Berkshire Resources for Integration of Diverse Groups through Education

2020 at a glance - DEC. 1, 2020
17 Main St.
Lee, MA

413-394-4305 (o)
413-854-4020 (m)
Gwendolyn VanSant, CEO
Meeting Our Mission 2020

Moving as an Anti-Racist

- **Acknowledge** the reality of what is happening to Black and Brown people in America.
- **Align** with communities that have been historically marginalized.
- **Amplify** BIPOC voices, especially Black womxn, as well as the efforts of Black organizers.
- **Ask** people and communities what they need; don't assume.
- **Activate** your power and privilege for justice by using your position to shift resources to BIPOC communities.

Catalysts for Change & Integration est. 2007 IN Berkshire County, Western MA

**B R I D G E**

Berkshire Resources for Integration of Diverse Groups through Education

**NOT IN OUR COUNTY**

STOP HATE. TOGETHER.

BERKSHIRE
PIVOTING AT THE SPEED OF TRUST AND LOVE

Dear partners and friends of BRIDGE,

“This moment is where even through our actions, material or not we can truly prove to ourselves power belongs in our own hands.” ~Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

What does it mean to ‘work at the speed of trust’? 2020 was a continuation of our decade+ work at BRIDGE of building trusting relationships. As I pause and reflect, I know at BRIDGE, we simply could not have done everything we did without the relationships we share with you built on trust, respect, learning, and yes, love.

From launching the New Pathways series in April to our expanded food distribution effort throughout the Berkshires to pivoting to run our core trainings for organizations large and small throughout this extremely challenging year online, and then launching our New Pathways conference (featuring a keynote by Dr. Angela Davis), I am keenly aware that it all comes back to trust.

Personally, I trusted my own instincts and perspective, trusted our clients, trusted our incredible team to do good work with care, trusted that our funders would show up to support our community, and even trusted my critics. What this meant in the end was that we did exactly what we set out to do. We started building more equitable and just pathways into the future... Bouncing forward with resilience, not bouncing back! As we prepare to continue the much needed work, in the new year, I am asking for your help once again.

Here are three ways we invite you to support us:

Become a sustaining donor with a monthly contribution. Email us at donations@multiculturalbridge.org or note on the remittance envelope.
Make an annual contribution - all amounts welcome.
Support one of our amazing programs. Contact us for a digital 2020 zine on BRIDGE progress.
donations@multiculturalbridge.org

Thank you sincerely for your trust in BRIDGE and for your generous presence as an essential part of our beloved community.

Warm Regards,
Gwendolyn VanSant (Dec. 14, 2020)

“Mutual Aid is a way we can build networks in our backyard or our community to give aid and receive it if we need it. We can choose to share instead of hoard. We can choose to help instead of hurt.” - Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

BRIDGE
Berkshire Resources for Integration of Diverse Groups through Education
2020 OUTGOING BOARD CHAIR NOTE

DEAR BRIDGE COMMUNITY,

THIS YEAR HAS CONTAINED MULTITUDES: WITH THE GRACE AND PERSEVERANCE OF BRIDGE’S EXPERT TEAM AND DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS, CONSTITUENTS ACROSS THE BERKSHIRES AND BEYOND HAVE FELT THE TANGIBLE IMPACT OF BRIDGE’S WORK— IN THE FORM OF CONNECTION AND TRAINING THROUGH NEW PATHWAYS, IN THE FORM OF GROCERIES, MEALS, PPE, AND BILLS PAID, IN THE FORM OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO SHOW UP FOR THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.

OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, I HAVE HAD THE HONOR OF BEING A BOARD MEMBER AT BRIDGE. I AM SO GRATEFUL TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK CLOSELY WITH GWENDOLYN (WHO IN HER BRIDGE COACHING ROLE PROVIDES HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTING AND DIRECT SUPPORT TO OTHER BOARDS) ON CONTINUING TO BRING BRIDGE’S BOARD POLICIES, PROCESSES, AND MEMBERS INTO ALIGNMENT WITH BRIDGE’S MISSION AND WORK. WE HAVE WORKED TO INTEGRATE ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICES INTO OUR BOARD CULTURE, AND WILL BE OFFICIALLY MAKING OUR TRJ ACCOUNTABILITY A SUBCOMMITTEE OF GOVERNANCE. OUR ABILITIES TO COMMUNICATE, COLLABORATE, AND STRATEGIZE AS A BOARD HAVE GROWN AS WE FORM INTENTIONAL WAYS OF CONNECTING AND COORDINATING.

AS BRIDGE GROWS TO MEET THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF DEMAND, I WANT TO HIGHLIGHT THAT THE ORGANIZATION HAS CONTINUOUSLY STAYED CONNECTED TO ITS ORIGINAL MISSION TO ACT AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE. THE LEVEL OF INTEGRITY PRACTICED THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION IS ONE OF THE PIECES THAT DREW ME TO WORKING WITH BRIDGE AND SOMETHING THAT REMAINS CENTRAL TO BRIDGE’S ORGANIZING AND WORK. I AM SO EXCITED TO SEE BRIDGE CONTINUE TO FLOURISH AND BE RECOGNIZED AS A LEADING CHANGEMAKER AND A MODEL FOR GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING ACROSS THE STATE AND COUNTRY!

THANK YOU TO THE BRIDGE TEAM FOR ALL THE WAYS YOU HAVE SHOWN UP THIS YEAR AND PRIORITIZED CARE AND COLLABORATION. THANK YOU TO BRIDGE’S VOLUNTEERS FOR ALL YOUR BEHIND THE SCENES WORK TO SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBORS AND BRIDGE’S PROGRAMS. THANK YOU TO MY FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP AND GENEROSITY. THANK YOU TO GWENDOLYN, FOR YOUR MENTORSHIP, VISION, AND THE DEPTH OF CARE THAT YOU BRING TO ALL THE SPACES YOU AND BRIDGE INHABIT. TOWARDS A NEW YEAR FILLED WITH JUSTICE, TRANSFORMATION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND JOY!

SINCERELY,
ARI CAMERON
Upcoming New Pathways Labs to help us seed an equitable and resilient future based on justice, healing, and transformation
Moderated by Aseante Renee and Gwendolyn VanSant | Additional speakers added daily!

**Coming soon!**

**5.21 | 6:30 PM Whose stories are emerging?**
Rachel Moriarty, Jenn Smith, Setsuko Winchester

**5.22 | 9:30 AM Local and Sustainable Economies**
Dr. Chenzira Kahina, Jenn Salinetti, and Greg Watson

**5.22 | 1:30 PM Whose caring for the economic survival of our Black and Brown communities?**
Shirley Edgerton and John Lewis

**5.23 | 9:30 AM Investing in Our Future**
Josie Greene, Aseante Renee, and Tuti B. Scott

**5.24 | 1:30 PM New Pathways Action Lab**
Open Discussion, Q&A, Share

“Many of you have been ‘practicing’ equity work alongside me. You’ve made equity work an intentional, embodied practice for some time. With the outbreak of COVID-19, I am clear that practice time is simply up. Game on. We must create the new future we have aspired to, dreamed about, and envisioned for so long.” -Gwendolyn

**Sign up!** [multiculturalbridge.org](http://multiculturalbridge.org)  
Curated by Gwendolyn VanSant
Building Bridges Programs - Increased Engagement by 50-100%

Women to Women: We increased our participation by 50% and doubled our engagement time by returning to weekly meeting upon request of the community.

Happiness Toolbox: We extended our season from 2 weeks in summer with 2 special events to sustained engagement with monthly enrichment activities and 2 week hybrid program and monthly field trips. Youth Leadership stronger than ever in programming and social media support.

New* Food Sovereignty Program: We enhanced our existing mutual aid program with our W2W and HT families and increased our capacity to serve Brown, Black Communities and Families with high needs with new & existing grants, clients & partnerships in response to COVID-19


All powered by the network of board, staff, volunteers, activists and allies in our Towards Racial Justice and Equity in the Berkshires, ext. 2009 (Race Task Force and TRJ-South)
Resilient Diversified Funding Streams

*Highlight: Received MCLA 125th anniversary Medallion for our good work for 10+ years!*

**Earned Revenue $972,000 year to date (FY19 $495K)**

After the pandemic impact of losing contracts or significantly reducing in March 2020, we were able to recuperate with new contracts, reduced previous contracts and exceed projected budget. $253,000 (FY2019 $348K) Doubled membership revenue.$49,000 (FY2019 $24K)

Client, customer, and network Base reaches throughout Massachusetts in to NY and as far as CA and many other states! Home base: Berkshire County!

**Established New Funding Streams & Visibility**

**Grants:**

We were able to identify new grant realtionships to create new programs to meet the pandemic need and our FY2020 Priorities - $341,000 (FY2019 n/a)

**PPP/EIDL:**

We were able to finally secure financial credit with both SBA programs PPP (Greylock) and EIDL(SBA) which statistically was an anomaly for a minority and women run business or non-profit nationally. $137,000 (FY2019 n/a on line of credit/loans)

**BECMA:**

New member of Black Economic Council of Massachusetts and featured presenter at Black Expo in November

**New Programs:**

Hosting IDEA Institute train-the-trainer and also launched Inclusive Leadership Cohort 2021

Launched New Pathways Platforms: Talks, Labs, Podcast and Conference!
BRIDGE Team:

- **Stephanie Wright** - MSW Community Engagement and Happiness Toolbox Coordinator
- **Maya Richards** - Justice and Sustainability Coordinator*
- **Elie Yeo** - Business and Finance Manager*
- **JV Hampton-VanSant** - Digital Strategist and IT Coordinator
- **Don'Je Smith** - Executive Assistant
- **Gwendolyn VanSant** - CEO and Founding Director
- **Silvia Soria** - Bilingual Coordinator of Women to Women
- **Carmen Silva Baker** - Positive Psychology Lead for W2W and HT*
- **Dr. Emily Williams** - Special Projects
- **Aseante Renee** - New Pathways, Special Projects/Clients and Strategy

**CEO Commitment to Staff Wellness & Safety.** In 2020, we prioritized and accomplished:

- Provided wellness resources, time paid for mental health and quarantines & transitions.
- Provided each staff 4 COVID Wellness stipends
- Provided Stipends to adjust to Safety Requirements.
- Provided extensive PD support & coaching for our BIPOC team (executive coaching, team building, leadership training, systems training, technical skills training for scaling)

**Stewarding the Pandemic Pivot**

- Created Virtual Platform and set industry "gold" standard instantly with staff for clients across sectors
- Created New Programs, New Pathways, for clients and professionals in Spring 2020 (40 presenters in Labs and Talks, hundreds of attendees)
- Produced national conference in Fall 2020 (420+ attendees, 60 presenters)
- Hosted IDEA Institute for Train-the-Trainer Pilot (virtually!) & Manual completion by end of Lennox Grant cycle (Feb. 2021)
- Expanded network of staff*, experts and nationally and internationally renowned thought leaders in our BRIDGE network: Dr. Beverly Tatum, Dr. Angela Davis, Aseante Renee & Dr. Emily Williams... and dozens of presenters!
Development:

- Created new business, municipal & non-profit partnerships: e.g. MVP Action, Blue Q, Big Elm, Berkshire Mtn Distillery alongside our longstanding partners!
- Identified several new family foundations
- Registered on national boards for anti-racism and immigration work we have been doing!
- Increased donor base to 600+ active donors during the pandemic crisis and BLM uprising!
- Expanded Development Committee
- New Fundraising Tools: updated Ways To Give, Berkshire Restorative Justice Box, BRIDGE pin,
- Successful social media campaigns: Facebook Birthdays increased!, Giving Tuesday & Art Auction
- Started Reserve Fund with $15K for 3 years (total $45K by 2022) from seed investor
- Launched Instagram - one channel for development and one for organizational,
- Social Media Presence: Linked In, Twitter and Facebook!
- Trivia Night, Garden Party, Art Auction SJIAs...all a success!

Ways To Give
There are so many Ways To Give!

Join as a member. Please see our member levels and join us as an annual partner.

Your organization can join as a partner in justice and equity - if you areall individuals, you are supporting a local non-profit in being able to host a training.

Sustaining Monthly Donation: When donors make a monthly commitment, it supports our day-to-day Programs and operations plan and make an impact. BRIDGE’s Replenish Fund: We now have a fund to promote healing and growth of community bystanders and belonging to those members in our community who have been affected by trauma, hate, and oppression. We want gifts, stocks, hugs and licenses, help us reach $50,000 to create a Trust. Help make your donation today.

Moonlight Mile March: Make a two year contribution for us to scale BRIDGE’s scope and develop BRIDGE employees. An anonymous donor has stepped forth to offer a 2:1 match to support.

BRIDGE’s Endowment Capital Campaign: We need BRIDGE strong for the long haul. So we’re trying to create a fund of 10 donors who will be the foundation for an endowment. If 10 donors or $50,000, will you join us? Write me if you’d like more information. I’d love to speak with you.

Sallie Yarwood Memorial Fund: Honoring Sallie Yarwood, her expertise & dedication to social work and personal healing of women since her passing four years ago, this fund supports women and girls in the Berkshires who are seeking to fill in gaps of safety and stability in their lives through our unique “Women to Women” program.

Open Doors: With this donation, you support one of our first-generation BRIDGE children with college or post-high school training or education.

You can also sponsor a Clothesline. This sponsorship of $500, that offers a student of high academic, financial social, developmental and/or academic ressource to a positive education and student leadership that serves them all aspects of their emotional/spiritual physical and mental health needs, other: in simpler ways to give.

Write us to tell us your birthday and when your birthday comes around, we’ll tell how to use Facebook campaign to raise funds for BRIDGE. If you are one who have a surprise for you, tell! Or link your Amazon account to our BRIDGE Amazon Smile so that you make donation to BRIDGE everytime you shop on Amazon, more information and options, please click here to access it!

Some Good Development Views!
Major Gifts ($1000+) 38 individuals/DAFs
$138,000
126 donors @$100,000 (snail mail)
351 donors @$98,000 (online)
$341,000 Grants
$142,000 Donations
2021 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES LOOKING AHEAD

CEO Priorities

• Mission/Vision work with Board
• Internal Human Resources
• Infrastructure Capacity-Building
• Establish Charter for 3-5 year Business Plan
• Development (Long-term Sustainable strategies & current Donor Engagement)
• Program Development

Board Priorities

• Supporting CEO in Scaling and Vision Goals
• Establishing Board Giving & Engagement Strategy for FY21
• Establishing 3-5 year Strategic Plan to mirror Business Plan
• Resourcing the Work and Wellness of BIPOC/Immigrant Team and M/W led work
• Keeping Black Lives Matter Commitments

BRIDGE Ecosystem - Our Flock

• Board of Directors - expanding to incl. Accountability reps in certain sessions
  ◦ Exec Committee 2020 - expanding to appoint at-large members
  ◦ Governance
  ◦ Development
  ◦ Finance - expanding to incl. Communication/Marketing of SDP
• TRJ Accountability (moving to be housed both in TRJ&E and Governance in FY2021) & Accountability Coordinating both in TRJ&E and Development)
• 2020 Volunteers, Donors, Coaches/Consultants, Moonlight Mile Circle, Business, Sponsors, Grants, Individual Sustaining Members and Business/Organizational Members (see website for the many hands & resources who have contributed to our mission-driven work!)
Dear Friend,

2020 brought extraordinary challenges and BRIDGE was Resilient and most importantly Prepared. We have launched the Annual Appeal, “Pivoting at the Speed of Trust and LOVE”, highlighting our ability to emerge strong with a collective, "our army", of Committed Activists, Allies and Donors and among them our Trusting Constituents. We worked at the Speed Of Trust (Competence and Love) with a persistent staff skilled to carry us forward! The priorities that I held were taking care of our majority (and at times) entire BIPOC Staff and their loved ones during the Pandemic and Black Lives Matter Uprising as well as taking care of our Constituents in the spirit of valuing their Humanity first and in so doing fulfilling our Mission and Founding Vision. We found Donors (new, Lapsed and Current) that responded to the requests and needs of our constituents. We identified Sponsors, called in Leaders and created New Pathways for resilience and bouncing forward!

We are identifying and making new contracts weekly and currently resetting with current clients disrupted by the Pandemic.

I am eternally grateful for the Beloved Community BRIDGE has!
Together we are the Change! The Work Before Us remains immense and we can accomplish great strides together in mutual respect.

Thank you for your commitment, support, and service!

~Respectfully Submitted,

Gwendolyn VanSant