Bridging Artists

a Bridging Team Innovation

Jacques Graveline (co-Facilitator)

In my time with Bridges Peterborough, I've developed new skills to navigate and understand the challenges that come with poverty ("Hidden Rules" generational/ systemic). The information and learning process through "Bridges Out of Poverty", "Getting Ahead", and now, in "Phase two", I can recognize the challenges of living in poverty and come up with strategies. I've had the privilege to gain improvement in all aspects of the "11 essential resources" we all need for a stable life. The challenges will never go away; but I handle them better.

My awareness of the challenges grew as we heard about other team member's lived experience. Bonds of friendship grow from the opportunity to share our stories. The Bedford House organization guided and trusted me with facilitating responsibilities and helped me develop skills that ultimately led me to my current job position as "board chair" for the Fleming Student Administrative Council.

Many changes have happened in my life since being part of Bedford House. I believe it's the company you keep that makes up a large part of one's character. The company I have been in has provided a supportive, engaging, and a safe place to be. I look forward to continuing this journey with the organization and those who are on the team.

Who supports this Team?

Several Individual donors offer monthly Pre-Authorized Remittances through our charitable partner Greenwood United. 100% of these Catalyst Fund donations go to support team members. **Thank you!**

Rotary Clubs put wheels under the team:

Both of Peterborough's clubs sent $2,000 to support the team's co-facilitators.

Thanks to Rotary Club of Peterborough and the Rotary Club of Peterborough Kawarthas.

The Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough sponsored the Facilitation Training for Jacques Graveline.

Ottawa's Trinity Jubilee Foundation also provided a generous grant towards the start-up organizing work pulling together this amazing group of people.

We asked participants in the current Bridging Team …

for some words of appreciation to our core supporters of the Catalyst Fund via Greenwood church. Their comments say it all:

Donna McGee

What I really appreciate about the Peterborough bridging group is that it brings such a diverse group of people together from different socio-economic backgrounds that probably wouldn't otherwise be spending time together!

I love always learning something, sharing stories, experiences etc and expanding my world in so many ways from all the members who bring such a wide range of life experiences, skills, perspectives and wisdom.

It's wonderful to be building a real sense of friendship and community in a nurturing, respectful and safe environment that the facilitators made for us. It allows us to feel seen, heard, validated and supported.

I love how this environment makes for real honest and vulnerable exchanges and trust building. We share laughs and tears in a healing way.

I would recommend the Peterborough bridging group to anyone who wants to learn a lot of different things - from a wide range of topics. I have learned so much so far that's really helpful to better my life.

Also, just for my own mental health, getting out and building friendships, to better each others' lives, and our community, is reason enough for me to attend.

I'm grateful that this group exists in my city and I found out about it.

Thanks for the support that allows us this opportunity, it's really appreciated!

Todd Coombes

Bridging Teams, for me, have been valuable and life changing. I cannot thank all the donors enough, with their generosity, to help me confidently move forward.

John LeVasseur

The Monday group meetings R a real blessing. I say this because I get ideas of how I can help myself in certain situations and ideas on different matters that affect me personally. The group also helps me to C how I can find the help I need to access different community agencies. It's also good to not only know that I'm not alone.

Plus the food car is a giant help as well. Thank U for all U and everyone else involved do to make this happen and please if possible thank the unseen people that donate and contribute. I pray everything continues to go well. GOD Bless U

Gordon Balch

Bridges has helped me to expand those networks with people who I normally would not come into contact with. It has brought a greater sense of humanity into my life and a desire to work on common social problems together through the power of personal interactions.

Andrew Lamkiewicz

I very much appreciate the donors, as I have learned so much, met some wonderful people, and reorganized my goals for the future. Also the personal growth has been awesome. Thank you to the donors.

Paintwell Plus,

Alice R

With gratitude & appreciation I send a Big heart-felt Thank you to each & every donor. May God Bless them! Monday evenings has been a great time of connecting & learning about the joys & sorrows of my fellow friends. Sharing a smile, a helping hand or just a word of encouragement helps to lighten everyone's struggles in life.

David Marshall

What I appreciate about being a part of two Bridging Teams - keeps changing and expanding - which for me is a big part of the magic of participating. Most recently, I've appreciated the growing sense of trust between members, and the biggest difference - now and in the past - is realizing that people I otherwise would not have an opportunity -or even an inclination - to get to know are people very worth knowing. My fellow members have enriched and expanded my life and my empathy for those whose lives are sometimes very different from my own.

Kim LaBelle

I appreciate the group gathering together to discuss various informative topics that help us to grow and see ourselves and others in a different way. We are challenged to learn, take initiative and evolve into a stronger person.

Growing the Essential Resource of Spirituality:

Last Monday, as part of our co-learning, we discussed Spirituality. This sparked some reflections:

"Hi Terry, Thanks for sharing the story of Arepo and his god of the fallen leaves. I can see how it would be meaningful to many. It spoke to me about a relationship that was open and honest and undemanding of the expectations that can often enslave relationships and, in turn, sour them for all. This is what I long for and I think many others do also. I feel this desire growing, particularly in a time and age when many relationships are based on "what can I get out of this" or "you scratch my back and I will scratch yours". It's sad when that happens since it may lead to us to becoming jaded and turning inward out of self-protection.

I value the Bridging group since it is different from what many of us normally experience. I valued our discussion last Thursday on spirituality and religion. It was refreshing to be able to have the freedom to express our feelings without the backlash of controversy and judgement. As was said that night, we as humans are by nature spiritual beings. This is something I wholeheartedly believe in; it is core to my existence and how I view life. Without it, life has no purpose or meaning.

I found it interesting that many in the group expressed an awareness and or hunger for spirituality in their lives. I found that comforting since, in this respect, we have something profound that is common amongst us.

Thanks for sharing the story of Arepo with us and the energy you bring each week to the group.

Cheers, Gord

It's nice that we can have the freedom in this group to express our beliefs whether that be pagan, atheist, different Christian views, or, somewhere in the process of trying to sort it all out - we can express who we are and our spiritually without debate or fear. And we can appreciate another's personal point of view and their journey.

I appreciate this safe space. Thank you. Kim LaBelle