

VISIONS AND PATHWAYS

Winter 2023 Newsletter

US Army Staff Sgt Christopher Reed reflects on his time in Brahma House at the 2023 Spark! Gala

Self-Expression and Wishes



LAURIE PELLEGRINO, Board VP with Chris Reed with his Fiancé

Not too long ago, I was a participant in this event in a completely different capacity. I was sitting in the crowd just like you are today. If I may for a minute, I'd like to reintroduce myself. I know my current attire for the evening with medals and ribbons decorating my chest may seemingly create some separation between us, as in, how could I relate to anything you've gone through? but underneath it all, I'm just a guy. My name's Chris, and about 10 years ago, I was a resident of Visions and Pathways Program, Brahma House. The eight months I spent there were some of the most PIVOTAL and important moments in my life. They really shaped my identity and the man I ended up becoming. From the in-house counselors, the weekly events, trips to eat, and educational opportunities afforded to me as a resident; I gained immeasurable confidence and skills here. And all these freedoms are only possible through the generosity of the donors. I would like to personally thank all the businesses/companies/ INDIVIDUALS, who saw fit to align themselves with such an amazing cause. I, myself, spent a Christmas at Brahma, and those who have been in a group home during the holidays know it can be an emotional time. But long story less long, a group of amazing donors

came and blessed the residents with items we had put on a wish list. It was less about receiving the physical item, and more about appreciating these individuals who spent money but also donated time to be with us kids, who couldn't be with our families during this time. I've only ever spent 2 Christmases away from family. One was overseas, and one was with Brahma. The one at Brahma was absolutely more fun. Before my time comes to an end here, because I can absolutely talk forever, I would like to address the reason we are all here -you guys, the youth. I'll keep it short and sweet. You guys are strong, you guys are resilient, and you are IMPORTANT. And most importantly, you are the future. For those of you going through a rough patch, I have some corny advice for you. There's a light at the end of the tunnel. I was in your shoes once and I was sad, and I was down in the dumps, borderline depressed. But one day, the sun was a little brighter, people were a little nicer, and the air was a little crisper, and things started to turn around. Thank you for your time this evening. I love you, and may peace be with you.



CHRIS REED with Spark! Gala MC Eric Landskroner



Residents are encouraged to share their thoughts and words that inspire them and others on the Wishing Wall at Brahma House.



Foundations for Our Young People



DAVID BUCKMAN

Helping at-risk youth find a path to successful and productive lives is our mission at Visions and Pathways (V&P). An important component of that mission is Bridge House - a transitional housing program that serves young adults who are on the street or have aged out of foster care, who need housing and support to transition to adult independence. Residents pay 30% of their income as rent and participate in programs that

teach the skills necessary to become self-sufficient adults.

Building Bridge House has long been a goal of V&P, so we are very excited to announce that the Bridge House expansion and reconstruction project is underway! Our organization has over \$1.5 million committed to the project, which is about half the amount needed to cover all construction costs. Fundraising will continue as the project proceeds. The re-imagined building will expand Bridge House to encompass ten apartments along with other spaces that can be used by the residents.

The architect for the project is long-time V&P supporter David Buckman of Buckman Architectural Group. David has been a strong advocate for the agency and used to co-chair V&P's Advisory Council. Mr. Buckman was introduced to V&P and its mission years ago when he met David Walker, V&P's Executive Director at a networking event. The two immediately connected, and David B. became interested in supporting V&P's mission of providing hope, healing, and practical support to at-risk youth.

We asked David B. how he might

compel other potential donors to support V&P. His answer was, in fact, a question:

"How would YOU survive with no family support, either emotional or financial? Do you know that over half the kids in that circumstance end up in jail or on the street? V&P provides practical help that changes the trajectory of these young men and women with programs that seek to heal both emotional and financial needs. They offer safety and security to kids with nowhere else to go and guide them to become self-sufficient members of our community." Visions and Pathways has helped tens of thousands of young people over the past 50+ years. Without amazing supporters like David Buckman, our work would not be possible.

You too can change lives!

To donate to the ongoing
Bridge House Campaign visit

<https://visionsandpathways.org/donate>
and designate Bridge House.

Kids helping Kids

Dora Katsanos, a senior at Randolph High School, wanted to make a difference. Intrigued by Visions and Pathways' mission to help homeless youth; she approached her pastor, Father John Theodosion, of St. Andrews Church in Randolph, NJ with the idea of a book collection. He agreed it would be a great way to help V&P advance their efforts. Dora arranged for a New Legacy Book collection bin to be placed at the church and reached out to parishioners and area residents to donate. New Legacy is an organization that facilitates the reuse and redistribution of used books and pays organizations for their collection efforts. The close-knit community responded with a strong show of generosity and support,

and the bin filled quickly.

"Saint Andrews is committed to this cause and for this reason, we are supporting Visions and Pathways," says Father John who leads the St. Andrews community. "It will take all of us to be informed and be on the lookout to help humanity." V&P is grateful to Dora and the St. Andrews community for their efforts. Proceeds will be used to build housing and fund programs to improve the lives of homeless and at-risk youth.

Learn more about how Visions & Pathways helps at-risk and homeless youth to young adults with safe beds, food, and support at www.Visionsandpathways.org.



DORA KATSANOS

You can make an impact: a gift in a will or trust

Current transformational gifts can be made with appreciated securities, real estate, or IRA rollovers. Future planned gifts can include adding Visions and Pathways to a will, trust, or life insurance policy. We have opportunities to honor these gifts with naming opportunities. If you are interested in making a legacy gift and need our legal name and Federal Tax ID, please contact Visions and Pathways Director of Finance Indumati Patel at ipatel@visionsandpathways.org.

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List of donors 2023

THANK YOU to the companies, foundations, and service organizations that have made generous monetary contributions from January 2023 to date* to support Visions and Pathways and the homeless and runaway youth the agency serves.

Affinity Federal Credit Union	Meissner Family
Albireo Energy	Messer North America
Aldersgate United Methodist Church	Middlesex County
Anonymous	Morris Arts
Arts Council of Morris	Morris County
Atlantic Health	New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Company
AT&T	Nisivoccia LLP
AT&T Pioneers, NJ Chapter 139	Oasis-NJATT
Bausch Health	Paycom
Bellari Home Remodeling	Pennoni Associates
Bell Service Concierge	Provident Bank
Belle Meade Co-Op	Rite Aid Foundation KidCents
Bristol Myers Squibb	Robert A. Bonavito
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Buckman Architectural Group	Seamless Title Agency Inc.
Citizens Bank	Shamrock Construction Group
The Coffee Box	Shoprite of Hunterdon County
Columbia Foundation	Somerset County
Community Foundation of Princeton	Somerset County Children's Fund
Connolly and Co, PC.	Somerset Hills Community Health Foundation
Costco	The Celia Lipton and Victor W. Farris Foundation Inc.
Curtis McGraw Foundation	The John Tyler Foundation
CTS Partners	United Way of Somerset
Dombal-Vogel Foundation	Valley Wellness
EJ Benadon Consulting LLC	Walkers & Associates
First Energy Foundation	Warner Media
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	Whole Foods Market
Hightower Egan Wealth Advisors	Zeus Industrial Products, Inc.
Hillsborough Imaging Associates, LLC	
Hillsborough Irrigation and Landscaping	<u>Facebook Fundraisers</u>
Hirsch Family	Emily Benadon
Hodge Family	Buckman Architectural Group
Holmes Family	David Dvorin
Holy Trinity Church	Michelle Drapkin
Hyde and Watson Foundation	Joseph Garcia
Imperial Copy Products, Inc.	Adriana Gonzalez
Insmed	Keraya Jefferson
J. Williams & Company	Joanne Machalaba
Janssen Pharmaceutical	Annemarie Mattia
Johnson and Johnson	Kate Meade
Jolyn Foundation	Cynthia Ramsey
Lincoln Tech	Jill Scott
Luxury Tax Financial Services, LLC	David Walker
Magyar Bank	
Mailboxes Business Center	
The Curtis McGraw Foundation	

Fun enrichment activities sponsored by our Corporate and Faith Communities in 2023



BRAHMA RESIDENTS attend the Unspoken Concert hosted by the Evangelical Chapel and Celebrate Recovery.



COOKING CLASS for the Skittelz! LGBTQ+ Residents Hosted by J&J's Open & Out Employee Resource Group



I AM REMARKABLE Workshop Hosted by J&J



SALON DAY and Haircuts Provided by Causmetology



BEAUTY DAY Hosted by the Young Adult Ministry at Zarephath Church

2023 Events Memories



SPEKTRUMS AFRIKANS, an African dance company, Newark

Run/Walk



Giving Thanks Concert



BHARATNATYAM DANCERS students from the Vedic Vidyalay School. Harshini Sivaswami and Janani Thulasiraman.



2023 Spark! Gala



Scholarship Award Ceremony





IMPACT KIDS | GET INVOLVED!

"We help kids" find a **vision** and a **path** by giving safe housing, food and support services to at-risk and homeless NJ kids, ages 13+. **And we need your help!**

HOW?

Mentor Kids • Our residents benefit from life skills, financial literacy, public speaking, cooking, conflict resolution, trades and other professional & life skills

Volunteer • Paint a room, plant a garden, build benches, and attend events

Connect with us •    

Operational Services • Share your skills updating or managing our website, create or support a fundraiser, research/write grant requests, draft a brochure or write a blog. We've never found a professional skill that didn't help our kids!

Financial Support • Financial donations, donations of a car or home, fund a scholarship or legacy /endowment, start a birthday Facebook or GoFundMe fundraiser, or make a Memorial donation in lieu of sending flowers

Become an e-helper • No time to volunteer and still want to help? Become an e-Helper by giving us your email address and a few times a year, we'll email you when a homeless teenager asks a special request not covered by our budget...Can I go to the prom, join the basketball team, can I get dress shoes for my job? Fulfilling these requests help youth living at Visions and Pathways get the same opportunities as their peers who live at home. E-helpers who can contribute let us know they're either sending a check or donating instantly online. There's no obligation to respond to each request, but every little bit helps. Email Adriana at agonzalez@visionsandpathways.org if you're interested in e-Helping.

You can involve your company too!

Ask us about volunteer days, mentoring, event sponsorship & "Adopt a Charity"!

Join us at Visionsandpathways.org, streetmartoutreach.org or at our Bridgewater and Morristown locations

Learn more about us ...

Visions and Pathways provides abused, neglected, homeless, and missing youth with housing, a stable environment, and supportive services that help them to become self-sufficient. Since 1970, we have provided over 12,000 youth with safe shelter, food, clothing, and support services. Our programs for vulnerable youth include

- Brahma House residential crisis intervention program;
- Passages, My Place and Whitney House residential transitional-living programs;
- Prosperity independent-living skills education program;
- StreetSmart street and community outreach program;
- Transitional Learning Center for in-house education instruction;
- Bridge House and Village House, supportive-housing for aged-out youth, a Wellness Program (former Arts and Recreation Program), and the Transitions aftercare Program. The Loving Care Homes residence for homeless women.
- Scholarships: General, Meissner Memorial Fund, Warren, Sharing Joy and Magic Money.
- The Arman Roy Technology Center (ART Center) at Brahma.
- Pathways to Community Counseling (PCC) is an analytical, focused, goal oriented and needs based clinical intervention that addresses emotional and behavioral challenges.

In addition, V & P has an affiliation agreement with Newark's International Youth Organization (IYO). IYO has served Newark's highest need youth for almost 50 years.

For more information, visit VisionsAndPathways.org or contact Executive Director David Walker, Esq., MSW at dwalker@visionsandpathways.org.

Engage with Us

-  Like our page on Facebook
-  [@visionsandpathways](https://www.instagram.com/visionsandpathways)
-  Like our page on LinkedIn
-  Follow us on Twitter
[@VisionsandPathwaysNJ](https://twitter.com/VisionsandPathwaysNJ)
[@StreetSmart_NJ](https://twitter.com/StreetSmart_NJ)

When There is Nowhere Else To Turn . . . We Give Homeless Youth A Home and Hopeful Future

Yes! I/We want to help youth at Visions and Pathways

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

My/Our gift is ☐ in honor of or ☐ in memory of:

Please send a notification (without amount) to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Your tax-deductible donation provides operation funds for food, clothing, shelter, crisis intervention, counseling, basic education and independent-living skill education.

You can put your money to work immediately by making a secure gift online at www.visionsandpathways.org, or use one of the payments to follow.

Here's my heartfelt gift of : ☐ \$20. ☐ \$25. ☐ \$50.

☐ \$75. ☐ \$100. ☐ \$250. ☐ other _____

Check enclosed, payable to Visions and Pathways

☐ One-time or ☐ Monthly gift charged to my credit card

☐ VISA* ☐ MASTERCARD* ☐ AMEX*

Amount \$ _____ Exp. Date _____

Card No. _____

Signature _____

☐ Employer's Matching Gift form enclosed.

** A gift of \$250 or more entitles you to a brick in our Walk of Wishes, a garden walkway at Visions and Pathways, as a permanent symbol of your generous support.*

What name or message would you like on your brick?
Up to 3 lines with a total of 15 letters and spaces on each line

W23



Visions and Pathways and Kiwanis Club Team Up to Provide a Brighter Future for V&P Residents

Part of Visions and Pathways' (V&P) strategy is to collaborate with community organizations like Kiwanis Club. We hope this story describing the evolution of our partnership with Kiwanis might inspire your firm or club to reach out and discuss ways you can work with us too!

Kiwanis and Visions and Pathways share the goal of helping homeless and disadvantaged youth. Five years ago, a local Kiwanis Club member reached out to David Walker, Executive Director of Visions and Pathways, to offer V&P a membership to the Club. David agreed, and a partnership was born. Since then, local Kiwanis Clubs have supported V&P in the form of monthly donations of kitchen and cleaning supplies, first aid kits and hygiene items along with clothing and monetary donations. The Somerset Hills Chapter has also partnered with V&P for the 50/50 Raffle during the 5K Run, raising several thousand dollars for that event over the years.

In 2023, the partnership gained momentum when Kiwanis designated youth homelessness and LGBTQIA+ issues as a strategic focus of their mission and launched a pilot project to raise \$10,000 and volunteer 1,000 hours to assist youth homeless agencies. Michael Ellithorpe, assistant secretary of the Kiwanis Club of Keyport, and long-time youth advocate was the logical choice to head this project. He was appointed NJ District Project Chair in October 2023. Michael assembled a diverse state-wide committee devoted to homeless youth. Knowing that Visions and Pathways serves this population, Michael reached out to V&P's David Walker, who is also current President of the Somerset Hills Kiwanis Club. Through their discussions, Michael realized that V&P was more than safe nights for vulnerable youth - "we are starting to really understand what you do - all the different services you offer that go beyond shelter." Mental health counseling,

scholarships for post-secondary education, life skills training, and help finding jobs are a few examples of how V&P helps beyond a bed. Through this partnership, individual Kiwanis members have volunteered their time to prepare meals for residents and Kiwanis has provided monetary support for V&P programs.

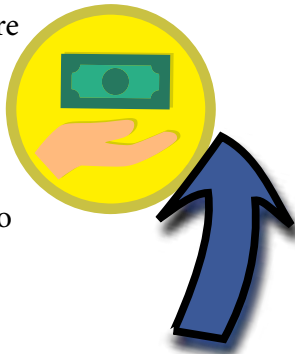
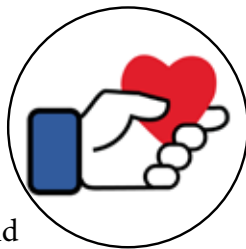
With the initial phase of the Youth Homelessness and LGBTQIA+ project underway, discussions to go beyond periodic relief and focus on formalizing ongoing support for V&P's mission have begun - to work toward giving every homeless and at-risk youth in New Jersey the opportunity to thrive. Individuals from both organizations acknowledged that they have learned lessons and grown from their mutual efforts to strengthen the community. If you belong to an organization or company that would be interested in working with us, please contact David Walker, dwalker@visionsandpathways.org.

Here is the Winter 2023 issue
of your Visions and Pathways
newsletter.

*Thank you for investing
in the future of our youth!*

IT'S EASY TO HELP!

1. Hold a Facebook Birthday Fundraiser
2. Ask if your local stores would host a "Coins for Kids" collection box on premise
3. See if your local grocery store would agree to a "round up" campaign
4. Ask your church or school to host a book collection bin



Save The Date

*Put our
2024 Events
in Your Calendar!*

- **Run and Walk**
April 20th
Duke Island Park
8am to 1pm
- **Giving Thanks Benefit Concert**
June 22
Drew University Concert Hall
5pm to 7pm
- **Spark! Gala**
October 17
Bridgewater Marriott,
6pm to 9pm