Bridge Communities…
connecting homeless families to a better future

…I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference

Robert Frost
When Mark and Bob rented that first apartment for a homeless family, they really did not know this act of kindness would take their lives down a new road. Years later, they would be joined on this road by many who would volunteer to help others in need. Together, all would walk the road toward a better life.

At the beginning, in 1988, it was truly a road “less traveled by” as Frost would say. No one else in DuPage County was helping homeless families find a way out by providing the important foundation of a permanent roof over their heads. However, this road “less traveled by” has ultimately become a main artery for those families who need to find a way out of poverty and homelessness for themselves and their children. Two decades later, Bridge Communities is, the largest service provider for the homeless in DuPage County.

All of us, at one time or another, have reflected on how our lives would be different if we hadn’t taken a certain path. Maybe we would not have met a certain someone or moved into a certain career. A good many of our Bridge families, like Erin in our feature story, reflect back to us that, their life journey has changed for the better because they found Bridge. We may have traveled together for only a short time, but the profound changes have left indelible marks. Through the help of their mentors, our Bridge services of tutoring, case management, employment and training, new avenues for success and happiness have been opened to them.

When we speak to mentors during their Bridge mentor training, we describe our program as a journey for them as well as their clients. Many of our mentors have stated that they too have been profoundly changed because of their experience. It may be a tired phrase, but it is very true that the journey is just as important as the destination in life. I know Mark and Bob have been changed because of the road they traveled, starting with the first family they helped in 1988. I know my life has changed in the 12 years I have been involved. And Erin’s story is only one of hundreds of similar stories I have heard through the years. Each one of them started off with only dead ends, detours, and major obstacles. I have to admit I am a sucker for happy endings, but then again that’s why I am here still telling these stories.

Thank you so very much, each and every volunteer, donor, staff and board member of Bridge Communities who have supported our work this past year, and thank you to all those courageous families who have worked so hard to take the road “less traveled by” out of homelessness. “And that has made all the difference”! 

Joyce Hothan
Executive Director
Client Outcomes

**Bridge Communities** has helped nearly 400 families travel their road to self sufficiency. In 1999, we began to survey families one year after they exited the two-year Transitional Housing program. 114 former families, who successfully completed the program, have replied to the self-reporting survey. Results from the 2008 surveys indicate overwhelmingly that while in the Program, Bridge families developed the skills necessary to live productive self sufficient lives.

**Housing**

100% of clients that exited the program in the past year (who completed the survey), were able to maintain permanent, stable housing

- 44% fair Market rental
- 31% own a home
- 25% subsidized housing

**Employment**

92% of former clients were able to maintain stable employment

- 84% full-time
- 8% part-time
- 8% unemployed

**Debt Management**

63% of former clients had not increased level of debt since they left the program.

- 37% debt decreased
- 13% debt remained the same
- 25% no debt

Transitional Housing Program Partners

Church of the Resurrection, Glen Ellyn
Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Carol Stream
Daybreak/St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, Lisle
DuPage African Methodist Episcopal Church, Lisle
DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church, Naperville
Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church
Faith Lutheran Church (Faith House), Glen Ellyn
Families Helping Families, Naperville
First Congregational UCC, Downers Grove
First Congregational UCC, Glen Ellyn
First Presbyterian Church, Glen Ellyn
First Presbyterian Church, Wheaton
First United Methodist Church, Downers Grove
First United Methodist Church, Glen Ellyn
Gary Memorial United Methodist Church, Wheaton
Glen Ellyn Bible Church
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Downers Grove
Hinsdale Community Group
Hinsdale United Methodist Church
Holy Ghost Catholic Church, Wood Dale
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Elmhurst
Lombard Christian Reformed Church
Our Lady of Mercy, Aurora

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, Darien
Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Naperville
Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Naperville
St. Daniel the Prophet Catholic Parish, Wheaton
St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, Naperville
St. Isaac Jogues Catholic Church, Hinsdale
St. Peter’s Catholic Church, Itasca
St. Petronille Catholic Church, Glen Ellyn
St. Scholastica Catholic Church, Woodridge
St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, Naperville
Steping Stones, Roselle
  - Trinity Lutheran Church
  - United Methodist Church
  - The Ministerium, Bloomingdale
  - Episcopal Church of the Incarnation
  - St. Isidore Catholic Church
  - St. Walter’s Catholic Church
  - THM Ministries, Wayne
  - Little Home Church by the Wayside
  - Resurrection Catholic Community
  - St. Matthew United Church of Christ, Wheaton
  - St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Winfield
  - Union Church, Hinsdale

By providing housing to a family in need, Bridge allows us to save the money we need for the future. My wonderful case manager and mentors taught me how to see my future and make better decisions in a way that I had never done before. I am now, on my own, able to continue my life down a path that was started by their guidance.

Shaunte, Transitional Housing Graduate
In 1996, Erin found herself at a sharp crossroad in her life with little support and desperate as to where to turn. Hearing her young son scream, “Stop fighting,” was the wake up call she needed to get out of a troubled marriage. While her ex-husband was at work, she packed a few bags with their clothes and took the $200 she had and fled. A friend drove Erin and her children far enough away she believed her ex-husband would not find them. Erin had no idea what their future held, she just wanted to be safe. “I wanted to save my kids from my mistake,” Erin shared.

Her ex-husband did find them; he broke into the dilapidated motel room where they had been living and tried to strangle her. She remembers reaching deep within herself and using everything she had to not just completely give up. Her self-worth was very low from the abusive marriage, but she fought back and broke out of the terrible situation once again. This time Erin was determined it would be for good. “My children were my strength. I was so scared they had been damaged and I wanted to change.”

A few days after the attack (it was almost Thanksgiving) Erin heard a knock on the door. It was Mark Milligan and Fran Anderson. They had been told by the social worker at her son’s school that Erin and her children were living in the motel. They explained the Bridge program and asked Erin if she would be interested. It was the “fork in the road” that Erin needed to begin a new life. She decided take that road and enter the Bridge program.

Erin soon met her mentors, Mary and Jack. They helped the family get settled into their new apartment. Once stabilized, Erin and her mentors worked together to open a checking account, they started to teach her budgeting skills, and she began to save money. Her mentors helped her set goals to gain self sufficiency. In need of a car, Bridge was able to offer her a donated automobile. Erin said, “Most importantly, Mary and Jack made me feel that I was worth something. My self-esteem was terrible. I felt I was worth nothing, but Mary always had a smile and a hug for me and it made a world of difference.”

As Erin began working on her goals, she realized that the program really would help her get on her feet. Even though she entered the program just for her children, Erin realized that she also needed help. It was then Erin committed to make the long term changes needed to brighten her family’s future for good. Erin said, “I wanted to be successful because people believed in me when I needed it most. I did not want to let them down. I realized that this short term program was here now, so I took every opportunity that was offered to me to learn how to budget, save money, go to school and make the permanent break from my husband. I realized that I had a lot to live for. There were so many people in the Bridge program willing to help me and they didn’t even know me.

Because she has always had a strong need to help others,
the career path Erin chose was in Emergency Support. She completed a three-month training program and became an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). She was hired by Suburban Ambulance Company where she worked as a basic life support provider.

Erin then decided to apply to Loyola University to earn a paramedic’s license. It was a daunting process to even be accepted. Her parents offered to help her with tuition while she went through the very intense one-year program. She earned an Associate’s Degree and a national certification, so she could work anywhere in the country that provided her family with the best opportunity.

During this time she met her fiancé, Bill and moved to Minnesota. She was re-licensed as a paramedic and re-started her career. Her career has advanced to her current position as an EMT regional supervisor of northwest Minnesota. She is charged with coordinating the education needs and certifications for all public services agencies such as the fire, police, water and maintenance departments of a multiple county area.

Erin exemplifies the way the Bridge Communities Transitional Housing Program can transform the life of a family within just two short years.

Each year at Thanksgiving, Erin thinks about Bridge and her mentors Mary and Jack. This past November she decided to call Mark Milligan to reconnect, share her gratitude and update him on her life. Mark was impressed with Erin’s successes and gladly reconnected her with her mentors. Mary remembered Erin fondly and they shared many laughs and tears when they reconnected. Mary shared, “Erin was an independent, strong willed woman who was determined to make permanent changes in her life.”

Erin loves her life and appreciates how fortunate she is to live “a regular life, just like we all want.” She is in a relationship with someone who loves and supports her. She owns her own home on four acres of land and she “loves being a homeowner.” She manages a large family of three children and two step-children and they enjoy nights at home playing games, attending school activities and enjoying the many great Minnesota lakes for fishing and boating. While she still has stresses and worries, Erin is pleased that she has a “teammate” to get through it with whom she loves and trusts.”

Erin became emotional when she talked about her time in the Bridge program. She wanted to thank everyone who supported her as she traveled down her road toward self sufficiency. She said, “Everyone involved with Bridge Communities not only helped me, but my kids too. They are selfless and their incredible devotion to helping families brought us to the next phase of this incredible life.” Erin laughed as she remembered her own Bridge experience, “Never give up on the feisty ones, we need the help more than most!”

Long ago when standing at that crossroad in her life, Erin had a defining moment. She realized deep inside that if she chose this new direction, her life would never be the same again. Erin said, “I was right, but never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that this would be my life. I love it and I am so happy.”

I wanted to be successful because people believed in me when I needed it most.
Community Partnerships

Bridge Builders are local residents who take a hands-on approach to enhancing the lives of Bridge families, particularly creating exceptional experiences for the children.

Career Vision provides skill aptitude assessments and testing so that our families have a better understanding of their needs and abilities.

Community Housing Association of DuPage (CHAD) provides long-term government subsidized housing for many Bridge Communities’ clients when they leave the Bridge Transitional Housing program. CHAD also manages Bridge Communities’ apartment buildings and does Bridge’s book-keeping.

DuPage Community Clinic fulfills pre-entry drugscreens for Bridge Communities applicants.

DuPage County Homeless Continuum consists of 58 member organizations that work together to create visionary solutions to promote self sufficiency, maintain a seamless network of community resources and build capacity through the responsible allocation of funds with the overall goal to end homelessness in DuPage County.

Family Shelter Services provides referrals to the Bridge program and provides some counseling for our clients.

DuPage Homeownership Center provides credit counseling and homeownership preparation for Bridge Communities’ clients. Some clients have purchased a home through their discounted loan program.

Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC) provides employment and training services to our clients.

Peoples Resource Center (PRC) provides a food pantry, employment training and other resources to many of our clients.

Posed for Success provides business clothing to women who are entering the workforce, but who lack the financial means to acquire suitable attire for job interviews.

Sharing Connections provides furniture and clothing for some of our clients.

Village Garage Glen Ellyn accepts, inspects, repairs and stores donated automobiles for the Bridge Communities Auto Donation program. Donated cars are given to our clients to use for transportation to work and child care.

Gifts to Bridge Communities

Received between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008

Bridge Communities would like to recognize donors who provided financial and in-kind support during the 2008 calendar year. We strive to accurately list all donations. Due to space and cost restrictions, Bridge is not able to list donors below $50. We appreciate all donations and apologize for any oversight. If your gift is not properly recognized, please contact our office at 630-545-0610, ext. 12. On behalf of the families served, thank you.

$10,000 and above

- 95.9 The River
- Alfred Bersted Foundation
- Anonymous (4)
- The Balka Foundation
- Bridge Builders
- Central DuPage Health
- Chicago Tribune Holiday Fund
- A fund of the Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation
- Emergency Fund
- The Jeanmette and John Cuijkshank Memorial Foundation
- The Judy Family
- Harris
- ICON Digital Design
- Little Angel Foundation
- McCormick Tribune Foundation
- The Ronald R. McDaniell Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. David Plumb
- Mr. and Mrs. Mark Spears
- Sts. Peter and Paul Parish
- Tothery Family Foundation
- United Way of DuPage Area
- United Way of Naperville

$5,000 to $9,999

- Mr. and Mrs. Michael Allen
- Anonymous
- Baird & Warner Good Will Network of Chicago Community Trust
- Bank of America Foundation
- Community Memorial Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Ken Favata
- Glen Ellyn Infant Welfare Society
- Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Johnson
- Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kirby
- Mr. and Mrs. John Kreiling
- Mr. and Mrs. Tim Mackenzie
- Mr. and Mrs. Ross Manine
- Monarch Landings
- Morgan Stanley Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Carl A. Pellettiere
- Pepsico Foundation
- Suburban Life Publications
- Mr. and Mrs. John Thacker
- Walter E. & Ruth K. Wright Foundation

$1000 to $4999

- Mr. and Mrs. Mike Allens
- Anonymous (3)
- A-Parently One Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Marc Assaslemer
- Mr. and Mrs. Ron Aubrey
- Bank of America Matching Gifts
- Mr. and Mrs. Gary Bartlett
- Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Becker
- Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bermann
- Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Boyd
- Ms. LaVerne S. Brzozowski
- Mr. and Mrs. Doug Carthy
- Community Bank Wheaton
- and Glen Ellyn
- Constellation Brands, Inc.
- Corn Products International
- Ms. Elizabeth Cronin
- Mr. and Mrs. Steve Daley
- Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Darnall
- Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Delisi
- DesignStorms, Inc.
- Directions Training Center
- Ms. Marybeth Dougherty
- Dr. and Mrs. Michael Durbin
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Ellis
- Emerson Charitable Trust
- Mr. and Mrs. J. Todd Faulkner
- Mr. and Mrs. Zed Francis
- Mr. and Mrs. William Frazer
- Mr. and Mrs. Joe Gavin
- GKN Foundation
- Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Gorski
- Grace United Methodist Church
- Grand Prairie Transit
- Mr. and Mrs. James Gruscock
- Hinsdale Bank & Trust
- Mr. and Mrs. Hal Hothen
- Ms. Janet N. Hagg
- The Humenansky Family Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Huppertz
- Mr. and Mrs. Stanley H. Iverson
- Mr. and Mrs. Tim Jenkins
- Mr. and Mrs. Garrett W. Jenkins
- Mr. and Mrs. Winiflow S. Jones
- Mr. and Mrs. John Joseph
- Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kael
- Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Larabee
- Mr. and Mrs. Paul LeFart
- Mr. and Mrs. Randall S. Leland
- The Lubriza Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Dave Ludwig
- Mr. and Mrs. Dan Luessenhop
- M.R. Bauer Foundation
- Micro Tek Computer Labs
- Mr. and Mrs. Mark L. Milligan
- Mr. and John M. Mulherein and
- Ms. Sara Bonkowski
- Mr. and Mrs. Ken Murphy
- Naperville Noon Lions Foundation
- Naperville Prebyterian Church
- Naperville Rotary Charities, Inc.
- Mr. and Mrs. David Navarro
- New Horizon Christian Fellowship
- Nicor
- Oxford Bank & Trust
- Mr. Robert Patsiaude
- Mr. and Mrs. Zach Patterson
- Mr. and Mrs. William Pecover
- PeoplesAmerica Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Greg M. Pierce
- Reidekemarian Lutheran Church
- Mr. and Mrs. Richard Routsen
- Seibert Landscaping Company
- Mr. and Mrs. Glen A. Shute
- Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Skallos
- Mr. and Mrs. Walter Snodell
- Southminster Presbyterian Church
- St. Daniel The Prophet Parish
- St. Isaac Jogues Church
- Mr. Judy Stowe
- Suburban Bank & Trust
- Sun Publications
- Mr. and Mrs. Rob Suva
- Mr. and Mrs. Sven S. Sykes
- Village Garage & Tire of Glen Ellyn
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wahlgren
- Mr. Bill Walker
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Wallace
- Washington Mutual
- Washington Mutual Matching Gift Program
- Mr. and Mrs. Tim Waterlow
- Mr. and Mrs. John F. Welch
- West Suburban Bank and Trust
- Wheaton Orthopedics LTD
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Wiedner
- William Wrigley Company
- Mrs. Marilyn Wolff
- Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Yates

$500 to $999

- Advocate Home Health Care Services
- Mr. and Mrs. Mark A. Anderson
- Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Anderson
- Anonymous (2)
- Mr. Eric B. Ault
- Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Austin
- Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Bakker
- Mr. and Mrs. Bryan Barus
- Buss Landscaping, Inc.
- Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Burlingame
- Mr. and Mrs. James Carlson
- Mr. and Mrs. James A. Carroll
- Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Cohen
- Mr. Peter Cooper and
- Mrs. Celia Rodee
- Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Dickson
- Ms. Renne Dion-Shi
- Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Doyle
- DuPage African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Fallon
- First Church of Lombard
- First United Methodist Church of Elmhurst
Employment Stats:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clients received employment counseling</th>
<th>$12,913</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clients took skill assessment testing at Career Vision</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clients enrolled in college</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clients received professional certificates</td>
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## Statement of Financial Position

**Fiscal year: July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008**

### Current Assets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cash:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>76,026</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restricted</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Investments:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>DuPage Community Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
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<td><strong>Receivables:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants - Unrestricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>7,095</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Assets</strong></td>
<td>714,698</td>
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### Property and equipment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Furniture and equipment</strong></td>
<td>74,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land</strong></td>
<td>1,607,291</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Buildings</strong></td>
<td>5,482,737</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leasehold improvements</strong></td>
<td>143,542</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction in progress</td>
<td>2,229</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Less accumulated depreciation</strong></td>
<td>(1,134,562)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Property and Equipment</strong></td>
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### Deposits:

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<th>2008</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Condominium shares</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Security deposits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Other Assets</strong></td>
<td>1,490,875</td>
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### Current Liabilities:

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lines of Credit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Notes Payable</strong></td>
<td>9,021</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deferred Income</strong></td>
<td>203,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Payables - Trade</strong></td>
<td>40,695</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Payables - Grants</strong></td>
<td>16,226</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Payables - Program Partner Deposits</strong></td>
<td>34,842</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Payables - Security Deposits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Liability</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Accrued Expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Current Liabilities</strong></td>
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### Noncurrent Liabilities:

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Notes Payable</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Liability</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deferred Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Noncurrent Liabilities</strong></td>
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### Total Liabilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unrestricted</strong></td>
<td>3,918,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporarily Restricted</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Permanently Restricted</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
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</table>

### Revenues:

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<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programs &amp; Services</strong></td>
<td>1,148,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client Housing Costs</strong></td>
<td>553,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Services</strong></td>
<td>139,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration</strong></td>
<td>212,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundraising</strong></td>
<td>212,861</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In-Kind Gifts</strong></td>
<td>150,800</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate &amp; Foundation Grants</strong></td>
<td>134,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government Grants - Operating</strong></td>
<td>$197,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government Grants - Capital</strong></td>
<td>$622,361</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
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### Expenses:

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### Net Assets:

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### Total Liabilities and Net Assets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td>3,401,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>8,381,094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bridge Communities provides transitional housing and comprehensive services to homeless families that live and work in DuPage County.

Our mission:
Inspire and affect change by advocating for homeless families while at the same time providing services and opportunities that connect those families to a better future.

Collaborate with faith-based partners, community groups and businesses to leverage resources and create long-term solutions.

Lead by example through our innovative programs and grassroots involvement.

Strive for personal integrity in all interactions.

Encourage collaborative decision-making while valuing individual initiatives.

Value diverse perspectives.

Consciously sustain an environment of caring, support and personal growth for our staff and others with whom we work.

Our vision:
To promote a community where all people can live to their full potential.

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Maria Sanchez, Secretary
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Molly Colford Howieson, Case Manager
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Margo Matthews, Director of Grants
Patty Kelly, Employment Director
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Marge Bartlett, Special Projects Coordinator
Lisa Hedrick, Sleep Out Saturday Coordinator

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