

Annual Report 2013-2014

Safe passage from addiction to sober living



Gilbert: Back to The Good Life

Gilbert grew up like many Nebraskans. He was raised by hard-working parents with strong family values rooted in his faith. Ultimately, it was his family and faith that intervened and literally drove him to The Bridge to turn his life around. Now that he has been sober for more than a year, Gilbert's life is once again devoted to hard work and family.

Vodka was Gilbert's drink of choice. If he tried to cut back to less than a half-gallon per day, he would begin suffering from withdrawal symptoms. His marriage was over and he lived with his parents. It was the minister at his local Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall that drove him more than five hours from Kimball, a small town in the panhandle of Nebraska, to the front door of The Bridge. Gilbert drank along the way because if he didn't, he would physically tremor.

Today, Gilbert has returned to his roots of hard work and faith. He drives truck for a living and is rebuilding his relationship with his ex-wife. He lives in Scottsbluff but remains close to his parents in Kimball and is active in his church. Following his faith, he refrains from using tobacco and illegal drugs, and can proudly say he stays away from alcohol by simply living his life focusing on family and work.

The joy that Gilbert is experiencing in the normal day-to-day of his life is a far cry from his addiction that was so severe, no

medical institution in his area could handle the complex nature of his withdrawal and treatment. The Bridge's specialized Medical Withdrawal Unit was where Gilbert started the difficult days of detoxifying from years of alcohol addiction. Gilbert then moved down the hall to an open bed at The Bridge's Residential Treatment program, staying for approximately three months.

In those three months at the Bridge, Gilbert found that connecting with other men facing the same issues was helpful. "All of my peers there were like family. We all interacted and someone was always there for you," he said. "I never felt alone."

His counselor at The Bridge, Jack, made a lasting impact on Gilbert. "He was always straight up with me. He used my name each time he spoke to me," he said. "He was like a father and always spoke with kindness and respect."

Gilbert is pretty content, with simple dreams of expanding his family farm to include more animals. Life on the farm in Nebraska is "The Good Life" for Gilbert.



Your support of The Bridge enables us to go to great lengths for anyone seeking safe passage from addiction to sober living.

Highlights of the 2013-14 Fiscal Year:

- We celebrated 30 years of serving Lincoln and surrounding areas.
- We changed our name from Cornhusker Place to The Bridge Behavioral Health!
- While the majority of those we serve are from Lincoln/Lancaster County, we provided treatment to people from all across Nebraska.
- We began offering more services to women and men through our Outpatient Programs.
- The Bridge Behavioral Health served 5,317 individuals in all of our programs.

30TH
ANNIVERSARY



Serving those who are unable to pay.

Nearly 35% of clients were homeless and 39% were unemployed (not student, retired, homemaker, etc.) and 16% were Medicaid eligible. The vast majority of clients are under the poverty level (70% making less than \$11,000 annually.) Only 10% of clients made more than \$30,000 per year. Those were primarily clients admitted by law enforcement to our Civil Protective Custody program.

All clients are billed for services because we believe it is important they know the value of the service they received. We use a sliding fee scale based on income but most individuals are unable to pay.

The problem with substances.

Our withdrawal programs are admitting clients using a much wider variety of substances. Besides alcohol, rates of prescription drug use, illicit drugs, synthetic drugs (like K2) and IV drugs continue to rise. Withdrawal from these drugs takes longer and can bring on greater medical symptoms to manage.

Though 90% of those we served used alcohol as their primary substance, many also used methamphetamine, marijuana, opiates and/or synthetic drugs. Among treatment clients, 607 had a history of IV drug use.

More and more individuals are seeking medical supervision as they withdraw from substances. In fact, The Bridge has seen a 25% increase in voluntary admissions into our Medical Withdrawal Unit and the greatest increase is in self-referrals.

Greater medical and behavioral health needs.

Increasingly, clients are presenting with more underlying medical issues in addition to their substance use. For instance, some clients are diabetic but not effectively managing their illness. Others might have suffered a recent head injury, wound or other physical trauma due to their intoxication.

More clients are suffering from long-time, chronic addictions that, when going through withdrawal, can bring on seizures, tremors and other severe medical symptoms.

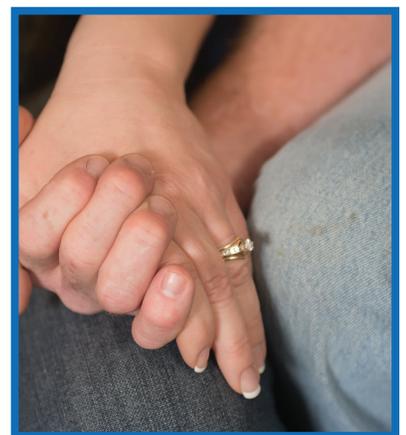
Additionally, we are seeing more individuals in need of mental health services because of an undiagnosed or untreated issue. Skilled staff address the range of addictions along with the individual's mental and medical health needs.

Smoke-Free. Fighting another addiction.

Tobacco, while legal, is an addictive substance. Many of the individuals we see are smokers and have tried to quit. Evidence shows, though, that individuals undergoing treatment for their alcohol or illegal drug addiction can also succeed at quitting their tobacco use.

We started by asking our staff to go smoke-free on campus. While it wasn't easy, we discovered that many employees reduced their usage or quit entirely. We provided support and encouragement along the way and are happy to now offer a healthier workplace.

Finally, in January, we became tobacco-free to clients and visitors. With the help of support in groups, nicotine replacement therapies and a lot of extra candy, our clients made the transition. For some, quitting smoking was just as big of an accomplishment as stopping their alcohol or drug usage.



Programs

Withdrawal

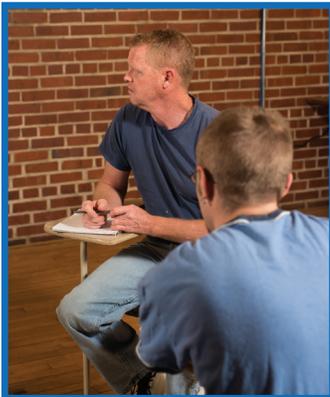
- **Civil Protective Custody** – In Civil Protective Custody, law enforcement admits males and females age 14 and older for detoxification when chronic addiction or episodic alcohol drug abuse makes them a danger to themselves or others. Based upon state statute, clients in this program stay up to 24 hours or until released to a responsible friend or family member.

Each admission into protective custody is seen as an opportunity for intervention.

- **Voluntary Medical Withdrawal** – Our voluntary Medical Withdrawal Unit serves men and women age 19 and older who want a structured withdrawal program. Staff include 24 hour registered nursing care and licensed alcohol and drug counselors, who help clients prepare for treatment, provide case management, and arrange follow-up care. Stays are three to five days. Services do not require a professional referral or evaluation. This voluntary program is separately located from the Civil Protective Custody Program.

Treatment

- **Residential** - Clients stay at The Bridge from 30 days to 10 months in structured programs. They address issues that led to addiction, cope with personal trauma, learn life skills, and address medical needs. When graduating, clients have a plan and ongoing care choices. Residential treatment programs are for men 19 and older.
- **Outpatient** - Outpatient services allow clients to maintain community roles while participating in treatment. Treatment may be one-on-one and/or in a group setting.



The Bridge staff work with other community programs to implement recovery individual recovery plans. Outpatient Services are for both men and women 19 and older.

- **Respite** - Respite Care is available for people who have a plan to attend treatment and

are waiting for an opening or need a break from their current treatment program. Respite clients stay up to 7 days and work on specific issues during their stay. Respite care is for men and women 19 and older.

- **Domestic Violence Education** - This educational group is for men who have displayed violent behavior or domestic abuse. The program brings about individual change by expecting batterers to take responsibility, challenge attitudes, learn alternatives and change behavior. The program and facilitators are certified by the State of Nebraska.

“I knew the son who started treatment at The Bridge. I had never before met the son who left there 40 days later.”

– Mother

Recovery Support – Research shows that clients who get involved in continuing care after treatment are more likely to remain clean and sober. The Bridge helps people stay sober through a variety of special programs and community events.

- **Continuing care** for those that have recently finished treatment as a way to step into greater independence.

- **Self-help meetings** such as AA meet in our building daily and are open to the public and our clients.

“What The Bridge has given him on this day is his life back. There is no bigger gift than that.”

– Mother

- **Recovery events**, like Soberoke and Tailgate Straight, are offered to allow those in recovery to enjoy social events without the presence of alcohol or drugs.
- **Alumni group** meets monthly to support each other and give back to the community.



Tailgate Straight is an annual event where clients, alumni and the community can enjoy an alcohol-free tailgate party. The Bridge offers safe and sober social activities to help clients and those in recovery socialize without the use of substances.

Fundraising Support

In the past few years, The Bridge has worked to diversify funding streams in an effort to not rely too heavily on one source. We work hard to stretch our revenue in order to help cover items that are not paid for by our payers, for example, personal care items for clients, AA books for self-help groups and supplies for art therapy.

The community can provide financial support in a variety of ways including:

- **Employee Giving Campaigns** - As a member of Community Services Fund, The Bridge can now receive payroll deduction donations from those who wish to give in the workplace.



Community
Services Fund
of Nebraska

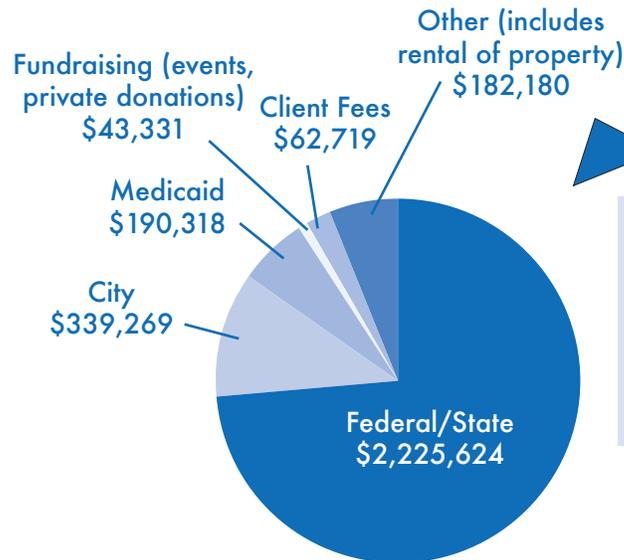
- **Give to Lincoln Day** - The Bridge participates with a grill-out, car wash and bake sale to help raise funds on the biggest giving day in the community, sponsored by Lincoln Community Foundation.

give
To Lincoln Day

- **Comedy Benefit** - For the past three years, The Bridge has hosted a recovery comic as the stand-up entertainment at our annual fundraiser. In 2015, our comedy event will be September 18 at The Howell Theatre, featuring recovery comic and actor Jamie Lissow.

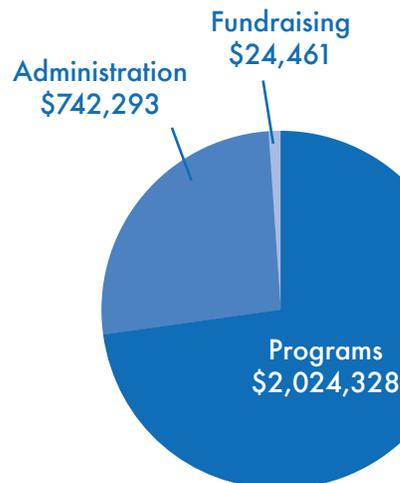


Revenue - \$3,043,441



We are fortunate to own our building. We bring in 6% of our revenue thanks to a long-term lease for a portion of our building.

Expenses - \$2,791,082



No client is ever turned away due to inability to pay.

Our biggest asset is our staff! They are highly trained and professional in addition to having a passion for helping people with substance abuse disorders and the mental health issues that often accompany them.

The Bridge Behavioral Health
721 K Street, Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 477-3951
www.TheBridgeNebraska.org