

Connections

Prevention • Counseling • Advocacy • Outreach • Crisis Intervention • Family Education

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Special Play Time

Marianne is the single mother of a four-year-old girl named Ally. Marianne's husband abandoned them when Ally was an infant and has since given up all rights to see Ally. Although Marianne has family in the area, her relationship with them is stormy and support is provided conditionally or not at all. Marianne is exceptionally intelligent as is Ally. Marianne fiercely loves her daughter and tried to parent her using logic and reason. Her own parents used fear and harsh punishment to gain obedience, and Marianne is determined not to strike Ally when she misbehaves.

Marianne came to The Bridge when Ally's negative behavior, including manipulation, whininess, and lying, became overwhelming. She told her therapist that she didn't understand why Ally wouldn't respond to reason. Marianne cited an example of attempting to explain the economic reason for not buying her a desired toy. Ally's subsequent temper tantrum, although developmentally appropriate, confused and angered Marianne. The therapist explained Ally's behavior was not due to a deliberate attempt to anger her mother, and helped her to understand developmental and psychological factors underlying Ally's behavior.

Marianne's need for information regarding general parenting skills, need to understand development and her desire for a close relationship with Ally prompted a referral to the Child Parent Relational Training (CPRT) group. CPRT is a program that teaches parents how to use basic Child-Centered Play Therapy skills similar to those used by therapists. The parent is taught to use these skills for 30-minutes once a week during "special play time" with their child.

The CPRT curriculum used at The Bridge is a protocol that has been proven to be very

effective in clinical testing. Several Bridge therapists were fortunate to have been trained by the author of the curriculum, and are eager to work with Marianne and other parents to help them improve their parenting and relationships with their children.

Through the CPRT group, Marianne learned how to use empathic listening to recognize and respond appropriately to Ally's feelings. She became more aware of how Ally communicated differently than an adult and recognized how Ally's play offered more information than her words. Marianne also learned to use effective ways to set limits with Ally, which assisted her in maintaining positive feelings for Ally even when she misbehaved. Marianne's experience in the CPRT group created confidence in her ability to be a good parent.

Marianne told her therapist that the special play time with Ally is the tool which helps her feel the best about herself and her daughter.

SAVE THE DATE

**Peter D. Cunneen
Memorial Golf Outing**

August 8, 2011

**Inverness Golf Club
www.bridgeyouth.org
to sign-up!**

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Youth Council News

by Nancy Kukankos

The Bridge Youth Council builds teens' leadership skills through community service. Through volunteering and sharing causes about which they are passionate with their peers, members learn about their community and discover that they can positively affect the world around them. As in past years, Youth Council members planned and participated in many worthy projects.

Youth Council members are among the few who think of picking up trash as a social event. The group started the year off with road cleanup along Colfax Avenue and lunch at Wendy's as a way for members to work together and get to know one another. In another outdoor activity, members with interests in the environment and nature volunteered for Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards, collecting seeds from native prairie plants that will be planted in spring as part of the restoration project. One of the group's favorite activities is packing meals for hungry children around the world at Feed My Starving Children. Since October, they have helped pack 35,208 meals, enough food to feed 96 children for an entire year. Members also helped senior citizens celebrate Halloween by setting up and working at the Haunted House in Friendship Village, a retirement community in Schaumburg. Some even gave a day of their winter break to volunteer at Little City, helping the younger residents with recreational activities.

Youth Council members are reliable volunteers for The Bridge, too. They put together gate gifts for golf outing, phoned prospective donors during The Bridge Phonathon, and baked cookies for our major donors. They worked with Fremd High School staff to organize the "Share the Love" toy drive to collect play therapy materials. More than 250 items were donated and additional donations are still being delivered.

Future activities include volunteering at the Special Olympics track and field competition this spring, making cards for Super Sibs, a program to help siblings of children with cancer, and volunteering at The Bridge gala.

Youth Council's dedication to serving the community remains strong year after year and helps us all recognize that young people are a valuable asset to our community.

Youth Council is part of The Bridge's prevention programming.

Members are high school aged teens in Palatine Township who pledge to abstain from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and who plan and carry out community service projects.

For more information about **Youth Council** membership or to see how we can help your organization, contact Nancy Kukankos 847-485-3083, nkukankos@bridgeyouth.org.



Connections

The Dangers of Cutting

by Erica McIlveen

Self-mutilation. It is estimated that one in every two hundred teenagers do it, and one in four teenagers have tried it at least once. Nearly seventy percent of those teenagers use cutting as their chosen method of self-harm. But why? What purpose does it serve? Is it a desperate plea for attention or a cry for help? Or is it something else?

The most common misconception about cutting is that individuals do it because they want attention. This is simply not the case. Most teenagers who cut themselves go to extreme measures to keep their secret hidden from those around them. Some wear wristbands to cover the scars on their wrists. Others wear long-sleeved shirts or pants in the middle of summer so that no one can see the marks on their bodies.

Another misconception about cutting is that individuals do it because they want to die but are too afraid to actually go through with the act of killing themselves. The majority of teens who cut themselves do not want to die. Unfortunately, the most worrisome aspect of cutting is the fact that these teens, although they may not want to die, may end up accidentally killing themselves. They may not realize just how deeply they cut until they are unable to stop the bleeding.

So why do they do it?

For many, cutting is a form of self-mutilation. While some teens choose drugs and alcohol to mask an inner pain with which they are struggling, others find solace in turning their inner pain to outer pain. Cutting is something they can control. They can control how deep the cuts are. They can control how many cuts there are. They can control how often the cutting occurs. The physical pain is something that they can tolerate because they can see it. For these teens, they are typically struggling with an inner pain that they do not know how to deal with. They can't control the emotions they feel, but they can control the amount of physical pain that they inflict upon themselves. They then have the scars to remind them of the power that they have, despite this being a false sense of power. These teens need to learn how to deal with their inner pain without inflicting physical harm on their bodies.

When a parent discovers that his or her child is cutting,

the most important thing that he or she can do is to refrain from responding with anger. Anger often results in the teen mimicking that anger, and that anger will most likely result in more cutting. Teens may also feel as though their parents do not understand, thus causing them to feel more alone and cause their inner pain to deepen.

It is also important that a parent does not blame him or herself. When parents respond by asking the teen what they did wrong as parents, parents are making the problem about them rather than focusing on their child. Cutting is not about the parent, but rather it is about their child and what her or she is struggling with.

Parents should avoid minimizing the problem of self-injury. They should not assume that their child is simply seeking attention and brush it aside as a phase that he or she will eventually outgrow. Parents should take cutting seriously and realize that their child needs help. Seeking treatment is imperative if the behavior is to be eliminated. Teens who cut and do not receive treatment are likely to continue the behavior into adulthood. And, like anything else, the longer the behavior continues, the more difficult it will be to stop.

In order to stop self-injury, one must find out what is causing the behavior. If you suspect that your child is cutting, ask your child about it. If your child denies self-injury, continue to ask in a non-judgemental manner. When your child is confronted he or she may respond by getting defensive, but show your child that you care enough not to give up on him.

If your child admits to self-injury, or if you have strong reasons to believe that s/he is cutting, it is important to seek professional help. You can work closely with a professional to help your child stop this behavior. A professional will help your child address the underlying emotions connected to self-injury. Parents can help their children accept uncomfortable feelings by offering support and alternatives to self-injury. One way parents can offer support is to explain that problems can be broken down into smaller, more manageable parts. Parents also need to understand that giving up self-injury can take a long time, so any progress that is made should be acknowledged and supported.



A Night Under the Big Top - The Greatest Benefit on Earth

What an amazing evening A Night Under the Big Top – The Greatest Benefit on Earth on April 16 turned out to be! Thank you to all of our sponsors, donors, attendees, and volunteers that made our vintage circus buzz with excitement and raise over \$70,000 for children and their families. The Bridge provides therapeutic services for over 1,300 young people and their families living in the northwest suburbs. Guests of the gala make it possible for families without insurance or those struggling financially to receive the same counseling and interventions as families that can afford to pay.

The evening was a three-ring circus of games, casino gaming, and dancing. Our Gala Chair, Nelly Adams-Sanchez and Executive Director, Gregg Stockey kicked –off the night with a welcome and a game of Heads and Tails. The Heads and Tails winner, Dan Cates, generously donated his winnings of \$250 back to The Bridge. Next the live auction started and included some air-fare tickets and trips to California, Scottsdale, Florida, and Punta Cana (Dominican Republic). The live auction raised \$17,000. Over \$20,000 in grand raffle tickets were sold. Our \$5,000 winner was Bob Ingraham, \$2,500 winner was Joe Crimmins, and the \$1,000 winner was Rich Scalzo.

The most remarkable moment of the evening occurred when a young woman spoke to the audience about her harrowing experience with attempting suicide and how The Bridge helped her find some peace of mind and a way back to her future. The woman spoke of loneliness, heartache, and anxiety at school and at home. Her counselor at The Bridge, guided her through activities to strengthen her self-esteem, and her relationship with her family and peers. This incredible young woman assisted The Bridge in raising almost \$12,000 by sharing her story with our guests.

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Debra and Michael Strauss



Connections

Early Childhood Behavioral Health Program

Purpose / Population Served:

This program extends The Bridge child therapy program to pre-school age children and their families. Due to the age of children being served (0-5) the program emphasis is on play therapy and parent education.

Program Components:

Parent Education and Training
Play Therapy
Family Counseling
Consultation / Coordination with other providers

Outcomes:

Outcomes achieved by intervening early with disruptive or troubled pre-school age children.

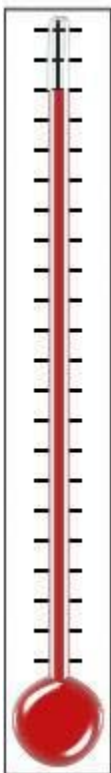
Prevention of child abuse, or if abuse already occurred, prevention of subsequent incidence of child abuse
Better child and family preparation for school and subsequently better school performance. Increases in Children's Global Assessment Scale functioning scores

Case for Support:

In 2003, The Bridge Board of Directors approved a Strategic Plan to guide the agency through 2008. The planning process included needs assessments, literature reviews, review of needs assessments from local funding sources including the United Way, key informant surveys and focus groups. Several community needs were identified, including the expansion of services to include children less than six years of age.

We found that services for children under six were nearly nonexistent despite a growing need. We uncovered disturbing trends including, 1) more children are expelled from pre-school than from high school, and 2) more than 1 in 5 children who visit a pediatrician for other reasons exhibit symptoms of a diagnosable behavior or mental health problem.

At inception of the program there was pent up demand that resulted in a large number of referrals. In the years since, referrals have continued to come in at a steady rate. It is clear that the concerns for which people turn to The Bridge do not begin at age six.



500,000

485,000

0

Donate to The Early Childhood Behavioral Health Program

Program provides counseling and parenting support for children under 6, assuring they get a good start and maximizing their chances for a happy, successful life.



Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Pledge Amount

\$100

\$250

\$500

\$1,000

Other Amount _____

Remit to: The Bridge Youth & Family Services, 721 S. Quentin Road, Suite 103, Palatine, IL 60067

Thank you for your support!



Connections

Our **sincere gratitude** goes out to our gala committee who gave this event their all to ensure that The Bridge would be around to continue being the safety for our community's young people and struggling parents.



**Peter D. Cunneen Memorial Golf Classic
Monday, August 8, 2011
Inverness Golf Club
Richard L. Bokor, Gerald D. Chapman, and Stephen D. Whited, Co-Chairs**

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Schedule of Events

11:00	Check-in Lunch buffet Putting Contest
12:30	Shotgun start
5:30	\$1,000 Shoot-out
6:00	Five-star dinner Raffle drawings Silent auction

The Bridge Beats the Winter Blues

The Bridge Beats the Winter Blues event on Friday, February 25th was a great beginning to the new year for The Bridge. Led by co-chairs, Ann Bokor and Karen Brookwell-Miller, this first-time event raised \$5,500 for the children and families served by The Bridge. The event offered an alternative to another cold and dreary night. Golf Nation in Palatine provided the perfect venue for this intimate get together and offers an indoor putting course, driving range, simulators, and televisions, a warm and cozy lounge, and bar. Inside at Golf Nation almost 100 guests tried their hand at the putting contests and enjoyed pizza from local pizza vendors. The main entertainment for the evening were the simulators that provided a hands-on experience of golfing on a famous course such as Pebble Beach. Our Board Chair, Michael Strauss led a closest to the pin contest; many participated in raffles and a putting contest which Richard Dessimoz won. This event continues our partnership with Golf Nation that began in the fall of 2010 when Golf Nation provided a toy-drive for children receiving services from The Bridge. We look forward to many more opportunities to collaborate with Golf Nation to ensure all children and families in our community receive the much needed mental health services. Thank you to all of our sponsors, pizza donors and dedicated volunteers that made this event successful!



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 - Matching gifts - Some companies will match, double or even triple your charitable gifts. Check with your human resources department for details.
 - Planned gifts - Leaving a gift to The Bridge through a bequest, endowment or other planned gift can be rewarding and provide you with substantial tax benefits.
- Here are a few giving options...**

No matter the size, each charitable gift enables The Bridge to continue providing vital services to the community.

Making a Gift to The Bridge Youth & Family Services