million is raised through multiple funding sources that ensure a positive balance sheet each year. Through partnerships with 44 faith-based and community action groups, Bridge raises 28% of its budget. Partnerships with thousands of individuals, corporations and public foundations, Bridge secures an additional 42% of its budget. "We welcomed 103 new donors into our "family" in 2009. In an era where many organizations are losing donors, we are incredibly grateful that more and more DuPage County citizens find our mission valuable and worthy of their charitable dollars. Every donation, large or small, will help us through this tough recession," said Mark Milligan, president and co-founder of Bridge Communities.

To request a copy of Bridge Communities' 2009 Annual Report or learn more about their work, please visit our web site at [www.bridgecommunities.org](http://www.bridgecommunities.org) or call Amy Van Polen at 630-545-0610, ext. 12.

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Bridge Communities.. *connecting homeless families with a better future* ... is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, with offices in Glen Ellyn, whose mission is to provide transitional housing to homeless families in DuPage County through partnerships with faith-based and community organizations who provide mentoring relationships which root homeless families into local neighborhoods. In the past 20 years, Bridge Communities has helped over 2000 people cross the bridge from homelessness to permanent housing. The Bridge Communities web site is [www.bridgecommunities.org](http://www.bridgecommunities.org).