



# The Bridge

A bridge is a structure built for the purpose of providing a passage over obstacles.

Violence Ends. Empowerment Begins.

June 2020 Issue 6

## Mission Statement

The prevention and elimination of domestic violence and sexual assault. We work to enhance safety and to promote equality in relationships. We are opposed to the use of violence to control the lives of others. The Bridge is committed to eliminating violence in the lives of women, children and men through empowerment, education and social change.

## Healthy

### Relationships

The Bridge promotes healthy relationships. We focus on the safety of victims when working with them. Every situation and individual we work with is different, and so are the outcomes. We continue to do our best to help those we serve.



## Plant, Grow, Bloom... The Bridge

Most plants start their life as some sort of seed. A seed has all of the information it needs to grow into a plant, but before it can grow, it needs certain conditions to be right. Until it is in the right conditions, the seed is *dormant* – it's kind of like it is asleep. When the seed has everything that it needs to live (sunlight, air, water, and nutrients from soil), it will 'wake up' and sprout, or *germinate*. The sprouted seed will soon grow a *stem* above the ground. Below the ground, it will grow *roots*. Soon small green *leaves* will grow out from the stem. At the top of the stem, a flower bud might begin to form (if it is a flowering plant). Eventually, the flower bud will open up, or bloom, into a *flower*. New seeds will grow. The process of growing a beautiful flower has many similarities as to how human beings grow mentally and in spirit to shape into the people that they are today. Just like the plant, humans are born with the information needed to grow, but not everyone's conditions lead them on the same path of nurturing depending on many individual factors and habits. Nutrition, exercise, nurturing people, guidance, experiences, are just a few of the attributes that can lead the person to grow into a beautiful bloom, or adverse conditioning can lead to a possible demise in having them learn and bloom to their potential. Learning to set healthy boundaries is necessary for maintaining a positive self-concept, or self image. "It is the humans way of communicating with others that we have self respect, self-worth and will not let others define us," states **Stacey Lichtenberg, Educational Outreach Coordinator for the Bridge**. Stacey leads a healthy **Boundaries'** class that focuses on all of the necessities for a long, fulfilled life. Just as the plant, humans need proper conditions to arrive full circle. Thus, they are then fulfilled with a happy life, a bright beautiful bloom. Lichtenberg shares some examples, (but not excluded to) learning to put a safe, healthy boundary around yourself.

### Some of these are:

1. Paying attention to your body—stressors
2. Taking time before reaching your decision—impulse control
3. Not being afraid to ask for help
4. Not being afraid to say no
5. Parenting/co-parenting
6. Healthy relationships/vs. unhealthy relationships

The Bridge's Healthy Boundaries' class meets once a week, via ZOOM with Lichtenberg. However, with the pandemic in place and lockdown, Lichtenberg has taken the opportunity to work with each group member in an individualized session, via ZOOM once or twice weekly. They work on strategies to apply to the member's lives during the week. Like the flower, she and each member are developing the time to plant healthy habits, how to cultivate one's surroundings for ultimate growth, and maintain proper conditions to keep their bloom, healthy and self sustaining. The group continues to focus as one cohesive unit and have life learning discussions.



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# Plant, Grow, and Bloom...Obstacles

Many members of the Healthy Boundaries' Class have made marvelous gains, growing, planting themselves firmly in the ground, ready to set out and bloom. However, there are many factors that can detain people with obstacles. During the pandemic, some of the group's main struggles have been disruption of routine, states Stacey Lichtenberg, group leader. With disruption of routine, it's easier for unhealthy impulses to rear their ugly heads. "Even though a majority of the members lost their jobs, or got their hours cut, they were forced to find the balance, just as the soil does to help a plant grow," says Stacey. "They began to experiment with solutions by trying to live on limited and or no money until they were able to find a different job, or their unemployment kicked in," states Lichtenberg. Members had to try and problem solve financial responsibilities (rent, car payment, insurance, utilities) and make phone calls to try and get either assistance and/or extensions until they had money coming in. Consistency and structure are key success tools for the Boundaries' group as well as a good portion of individuals fighting the same situations. Not being able to reach out to and have normal support groups and/or therapy sessions was a "new" difficult "normal." When you have extra time on your hands, with so much uncertainty, it can lead to anxiety about things that may not ever happen. So, like a conditioned fertilized soil, needing proper feeding, and sunlight for the plant to manage a healthy growth cycle, these ideas and feelings are as much of importance to a human. (but does prove to be challenging). Another trauma in the growing system for these group members, was not having one on one access to people who were of importance. This caused much stress to not be able to be around important people who are safe to mingle with. Teaching their children themselves when they have never done that, and also trying to manage their children's school schedule, along with their own was a big challenge for many. Just like a flower grows through the proper steps to beauty and prosperity, so does the human. We need to constantly think of ourselves, take care of ourselves mentally and physically, seek help and guidance when needed. Thus, as humans, we too can stand tall, self assured and share our inner beauty with those to make the growing cycle continue to produce confident, happy human beings!



## "Tuesday's Tales"

Are you ready for a Facebook Watch Party?! The Bridge is! Grab your blanket, your pet, your hot chocolate, a family member and tune into Facebook every Tuesday, this summer for "Tuesday's Tales!" You don't know how to get to the Bridge's Facebook page? Search: The Bridge (former Crisis Center) and poof there we are! Every Tuesday, at 9:00 a.m., Ms. Linda and special guests will be sharing an out of sight book with you! You say that 9:00 a.m. isn't a good time for you? Mission Accomplished! All of the children's literature that is being read on Tuesdays, are stored in our video archives and you can watch and listen to the selected story as many times as you like. The pandemic has led to our libraries and other facilities being temporarily closed. With "Tuesday's Tales" we can help you get your fill of wonderful books tailored just for you!

Reading you say! Why? Reading books aloud to **children** stimulates their imagination and expands their understanding of the world. It helps them develop language and listening skills and prepares them to understand the written word. Reading to children, or "share reading" with your child stimulates creativity, helps them understand language, develop comprehension skills and word meaning/choice.

With a COVID-19 filled world, consistency and normalcy are important routines to maintain developmental and positive mental growth habits in children as well as in adults. Pick up a book today, your mind thanks you! See you for "Tuesday's Tales!"

# Incredible Donations

thank you!

The following names are of those who donated to The Bridge between the dates of May 1st-present. We regret the accidental omission of any donor. Thank you for your donation and continued support! We could not do this without you!

American Family Insurance  
 Becky And Thomas Novacek  
 Beta Sigma Phi-Epsilon Iota  
 Beverly Thomsen  
 Dawn Koehlmoos  
 Erica And Gary Stillman  
 Fremont Kiwanis Club  
 Girl Scout Troop 58057  
 Nan Cunningham  
 Nye Legacy Employees

Gringo's  
 J Evan & Carolyn Nordstrom  
 James And Jody Horner  
 Jeremy Rehwaldt  
 Joshua Patrick  
 Lincoln Federal Savings Bank Employees  
 Lisa Stockamp  
 Michael And Cindi Brass  
 Nan Cunningham  
 Nye Legacy Employees

Peter Jacobus  
 Pinnacle Bank Employees  
 Rick And Julie Hansen  
 Shana Jordan  
 Sheryl Diers  
 Sid Dillon Chevrolet Employees  
 Susan Floth  
 Tom And Misti Wolf  
 Werner Enterprises-Ann Schow

## ABUSE IN LATER LIFE...AWARENESS

Abuse in later life can happen to older adults from all communities, racial and ethnic groups, and all economic levels. Abuse can occur across all genders and sexual orientations and it can happen in private dwellings or facility settings, or in public.

Abuse in later life is often violence against women. The majority of older victims are female; about 1/3 of older victims are male. A significant portion of abuse in later life is perpetrated by a spouse or intimate partner. June 's outreach centers around Elder Abuse/Abuse in later life. Please read The Bridge's featured story bringing awareness to this crime.

A victim's life event, paraphrased by our Executive Director, Suzanne Smith, follows below. (victim's name is changed for confidentiality)–

A few years ago a woman named "Becky" from Eastern NE was involved in a classic "abuse in later life" situation. Her story unfolds below. With the help of her church, and the Advocacy of The Bridge, "Becky" is now living in a safe, nurturing situation with her daughter. "Becky" was a sweet, nervous, quiet woman who attended church every Sunday with her husband. She was not seen in the community at other events, shopping, etc. One Sunday while having coffee in fellowship hall (her husband had gone to get the car) a concerned parishioner approached "Becky." She had observed "Becky" for many weeks and asked her if she was okay? Was everything at home okay? "Becky" quietly nodded, no. The women visited briefly about her situation. A short time later, the husband walked up to the two. He was very controlling and did not let her out of his sight often. The church member thought quickly and stated, "I was just talking to your wife and asked her if she would be able to help serve lunch at an upcoming funeral. Could you possibly drop her off on Wednesday? We could use her help for the luncheon and you could come and pick her up after." Being caught off guard, the husband agreed to bring her to the church on Wednesday. The church member had a keen sense of awareness that the situation was amiss with "Becky" and contacted The Bridge for advocacy help. Wednesday came and the husband walked "Becky" into the church. He agreed to come back and pick her up. "Becky" was kindly approached by the parishioner and told her she felt she might be in a situation out of her control. The victim admitted she was. The church member had arranged to have the Bridge there in a private setting that Wednesday to help advocate and come up with a safety plan for this woman's well being. "Becky" shared that she was never allowed to leave the house without her husband. She did not have car keys, she wasn't allowed to ever drive, didn't have a mailbox key, stamps, money, or a cell phone. They no longer had a land line. She was being kept prisoner in her own home. Her children did not live near anymore and she was not able to have private conversations with them to share her plight. Through the help of the Bridge and the church, contact was made with Becky's older children. They were shocked and in dismay that their mother was living in this controlling life with no freedom. Many private arrangements were made, but "Becky" was saved from her "imprisoned" life. She was retrieved by her oldest daughter and was moved immediately to her daughter's home. "Becky" currently is living in a safe, happy environment. #beaware



**Volunteer! Call The Bridge! (402-721-4340)**

The volunteer rate has remained steady at 62.8 million. Americans volunteered 7.9 billion hours last year. Those who volunteer enrich our community and keep our nation strong. Volunteering goes beyond helping other people. Studies have shown that the volunteers themselves benefit, whether through increased job prospects, better health, or even better overall well-being. Nebraska rates 7th highest in volunteer rate, with 34.6% of Nebraskans volunteering their time.

We respond to nearly 4,000 crisis calls each year. If you or someone you know would like to get more involved with The Bridge, please encourage them to contact us (402-721-4340) to learn more about volunteer opportunities and our training process.

**"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart"**



**—Elizabeth Andrew**



**24 Hr Crisis Line 1.888.721.4340  
1.402.727.7777  
Email: info@bridgefromviolence.com**

**FREMONT  
141 South Union  
1.402.721.4340**

**BLAIR  
810 North 22nd Street  
1.402.533.4411**

**WEST POINT  
500 East Decatur Street  
1.402.372.2204**

### The Bridge Services

24-Hr Crisis Line: 1.888.721.4340 or 1.402.727.7777, Crisis Intervention, Emergency/Temporary Shelter, Support Groups for Women and Children, Medical and Legal Referrals, Criminal Justice Advocacy, Public Education and Awareness.

**Victim services are free, confidential, and available in Spanish.**

### Women's Support Group

**Fremont - English & Spanish Women's Support Groups & Children's Rainbow Days Group, Thursdays, 6:30-7:30, The Bridge, 141 S Union, Babysitter available**



## The Bridge Board

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Kiley Cordes, President</b>        | <b>Becky Novacek</b>     |
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| <b>Kylee Stanley M.D., Secretary</b>  |                          |
| <b>Alisa Brunsing</b>                 |                          |

## The Bridge Staff

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|---|--|
| <b>Suzanne Smith</b> , Executive Director                                     | <b>Kylie Kampschneider</b> , Sexual Assault/<br>Criminal Justice Advocate        |
| <b>Jody Bykerk</b> , Shelter Program Manager                                  | <b>Christine Torres</b> , Cuming County/Spanish<br>Speaking Services Coordinator |
| <b>Stacey Lichtenberg</b> , Community Education<br>Coordinator                | <b>Linda Schlapfer</b> , Outreach<br>Communications Coordinator                  |
| <b>Jody Koziol</b> , Washington County Outreach<br>Coordinator                |  |
| <b>Jennifer Thomason</b> , Criminal Justice<br>Advocate/Volunteer Coordinator |  |

### LEAVING A LEGACY

A thoughtful planned gift can become a beautiful legacy you leave to The Bridge and to the victims of abuse who come through our doors for years to come. Bequests, Charitable Gift Annuities, Charitable Remainder Trusts and Charitable Lead Trusts are a few of the many avenues you may consider for continual support. An attorney can help you decide which option best fits your personal needs and financial circumstances.

