

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



Dear Friends,

This year reminds us of something both simple and profound: mental health care is built locally, even when the challenges feel global.

At The Bridge, we have always believed that strong communities are created through connection, collaboration, and shared responsibility. As national conversations signal potential shifts in federal and Medicaid funding and nonprofit sustainability, particularly for sanctuary states and community-based providers, we are entering a period that will test the strength of local systems.

In moments like these, strong communities do not pause, they prepare. The Bridge is positioned to adapt, coordinate, and respond as conditions evolve through longstanding partnerships with townships, municipalities, school districts, and Mental Health Boards. These partnerships are not abstract. They are relationships built over time, grounded in trust, shared commitment, and a mutual understanding that emotional wellness is essential infrastructure.

The Bridge exists because of people like you who believe that mental health care should not depend on political cycles or funding volatility. Together, we are strengthening a system of care that is resilient, accessible, and deeply human, one that can withstand uncertainty and continue to serve those who rely on it.

Thank you for standing with us as we look ahead. Thank you for saying yes.

With gratitude,



Kris Salyards
Executive Director
The Bridge Youth & Family Services

“

The Bridge is a great source for help and encouragement. It truly serves a massive need in our community, and we are very lucky to have The Bridge.

Palatine Community Member



THE BRIDGE

Mission Statement

The Bridge provides services to support youth and families in creating emotional wellness, strong relationships, and successful futures.

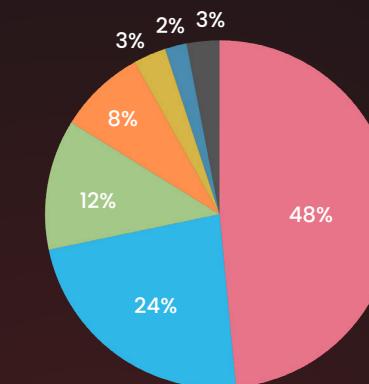
Vision Statement

We envision a world where healthy relationships and emotional wellness are priorities for all and every individual has been given the tools to thrive.

Summary

The Bridge seeks to be the primary referral source for youth/adolescents [and family] looking for emotional and behavioral support. Our expertise lies in working with kids and families, and our staff consists of educated, experienced, and licensed professionals proficient in trauma-focused cognitive behavioral, play therapy, and family systems therapies.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Hispanic-Latino	48%
Caucasian	24%
African American	12%
Multi Racial	8%
Middle Eastern/North African	3%
Asian	2%
Undisclosed	3%

Family Stabilization

This program is unique to our regional footprint and has been a [state] grant-based program held by our agency since its inception. As one of several state-wide teams, The Bridge continues to work with municipalities and schools to address issues such as truancy, substance use in teens, police involvement, and issues contributing to family conflict and breakdown.

Counseling

Our program works to break barriers to access, create opportunities for learning about mental health, and provide support to achieve the goals that the clients identify for themselves. We have a fully bilingual team of clinicians who work diligently on engagement, building trust in the communities we serve, and establishing relationships with partners who have direct communications with this in need.

Mentoring

Our mentoring program is highly individualized as we pair mentors 1:1 with young people who need an extra caring adult in their lives for additional support or guidance. Bridge Buddies are paired with students during lunch hour to help provide an extra caring adult in the child's school day.

Coordinated Care Team

CCT was created in partnership with The Schaumburg Township Mental Health Board, to address the needs of youth struggling with complex mental health and substance use in the community. This team's implementation and collaboration follows a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Model to assess, refer, and respond to high stress needs youth and families are facing. Serving youth and families within Schaumburg Township, youth are referred to a Community Care Coordinator.

Thank You!

Schaumburg Township
Mental Health Board for
your support of The Bridge
and CCT Program.

This year, our story can be summed up in three words: **We Said Yes.**

We said yes when schools called The Bridge with students in distress and no easy solutions. We said yes when families needed support before crisis became inevitable. We said yes even when funding was uncertain, but the need was not.

At The Bridge, saying yes has never meant acting carelessly. It means acting responsibly in the face of real need. It means showing up, building partnerships, and doing the hard work of holding systems together when the threads become undone.

Across the northwest and north suburban Cook County region, communities are increasingly recognizing that mental health is not a secondary issue, it is an essential infrastructure. The expansion of Mental Health Boards reflects that understanding, empowering municipalities to invest locally in prevention, crisis response, and long-term emotional wellness. As many surrounding townships are leaning into their Mental Health Boards to create healthy communities, we stand as a partner and pillar to support the work that needs to be done to achieve results.

With Palatine's recent passage of the Mental Health Board resolutions, our community took an important step forward. For The Bridge, founded through a historic partnership with Palatine Township, this moment affirms what we have always believed: local solutions, rooted in local relationships, create the strongest outcomes.

The Bridge's Community Coordination Team (CCT) is a direct service delivery model created as a pilot through the Schaumburg Mental Health Board. This initiative allows The Bridge to meet families where they are, coordinate care, and provide support and reduce barriers. This is where The Bridge does its most important work.

We are not a single program or a single solution. We are the putty in the cracks, pressing into fragile spaces, reinforcing systems under pressure, and strengthening what already exists. We support schools, families, and communities, not by replacing them, but by helping them function better together.



If you believe that mental health care should be accessible, coordinated, and rooted in the communities it serves, we invite you to invest in The Bridge, through partnership, advocacy, or financial support, so that together, we can continue saying yes when it matters most.

Visit bridgeyouth.org to learn more.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT IN EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Mental health needs do not pause for policy shifts, and communities cannot rely on distant systems alone to meet them. Local funding mechanisms, including Mental Health Boards, matter because they:

Keep Care Close to Home

Local funding allows services to be delivered where people already live, learn, and gather, reducing barriers to access.

Respond Quickly to Emerging Needs

Unlike large federal systems, local boards can adapt to changing conditions, address gaps in care, and respond in real time when crises arise.

Stabilize Systems When Other Funding Falls Away

As federal funding fluctuates, local investment provides continuity. It ensures that families are not left without support when national priorities shift.

Strengthen Coordination, Not Competition

Local funding supports collaboration across schools, mental health providers, and social services, reducing duplication and improving outcomes through models like the Community Coordination Team.

Reflect Community Values

Mental Health Boards allow residents to invest directly in the emotional health of their neighbors, reinforcing the belief that mental wellness is a shared responsibility.

BY THE NUMBERS

6090
Hours Served

32% Increase from FY24

486
Client Cases

11% Increase from FY24

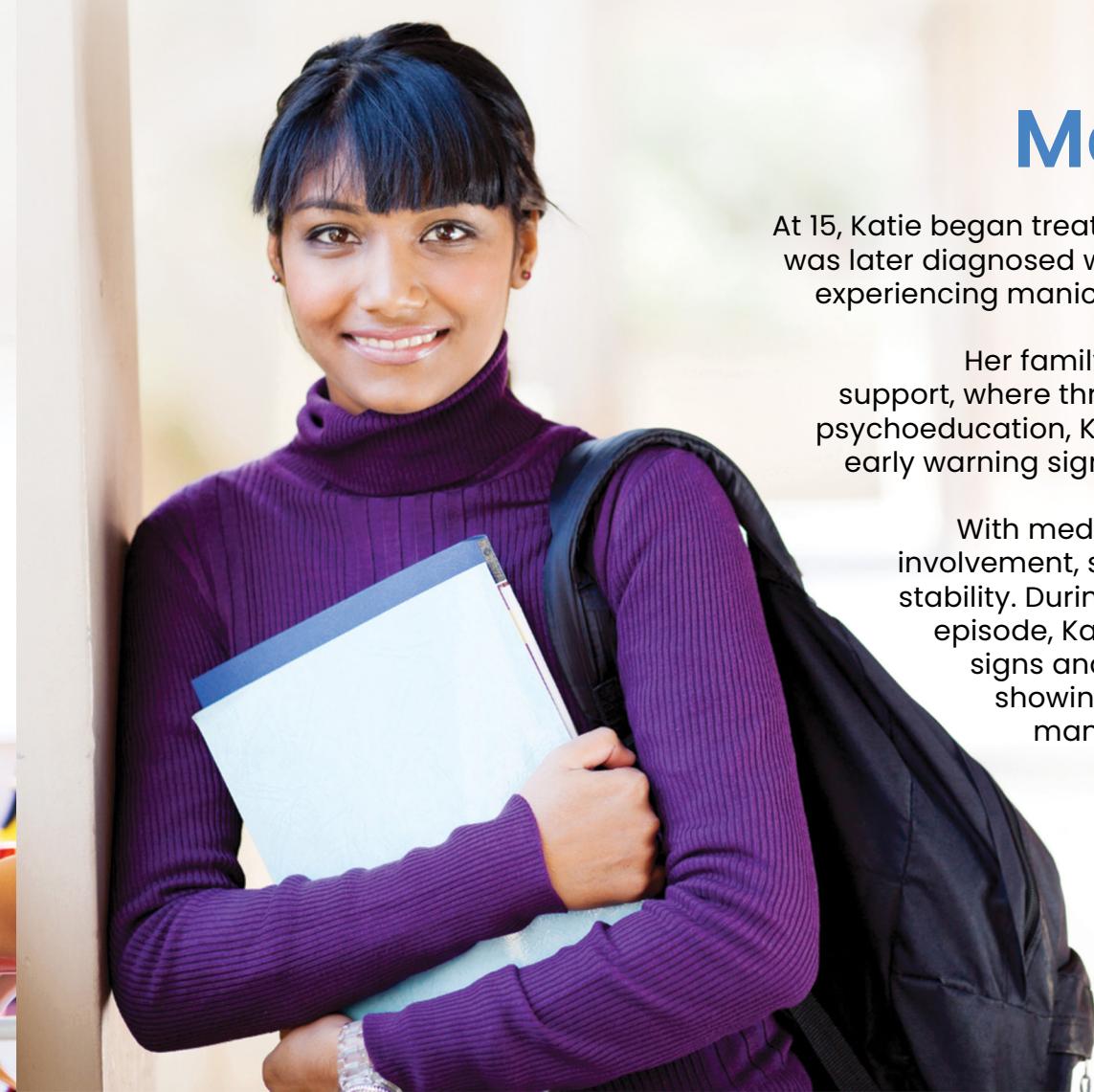
967
People Served

5% Increase from FY24



Thank You!

Palatine Township for
your continuous support
of The Bridge.



Meet Katie

At 15, Katie began treatment for depression and was later diagnosed with bipolar disorder after experiencing manic and psychotic episodes.

Her family turned to The Bridge for support, where through family therapy and psychoeducation, Katie learned to recognize early warning signs and build coping skills.

With medication and strong family involvement, she has achieved greater stability. During her most recent manic episode, Katie identified the warning signs and sought help on her own showing meaningful progress in managing her mental health.

- Client of The Bridge

KT

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Quality Assurance & Compliance Director
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CCBYS Case Manager
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Family Stabilization Counselor
Arned Loving
Family Stabilization Counselor
Maribel Rodriguez
Family Stabilization Counselor



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Family Stabilization Counselor
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Adriana Castro
Child & Family Therapist
Lois Karimu
Child & Family Therapist
Alexandra Tapia
Child & Family Therapist

OUTREACH IN ACTION



Celebrating 60 Years of The Bridge

In celebration of our 60th anniversary, The Bridge hosted the "60 Rocks the House" Gala & Concert, marking six decades of strengthening youth, families, and our community.



Wine 5K Run

The Bridge was proud to serve as the charitable beneficiary of the Wine 5K Run & Walk, with staff and Board members participating in support of our mission.



Mental Health Matters

At Palatine's Fourth of July Parade, The Bridge showed up in support of our community wearing shirts that boldly declared that mental health matters.



Golf Fore Youth Classic

The Bridge proudly hosted the Golf Fore Youth Classic, where community members came together to support mental health services for youth and families.



Community Events

The Bridge connected with families through multiple community tabling events, including Harper's Trunk or Treat, sharing resources and promoting mental health support.

DONORS

FOUNDERS \$25,000+

BMO Harris Bank
Clearwater Capital Foundation
Norman & Susan Abazoris
United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
Wheaton Franciscan Sisters

VISIONARIES \$10,000+

The Blowitz-Ridgeway Foundation
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CHAMPIONS \$5,000+

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STEWARDS \$1,000+

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Teresa DeJong

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Jen Dougherty

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Betsie Estes

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Francesco Furio

Deborah Gabriel

Paul & Suelyn Gates

Mary Giannelli

Scott Gibrich

John & Kelly Godawski

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GUIDING YOUTH. STRENGTHENING FAMILIES.

THE BRIDGE

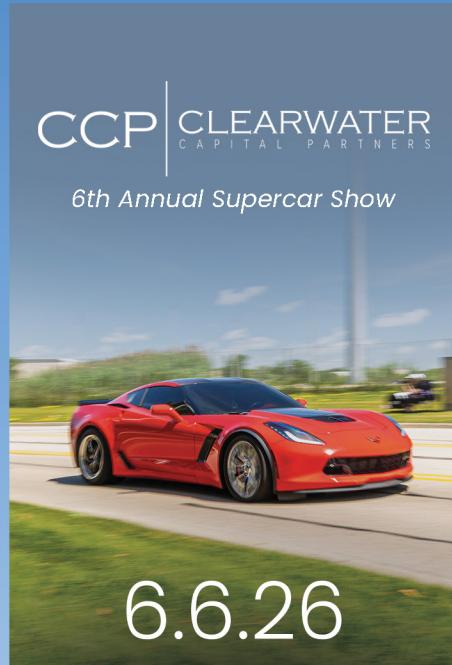
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THANK YOU PARTNERS



UPCOMING EVENTS



FALL EVENT TO BE ANNOUNCED : Follow us on social media for more updates.