

BRIDGE BUZZ

A BRIDGES TO CARE NEWSLETTER

"BUILDING WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE, SUPPORTIVE
& ENCOURAGING FAITH COMMUNITIES"



NOVEMBER 2021

Transaction to Transformation



I have always believed that relationships are the key to companionship, belonging, healing, and wholeness. I have been blessed with wonderful relationships throughout my life and ministry that have kept me going, held me accountable, picked me up when I have fallen, and listened when I needed to vent. Through Bridges to Care San Antonio, all that I have come to has been reinforced, deepened, and strengthened. Moving from a life of transactions to a life of transformation is what the Bridges to Care movement has done.

The Heart Central Cohort was the first cohort to go through the BTCSA training. I believe that all of us who received the training were moved in ways we did not imagine we would be...and we want more. In our first in-person meeting our Wellness Champions expressed an interest in learning more: to somehow keep the movement going in new ways with new opportunities to grow. And to invite

more people into the process.

The Heart Central Cohort's mission is to be a collaboration of faith communities that promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. By providing connections, companionship, and education we create pathways of hope and opportunity. I can share with you this mission is already being fulfilled in our area.

Seminars, church newsletters sharing information, teams being formed at fiat communities, and people being mobilized to be companions along the way are all happening. And there is more to do!

During the great freeze last February a man was camped out on the front porch of the Christ Episcopal Church Family Life Center. He was going to try to sleep through the night in that spot. I got a call, got in my car, and went up to the church to see what was happening. He was cold, not feeling well physically and emotionally. He was distraught and slurring his words. I knew him and he knew me. There was a trust already built. There was a relationship forged. We were able to get him to safety, to warmth, and shelter. Weeks later he showed up to Sidewalk Saturday, our weekly outreach ministry, and he said, "You saved my life! I would not have made it through the night."

That is Bridges to Care San Antonio. That is relationships and companionship. That is moving from transactions to transformation.

Rev. Justin Lindstrom

Heart Central Cohort Leader

Bridges to Care – San Antonio Steering Committee Member

Associate Rector for Community Formation, Christ Episcopal Church

Bridges to Care San Antonio (BTCSA) builds **connections** between congregations and service providers, **trains** people to be **companions** with one another for mental and behavioral health, brings **hope** and **compassion** to our city through cohorts of congregations in each district, and makes known the **resources** available to all for continued **wellness**.

Powered by NAMI San Antonio

Fueled by the City of San Antonio, our [BTCSA Partners](#) and our Community Wellness Network



SACRD.org Mental Health Portal is now Open!

With 1,200 + programs related to mental health, SACRD.org's mental health portal is a valuable resource for BTCSA Wellness Champions and all with whom they come in contact. Check it out at

www.sacrd.org/mentalhealth.



THE VISION SPEAKS...



The W.I.S.E. Vision of Bridges to Care is speaking loud and clear. The founder of Bridges to Care, Doug Beach, desired to help build W.I.S.E. congregations that would be Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaging congregations for members of our community who have mental health challenges.

Today, the W.I.S.E. Vision now includes, not only includes W.I.S.E. congregations, but also W.I.S.E. organizations, W.I.S.E. colleges, W.I.S.E. high schools; and, of course, W.I.S.E. Wellness Champions. Together, we are building a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaging city.

Bridges to Care now includes a Domestic Violence training for its Wellness Champions. Geri sent you the link in one of her recent emails. Register today for this workshop so you can help care for your community.

We now have Wellness Champions and congregations, organizations, and colleges as part of the Bridges to Care Team. In the words of Geri Gregory, “the sky is the limit”.

Thank you for being a part of this awesome wellness movement!

Veron Blue

Bridges to Care Cohort Coordinator

Monthly Highlight on BTCSA Congregations/Organizations

Spirit Wolf Therapeutic Intervention

Hello, my name is Pastor Jeff Schnoor, of Spirit Wolf Ministries ULC (Non-denominational). I am also the owner of Spirit Wolf Therapeutic Intervention where I am an Interventionist and mental health provider. We have combined both services to help those in need.

We have been heavily involved in street ministry for the past 5 years; working with veterans, the homeless, and those struggling with life. With the increasing number of individuals struggling with mental health and addictions, we felt there was a need to really help individuals and families that are suffering. In response to this need, we provide a variety of services that includes Interventions, Counseling, Spiritual Counseling, Assessments, Equine-Assisted Mental Health, PTSD groups, AA/NA Groups, and the treatment and care for individuals and families struggling with mental health or addiction disorders.

We have partnered up with Bridges to Care, because of their passion to help individuals and families that are suffering from mental health issues. The foundation of our street ministry and our other services and programs are built on the foundation of Matthew 25: 31-46.; we want to provide to our fellow brothers and sisters in need. Bridges to Care has created a unique plan and project to bring together the congregations of different faiths, to help members find community resources and services, to help support our communities in need.

A Visitor in our Midst!

The photo at right shows a gathering of Wellness Champions from Family Life International Ministries with Rev. Jermine Alberty (middle), BTCSA Dreamer & Trainer on his recent trip to San Antonio. When we see him on Zoom, he is in Las Vegas!

Welcome, Rev. Jermine!



BTCSA Facts

(as of November 9, 2021)

353 Wellness Champions trained or in training

54 Congregations or Organizations designated as “Behavioral Health-Friendly”

3 Cohorts Fully Formed

15 Cohorts in Formation

Go to

<https://www.nami-sat.org/bridges-to-care>

Important Information Needed by our City

Hello Bridges to Care Cohort Congregations,

Quick question to help broaden the reach of our mutual efforts:

Does your congregation have any efforts, ministries, programs, etc. in terms of outreach to the homeless in your geographical area?

Yes No

If so, who would be the most direct contact in your congregation to have a conversation about those details?

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

Please email the above information to Ann.Helmke@sanantonio.gov .

Rev. Ann Helmke

Faith Liaison
City of San Antonio
Department of Human Services

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Help with Point in Time Count!

Each year, on one evening in January, San Antonio joins other cities across the country in conducting a Point in Time (PIT) count, during which homeless service agencies and a cadre of volunteers scour the city for people who are homeless and ask those who are willing to complete a survey. (More here.) PIT results have a major bearing on how federal homeless-services funding is distributed. In San Antonio, PIT is run by SARA, the South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless. (More here.)

Each year, areas have been assigned randomly to teams that consist of a veteran team lead (usually a licensed social worker from an organization that provides homeless services), several volunteers, and an SAPD SAFFE officer.)

For the January 2022 PIT count, the planning committee is considering a pilot to explore a new approach: volunteers counting in their own neighborhoods. (Each team would still have a veteran team lead and a SAFFE officer.)

“Change happens at the speed of relationship,” so perhaps the greatest advantage to this approach is that volunteers would have an opportunity—in a safe and controlled setting—to meet their homeless neighbors and sow seeds of relationship that might eventually lead those homeless neighbors to better things.

Considering the high incidence of mental illness and distress in the homeless community, who is better situated to reach out as neighbors than Wellness Champions? Please consider volunteering.

For more information, contact Keith Wideman at keith.wideman@sacrd.org or (210) 616-1593



The **BridgeBuzz Newsletter** is published monthly. The deadline for submissions is the 20th of the preceding month at 12:00 Noon. Please submit your articles and photos to Geri Gregory at geri.g@nami-sat.org. For question, you may also call 210-269-5331.