



NewBridge

newbridge.org

Fall 2024



Dear Friend,

I hope you've had a lovely summer, enjoying long days and perhaps some time away from responsibilities. A bounty of fruits and vegetables is part of what defines the season for me and, as you'll read, for some residents of our affordable and specialized housing.

This summer brought honor to two of our residential professionals who were recognized for their dedication to the field by the **New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association**. We are so fortunate to have skilled, caring and committed staff, as well as devoted volunteers.

The newsletter introduces you to four volunteers who serve on our Board of Trustees, overseeing operations and ensuring we fulfill our mission **to bring balance to people's lives through counseling, housing and education**. Enjoy meeting them through their short bios.

We hope you find the Wellness Corner article about **Suicide Prevention Month** informative. Evidence shows that suicide is

preventable when people recognize warning signs and intervene. NewBridge adopted the **Zero Suicide** movement three years ago with a commitment that **everyone** in our organization be trained to recognize signs of suicide and take action.

You can support all our life-enhancing programs by sponsoring and/or attending our **28th Annual Golf Outing** — one of our two annual fundraisers — on Sept. 23 at the Knoll Country Club. **Our clients rely on us, and we rely on your support!** Please help us prevent suicide and address other societal issues such as mental illness, addiction, homelessness and isolation.

Thank you for recognizing the value of our work, and please spread the word! Enjoy the newsletter. As always, I welcome your suggestions, questions, and support!

Sincerely,

Michelle Borden

NewBridge CEO

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NewBridge Residents' Initiative Sprouts Impressive Vegetable Garden

NewBridge Services housing client John Donegan was grateful last year when NewBridge gave him the go-ahead to create a garden of vegetables, herbs and flowers grown from seed outside his apartment in Pompton Plains. The array of pots and front-yard plantings captured others' attention and this summer, the garden sprouted to a new level.

"It's really become a community project," said Antoinette Martin, the registered nurse for NewBridge's Community Support Services program. The garden has taken over a fenced-in space off Newark Pompton Turnpike that had been used in NewBridge's former horticultural therapy program.

There, Donegan and neighbor Bob Potts tend to 120 tomato plants of numerous varieties, squash, hot peppers, cucumbers, radishes, beans, peas, celeriac and mushrooms. They also grow basil, oregano, parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme, and tend to primrose bushes, a magnolia tree, Rose of Sharon shrubs and apple trees growing there for years.

'A Work in Progress'

"It's a work in progress," said Potts, a U.S. Air Force veteran. He sets humane traps for groundhogs who have helped themselves to not-yet ripe tomatoes.

NewBridge staff and other residents of NewBridge's apartments stop by to check on the garden's progress. Martin's son, Dylan, did some of the heavy lifting to get the garden set up. "He likes to volunteer and sees it as something nice to do for my clients," Martin said.

Donegan enjoys cooking and uses herbs and hot peppers from the garden in omelets and other dishes. With so many tomatoes on the vine, he's planning to prepare plenty of sauce, grill tomatoes and make tomato sandwiches on white bread with mayonnaise.

"I like watching the plant's grow, and I love cooking meals, so there's definitely a payoff," Donegan said. The 12 residents occasionally get together to grill outdoors, and they no doubt will enjoy the garden's bounty.

NewBridge Housing

Potts and Donegan are among 100 people living in NewBridge's 84 units of affordable housing. NewBridge provides case management and psychiatric rehabilitation services to another 74 clients who live independently. Nearly 60 people live in NewBridge's five group homes.



Meet Four Trustees

We are so grateful to the volunteers who share their expertise, time and energy as members of NewBridge Services Board of Trustees. Here are four we'd like you to meet:



Michael Mahar

Michael Mahar saw firsthand the value of community mental health services years ago when his son, then a teenager, was struggling. *"If it wasn't for that support, it would have been so difficult for our family,"* said Mahar, who became a trustee in late 2023.

Mahar is a senior vice president for commercial technology, loyalty and digital products at Wyndham Hotels & Resorts. He serves on the board's housing and real estate committee and the golf outing committee, alongside his wife, Janice Smit. Mahar is using his professional connections to attract more sponsors for the event to increase revenue for NewBridge programs.

The 53-year-old Pittstown resident said he feels strongly about NewBridge's mental health services and housing for people with mental illness.



Dan Nachman

New Jersey Deputy Attorney General Dan Nachman is responsible for enforcing a wide range of environmental laws, gaining particular satisfaction in cases that bring relief to overburdened communities. That commitment to helping people with limited means is what motivated Nachman to become a NewBridge trustee in January.

"I believe that it is important for everybody, no matter your status in society, to have access to the critical services that NewBridge provides," he said. Nachman serves on the golf outing committee.

"Like so many of us, I know many people that suffer from mental health issues and alcohol and drug addiction," said Nachman, who at age 28 is the youngest-serving trustee. The Jersey City resident said his goal is to raise awareness among his generation about the issues NewBridge addresses.



Kathleen Pennington

Becoming a NewBridge trustee felt like a natural fit for Kathleen Pennington. When she learned all that NewBridge does for older adults, people with mental illness and those struggling with substance abuse, *"I felt I had to be a part of that!"* she said.

Pennington serves on the governing board of Pequannock Township's Hearle Village senior housing and is president of the Pequannock Valley Rotary. Helping older adults live well has long been one of Pennington's passions.

"I want to spread the word about all of it, all the visionary programs NewBridge offers," said Pennington, who owns a mortgage company. The 54-year-old is a member of both the gala and development committees. She spent most of her life in Pompton Plains and now lives in Riverdale.



David Weinerman

David Weinerman is dedicated to supporting alcohol and drug treatment services, having lost a close cousin to addiction. He became a NewBridge trustee nearly two years ago, after serving 21 years on the board of a Sussex County treatment center.

"I feel strongly about giving back to the community and get a lot of self satisfaction being part of the NewBridge community," said Weinerman, a financial advisor and owner of Weinerman Wealth Management in Parsippany.

Affordable housing for people with mental illness and special needs is another of NewBridge's focus areas that resonates with him. Weinerman, 60, helps NewBridge with fundraising and strategic planning, and serves on the golf committee. The married father of four lives in Chester.

Interested in volunteer opportunities at NewBridge?

Please contact NewBridge Development Officer Jennifer Tanis at jtanis@newbridge.org.

The Power of NewBridge

Established in 1963, NewBridge Services is a community nonprofit dedicated to bringing balance to lives through counseling, housing, and education. Our compassionate, highly trained professionals serve thousands of children, adults, and seniors each year in Morris, Passaic, and Sussex counties — and beyond. Through 12 programs, NewBridge tackles some of society's toughest challenges, including mental illness, addiction, homelessness, and isolation. We could not do this crucial work alone. Our clients — your neighbors — rely on us, and we rely on your support. Please click [here](#) to donate. Your generosity makes a real difference in the lives of those who are hurting. Thank you!

For more information, contact NewBridge Development Officer Jennifer Tanis at jtanis@newbridge.org.

LET'S CONNECT



Email us at services@newbridge.org

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NJPRA Honors NewBridge Supervisors

NewBridge Services supervisors Patrick Pierson and Michael Fritts were recently honored by the **New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (NJPRA)** for their exemplary leadership and dedication to treating clients with mental illness with dignity and autonomy.

"NewBridge is grateful for all of the compassion and personalized, committed care they bring to our organization and people we serve," said Carolyn Dean, executive director of Community Outreach and Support. "NewBridge Services, staff and consumers alike owe both Patrick and Michael a debt of gratitude for their passion and advocacy."

Pierson joined NewBridge in 2001 and was promoted to assistant director of community residences in 2014, overseeing the nonprofit's five group homes. He grew up in a family that ran a nursing home and residential healthcare facility serving people with mental illness discharged from Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital.

"The support and services we are able to provide for people with mental health struggles is a deeply rewarding experience," Pierson said. "The challenges of the job are what keep it fresh; it is always a learning experience."

Fritts is a community support services team leader who joined NewBridge in 2016 as an outreach case manager. *"I learned long ago that there is no cookie-cutter answer for everyone, and what works for one person won't necessarily work for another," Fritts said. "If they don't buy into the idea, they're not going to do it."*

Fritts described NewBridge's nurturing work environment, noting his supervisors encouraged him to return to earn his Master of Social Work at Ramapo College of New Jersey two years ago.



NEWBRIDGE wellnesscorner



Suicide Awareness and Action at NewBridge Services

Three years ago, NewBridge Services joined the national **Zero Suicide** movement and has since helped many clients move from feelings of despair to hope. To mark **Suicide Prevention Month** in September, NewBridge Executive Director of Counseling Services Viki Ferlauto shares how to recognize suicide warning signs and to get help.

"The vast majority of people with suicidal thoughts give clear clues before they are ever at the point of acting on their thoughts," Ferlauto said. Most people in that position "just want the emotional pain to stop."

Suicide is preventable when mental health professionals, family members, and others recognize warning signs and intervene. Often, the individual is suffering in silence. *"What families can do is ask the question, 'Are you thinking of killing yourself?' That question alone usually will yield an honest answer,"* Ferlauto said.

The Zero Suicide framework is based on the understanding that suicide is preventable through awareness and intervention. *"We can no longer accept that suicide is inevitable,"* Ferlauto emphasized. At NewBridge, all employees, including front desk workers and maintenance staff, are trained to recognize warning signs and steps to take.

Risk factors include, but are not limited to: trauma, loneliness, unemployment, grief, humiliation and financial struggles. When these factors combine with depression, substance use or an anxiety disorder, the likelihood of the person acting on their thoughts is greater, Ferlauto noted.

Major warning signs include hopelessness, reckless behavior, dramatic changes in appearance or neglect of self-care, self-isolation, and substance abuse. Statements such as *"the world would be better off without me"* or *"what's the point of living?"* are cries for help and require immediate attention, Ferlauto said.

The National Institute of Mental Health recommends taking these five steps:

1. **ASK:** "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
2. **KEEP THEM SAFE:** Reduce a suicidal person's access to lethal means.
3. **BE THERE:** Listen without judgment to understand what the individual is thinking and feeling.
4. **HELP THEM CONNECT:** Share the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**. Get them in touch with a trusted family member, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.
5. **STAY CONNECTED:** Maintaining contact can help prevent a subsequent crisis.

If you or anyone you know is struggling with suicidal ideation, call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org anytime. Please read the incredible story of suicide survivor Kyle Ferris [here](#).

NewBridge JobsPlus Cultivates Young Adult Success Stories

NewBridge JobsPlus hosted commencement for its 40th class in June, celebrating young adults who, after leaving traditional high school, persevered to earn diplomas and prepare for fulfilling futures. Members of NewBridge JobsPlus Class of 2024 and alumni shared inspirational stories about how the education and career program helped get them on a strong path forward.



"Let us never forget the role NewBridge has played in shaping our futures," said Brittany Ortiz, who due to an undiagnosed illness missed too many days at Morristown High School to graduate. Ortiz received a \$1,500 James Ryan Memorial Scholarship Award and will study criminal justice at the County College of Morris.

'You've Got to Flip It Around'

"I learned patience, and that if you're going down the wrong path, you've got to flip it around," said Dominick Truglia, who graduated

alongside his sister, Jayden. The family relocated from Florida last year for a fresh start, and both Truglias turned troubles into successes, their mother said.

More than 100 family members and friends attended the commencement held at Morristown Beard School. Some of the best advice imparted came from three alumni who continue to build fulfilling lives.

Life-Changing

Alyssa Adonis said NewBridge JobsPlus helped her 16-year-old daughter, Madyson, cope with anxiety and come out of her shell. *"What NewBridge gave her — and gave us — is life-changing,"* she said. Madyson Adonis received the \$1,000 Lakeland Bank Scholarship Award and was named NewBridge JobsPlus Associate of the Year. She is enrolled at CCM studying her passion, animation.

NewBridge JobsPlus receives funding from: Morris-Sussex-Warren Employment & Training Services; the Morris-Sussex-Warren Workforce Development Board; Lakeland Bank; Morris County Human Services; Jostens; Fran McEnerney; Kathleen Parker; and Robert Parker.

To learn more about NewBridge JobsPlus and decide if it's the right fit for you or someone you know, view the [NewBridge JobsPlus information packet](#). For more information, email JobsPlus@newbridge.org. View more commencement photos on NewBridge's Facebook page [here](#).

FORE! Good: NewBridge Golf Outing on Sept. 23

Join us Monday, Sept. 23 at the [Knoll Country Club West](#) in Parsippany for **NewBridge Services' 28th Annual Golf Outing**. Guests will enjoy a fabulous day while also supporting vital programs that help individuals and families in our communities thrive.

The outing features an expertly maintained, CHAMPIONSHIP 18-hole course, GOODY BAGS valued at over \$500, PRIZES for top winners, FABULOUS food, an OPEN BAR throughout the day, a RAFFLE and TRICKY TRAY.

You'll have the opportunity to network with like-minded professionals and community members committed to improving the lives of neighbors who are struggling.

By partnering with NewBridge, you help tackle some of society's toughest issues including **mental illness, addiction, homelessness and isolation**. Each year, NewBridge's caring, experienced professionals serve thousands of children, adults and seniors in Morris, Passaic and Sussex counties — and beyond. Through **counseling, housing and education**, NewBridge:

- Connects older adults with needed services and provides wellness check-ins so they can remain in their homes.
- Helps neglected and abused children heal and trains parents to be the caregivers their children deserve.
- Runs a successful alternative education and career program that gives young adults who leave school without a diploma a second chance at success.
- Supports adults with mental illness so they can live in their communities, and runs five group homes for those who require round-the-clock supervision.
- Counsels individuals and families to overcome conflicts and grief.

- And much more! NewBridge continually adapts to community needs, developing innovative programs to meet them.

Join us for the golf outing and you'll understand the Power of NewBridge! Go to nbgolf2024.givesmart.com now to register or make a donation. To learn more about our sponsorships, foursomes and branding opportunities click [here](#) or contact NewBridge Development Officer Jennifer Tanis at (917) 929-3964 or jtanis@newbridge.org. Thank you!

INVITATIONAL
APPLIED
UNDERWRITERS

NewBridge Services' 28th Annual
GOLF OUTING

**Monday,
September 23, 2024**
Knoll Country Club West, Parsippany, NJ

Proceeds benefit NewBridge programs and services

NewBridge
40th Years of Service