

Bridge House: A Description

Bridge House, a nonprofit organization and Clubhouse located in Bridgeport, CT that provides psychosocial rehabilitation services for adults who have experienced serious mental illness, is seeking a compassionate, innovative, skillful and committed Executive Director to lead the organization in achieving its strategic goals for the future. The mission of Bridge House is to provide a positive, encouraging and enriching environment with supports to give individuals with psychiatric disabilities the opportunity to lead productive and satisfying lives. Bridge House helps people recover their mental health, stay out of psychiatric hospitals and live independently and productively in their community. Bridge House is based on the values of mutuality, equality and empowerment. Bridge House accepts and values people as they are, and welcome them to voluntarily join and participate in the life of the Bridge House community. Bridge House helps each individual set meaningful recovery goals and creates access to mental health, medical and case management services to enable people move forward with their recovery. Bridge House offers housing, employment and educational opportunities tailored to each person's needs.

The Organization

Founded in 1985 through a joint effort of the Bridgeport Chapter of The National Alliance of The Mentally Ill and the CT Dept of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Bridge House has become one of the leading providers of integrated employment, education and residential support services for people with mental illness in Fairfield County. Bridge House is a member of the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD) and holds its top level of program certification.

Bridge House employs the "clubhouse model" pioneered by Fountain House in New York to organize and deliver its services. The clubhouse model has recently been designated as an "Evidence Based Practice" by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and employs a unique collaboration between clubhouse members and staff in partnership to provide real opportunity for employment, education and community inclusion.

Bridge House serves adults with histories of serious mental illness, many of who have experienced multiple or long term psychiatric hospitalization. Many of its members are unemployed, poor and live in marginal housing in the community. Almost Nearly 95% of the population served by Bridge House has a monthly income of less than \$900 per month, or almost \$1,000 below the 2010 federal poverty level.

At Bridge House, members assist in every aspect of the Clubhouse and the clubhouse culture is one in which each person is valued, respected and needed. Bridge House serves an active membership of approximately 200 members and has served nearly 2,500 individuals since its inception in 1985. Each day, over 80 members volunteer their time and effort in service to Bridge House and its Members. Bridge House has an eleven-member Board of Directors and a staff of 18 full time and 4 part time employees. Revenue for the annual budget is approximately \$1.7 million and government contracts account for approximately \$1.4 million. Bridge House is located in one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the state of CT.

Programs Offered by Bridge House:

The Clubhouse: The underlying value and philosophy of Bridge House is that work is good and working is restorative. The Clubhouse culture expects and values everyone's contribution and the responsibilities for organizing the daily activity of the club is shared by everyone. For example, preparing meals, recording attendance, generating the newsletter, managing the member bank, tutoring, greeting visitors, giving tours and other essential activity is all shared between members and staff. Participation in the Clubhouse is voluntary, and members choose how they want to be involved.

Housing: Stable, affordable, permanent housing is a primary goal for many members and Bridge House offers housing supports to help members obtain and maintain their housing. Members sign their own leases and live independent of Bridge House but have Bridge House to assist when needed.

Employment: Bridge House has developed a network of employers within the local community devoted to helping Bridge House to work again at paid employment, some members for the very first time in their lives. Members choose the kind of work they want and the only criteria to participate in the employment programs is a desire to work. Members can gain experience, build confidence and test their skills and interest in a supported work environment or work independently in competitive positions with support from the Clubhouse community.

The Social Program: Many members describe Bridge House in terms of "family" and Bridge House believes that building a sense of community and "family" within the membership is crucial to the success of its various programs and encourages after hours social and recreational events that boost morale, enhance and create new relationships that strengthens a member's natural support systems and reinforce the values of mutual assistance and support. To accomplish this, Bridge House offers planned social and recreational programs and activities during the evenings, weekends and all holidays.

Supported Education Program: Bridge House believes that education provides one of the most important means of achieving self sufficiency and independence. For many members, education is a way to find a job and develop a career. For many more, it can be one of the most important aspects of a person's recovery. Bridge House provides assistance with enrollments, course selection, and accessing the academic and social supports often necessary to succeed with one's educational goals.

The Position

The Executive Director (ED) will replace the existing Executive Director whose visionary leadership and hard work has faithfully led the organization for the past 25 years. The ED will assume the leadership of the organization during a period of financial uncertainty within private and public sector funding. The ED is responsible for the leadership and management of Bridge House according to the strategic direction set by the Board of Directors and the approved ICCD Clubhouse Standards. The Director will inspire and work with others to achieve the mission and vision of Bridge House and will serve as the principal spokesperson and "public face" of Bridge House in the service system and the communities it touches.

Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership

1. Provides leadership and participates with the Board in developing a vision and strategic plan.
2. Identifies, assesses and informs the Board of internal and external issues affecting the organization.
3. Fosters effective team work between the Board, Executive Director and staff.
4. Represents the organization officially and at community activities

Operational Planning and Management

1. Develops an annual operational plan incorporating goals and objectives to achieve the strategic plan.
2. Maintains ICCD certification and embodies the Clubhouse Standards.
3. Ensures that operations are efficient and effective, meeting the expectations of members and the Board and contractual obligations with funders.
4. Reviews policies, recommend changes, drafts new policies for Board approval and implements them.

Program Planning and Management

1. Oversees planning and implementation of programs and services and maintains ICCD certification, ensuring that programs and services contribute to the mission and reflect the Board's priorities.
2. Monitors day-to-day delivery and evaluates programs and services to continually improve quality Human Resources Planning and Management.
3. Determines staffing requirements and assumes responsibility for all hiring and terminations.
4. An ability to develop new programs as member needs change or expand.
5. An understanding of collaborative program development, strategic alliances, and partnership is vital.
6. Oversees implementation of HR policies, procedures and practices approved by the Board in accordance with appropriate legislation and regulations.
7. Implements a performance management process for all staff.
8. Coaches and mentors staff as appropriate

Financial Planning and Management

1. Ability to maintain financial solvency and instill financial growth.
2. An ability to effectively manage the agency development program and conduct fund raising for program, infrastructure and other administrative contingencies.
3. Works with staff and Board to develop a comprehensive budget.
4. Researches funding sources, oversees development of fund raising plans, participates in fundraising activities and writes funding proposals.
5. Works with the Board to secure adequate funding.
6. Establishes sound fiscal policies and ensures these policies are followed?
7. Oversees all aspects of contracts, meets with auditors and ensures appropriate compliance. Provides timely comprehensive reports to the Board.

Community Relations/Advocacy

1. Communicates with stakeholders to keep them informed and to identify changes in the community.
2. Establishes good working relationships with community groups, funders, public officials and organizations.

Qualifications:

Qualifications and Qualities Desired

1. Passion for the field of behavioral health and the mission of Bridge House.
2. Working knowledge of private and public funding sources. Success in fundraising from individuals, corporations, foundations, and others a plus.
3. Understanding/knowledge of mental health and the healthcare system.
4. Strong leadership, at least five years management experience and ability to motivate staff.
5. Knowledge of standards and practices regarding nonprofit organization operations including human resources, finances and project management.
6. Comfort with a “flat” organizational structure and design.
7. Clear verbal and writing skills, accessible personal style and orientation toward service.
8. Comfort with and empathy for members of Bridge House.
9. Masters in social work, management or related field.

To Apply:

To apply, please send cover letter, resume and salary history to George Ruderman, Chair Bridge House Search Committee at bridgehousesearch@gmail.com