

BRIDGES TO MOMS NEWS SPRING SUMMER 2023

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING BRIDGES TO MOMS! YOUR HELP IS TRULY MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

On May 10, 2023, we hosted a “Day of Beauty” for the moms receiving our services. Over 50 women and their babies were transported to 850 Boylston St, Chestnut Hill, where they received free hair styling, manicures and make-up. Their babies were cared for by our wonderful volunteer “special ladies”. Live music was provided by my son, Willy Beaman, who flew in from LA to help out. Breakfast, lunch, gift bags, and unconditional love and support rounded out the day. For women whose struggles are spent alone and without family or friends, it was a chance to see that others were going through the same thing, and to feel less alone.



Bridges to Moms Team (L to R): Carmen, Fernanda, Dr. Means, William, Eudal with his daughter



Women's Division Chief Dr. Kathy Rexrode (far R) with hairdressers at the Day of Beauty

Services for this day of “happy chaos” were donated by these amazing women: Linh Dang, Samantha Duthley, Fatima Elisangela Fernandes, Claudia Gil, Andrea Gomera, Mayerlin Hernandez, Yalira Perez, Aracly Vaz and my amazing son, Willy Beaman.

Two of our current clients also contributed their services, one doing manicures, the other doing make-up.

TV crews from WCVB, Channel 7, and NECN 10/Telemundo dropped by, as well as a reporter from El Planeta. A wonderful story about the day was circulated in the BWH Bulletin and in one of the local papers.

Read more:

<https://www.naticktownnews.com/2023/04/28/433101/natick-doctor-helps-moms-succeed>

<https://bwhbulletin.org/2023/05/24/i-feel-like-a-princess-bridges-to-moms-program-treats-mothers-experiencing-homelessness-to-day-of-beauty/>

Here's the article published in El Planeta: <https://elplaneta.com/2023/05/16/locales/asi-fue-el-dia-de-las-madres-en-el-brigham-and-womens-hospital-de-boston/>

Among the women who attended the Day of Beauty are women whose pregnancies were challenged by circumstances beyond their control: the high cost of living, abandonment by a partner, trauma and violence, fleeing from civil wars, escaping from trafficking. What we see in all these women is the desire to have a healthy baby, to be a good mom, to create a nest to take their babies home to. Among the photos are babies who spent weeks in the NICU and thrived. We made sure their moms were given rides to the BWH to hold them every day.



Bridges to Moms' services are not recognized by insurance companies as "billable"—this is why we rely on you. There is no billing code for helping a homeless and destitute new mother get placed in a shelter when her baby is 24 hours old. Nor is there one for handing her a packet of meal tickets to the BWH cafeteria so that she knows that on the days she comes in for her prenatal care (transportation provided by us), she will not be, literally, starving. Insurance doesn't cover the box of diapers we bring to her when she is finally settled, even if "settled" is a tiny room in an attic without a fan or air conditioning, or a shelter

room in a building crowded with others in a neighborhood where gun shots can be heard at night. Nearly all these women feel anxious and depressed, many have been through trauma. Part of our focus is to let them know they can lean on us before they feel utterly hopeless. When we enroll these moms in the Bridges to Moms Program, we are giving them a degree of health care that is not officially recognized as health care but is just as vital and life-sustaining. We close the many gaps and we stay with them on their health journeys until the baby is at least one year old. Some day, I want us to be able to stay with them until the baby is 5 years old. What we do for pregnant moms and their babies has huge health repercussions long after the pregnancy.

Over the past year, we have developed partnerships with several Workforce Development Training Programs. This Spring we will see graduates in a Community Health Worker certificate program and a pre-apprenticeship class that will prepare them for jobs in construction. We are now adding mental health peer support training to our roster, and we have just referred 2 new clients to a program that will train them to become medical interpreters.

Our Annual Program Evaluation again showed that Bridges to Moms positively impacts prenatal and post-partum clinic attendance, hospital length of stay, access to housing, food, primary care and pediatricians, mental health services, and maternal bonding—and even among this population of women, 95% of whom are women of color, none of the hundreds of women we have cared for—and about--- in the last 7 years has died, even though maternal mortality in women of color is up to five times greater than in white women. We ran the numbers for the past 5 years and the results hold up. Bridges to Moms improves health, health access and the health trajectory of vulnerable women.

This Spring we conducted a phone Patient Feedback Survey to find out from the women's perspective how we are doing and how we can improve. We reached out to 96 women and had a response rate of 57%--this is high for phone surveys. The 62% who reported improvement in housing status excludes those who were already in a shelter or apartment and did not need to be placed or we helped them get rental relief. Considering the huge crisis in family shelter bed availability in MA, this is a strong testament to the hard work of the BTM Community Health Workers who leave no stone unturned in helping the moms get their own homes.

- 87% were satisfied or very satisfied with the BTM program
- 91% felt connected and supported while enrolled in Bridges to Moms
- 92% felt comfortable connecting with their community health worker
- 62% reported improvement in housing status while they were enrolled in Bridges to Moms
- 95% found the cab vouchers helpful
- 100% found the gift cards helpful
- 100% found the Brigham & Women's cafeteria tickets helpful
- 88% stated that Bridges to Moms was helpful in connecting them to primary care
- 87% of participants stated they saw an improvement in their mental health as a result of being connected to Bridges to Moms
- 94% stated that they would recommend the BTM program to others



A DAY OF BEAUTY IN PICTURES—A DAY OF LOVING KINDNESS, GIVING BACK AND GIVING FORWARD:



We are indebted to our Day of Beauty volunteers from the BWH and our friends and supporters: Asia, Barbara, Eileen, Ellen, Geisha, Joanna, Karen, Lilah, Malax, Mara, Michelle, Sheilah, Stacey, and Tessa. Bless you and thank you!