For nearly a quarter century Bridges From School to Work has remained true to a singular mission: enhancing employment opportunities for youth with disabilities. We’re pleased to present this first-ever progress report to highlight Bridges’ achievements for the many stakeholders who help us empower young people and engage business. Together, we continue to build more bridges to a brighter future for young adults across the country.

As the nation continues to grapple with high unemployment and slow job growth, the effect on young people is particularly troubling. The national unemployment rate among youth ages 16-24 stands at 16%; factor in disability and young adults are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as their nondisabled peers. Studies also indicate that only 40% of youth with disabilities are employed 1-2 years after high school graduation compared to 63% of the general population.

Bridges services are as relevant and needed today as when the program started in 1989. Employers are seeking work-ready job candidates and urban youth are facing ever-increasing challenges in a highly competitive labor market. Over the years, Bridges has successfully—and continuously—connected employers to an attractive but often untapped talent pool. Now in its 23rd year, Bridges is forging ahead because of the important, life-changing role employment can play in the lives of young adults as they transition from high school into the working world.

Key recent successes include:

- **Performance outcomes.** In the most recent program year, Bridges placed 813 youth with disabilities into competitive jobs with more than 350 businesses. 664 young people remained on the job for more than 90 days and 539 youth were on the job six months or more.

- **Bridges in professional journals.** Recent published reports in the Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin and the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation clearly illustrate:
  - “universally high job placement rates for a large sample of Bridges youth regardless of sociodemographic and geographic characteristics,”
  - the continued efficacy of the Bridges model and potential uses for its data set, and
  - identification of key characteristics among top-performing employment specialists that can assist in recruitment and selection efforts.
**Increased communications.** We’ve increased our communication outreach to tell the moving stories of Bridges youth through the addition of videos on our website, and the establishment of Facebook and Flickr pages.

**ClientTrack™ launch.** Over 23 years and more than 18,000 participants, Bridges retains longitudinal data detailing intervention services that help shape present and future operations. In 2012, Bridges migrated to the ClientTrack platform, leveraging new tracking and reporting technology in this best-in-class management information system.

**Successful fundraiser.** Nearly 1,000 attendees raised $1.36 million for Bridges at our latest annual gala. Highlighting the evening, NFL groundbreaker and community builder Tony Dungy shared his perspective on what is truly important in life.

In 2012, Bridges bid farewell to Dr. Floretta Dukes McKenzie, independent education consultant and past Superintendent and Chief State School Officer of D.C. Public Schools, who retired from our Board after 15 years of dedicated service (1997-2012). We are grateful for her commitment to Bridges. We are also happy to announce the appointment of a new board member, Jimmie Walton Paschall, Executive Vice President and Head of Enterprise Diversity and Inclusion at Wells Fargo & Company.

We’re proud of what we have accomplished over the years. Thanks to all of the people who make Bridges possible, we look forward to achieving new milestones in the years ahead!

Richard E. Marriott  
Chairman, Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities  
Board of Trustees

Thomas (Tad) Asbury  
Executive Director

**DEDICATION**

This report is dedicated to the memory of Stephen Garff Marriott, whose 23 years of unwavering service as a member of the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities' Board of Trustees were an important part of our success. That service, and the admirable way he lived his life, leave a lasting legacy of perseverance and courage which inspires our work to create opportunity for youth with disabilities for generations to come.

Stephen G. Marriott  
April 15, 1959 – June 23, 2013
WASHINGTON, D.C.: PATRICIA EVANS

“The passion she has shown for our residents is what really sets her apart,” says Patricia’s supervisor. Because of Patricia’s people skills, Bridges helped her secure a part-time position at the Fox Hill senior living community. After just a few weeks on the job, Patricia had already exceeded expectations and established great relationships with the residents.

ATLANTA: JONATHAN KEEPLER

Jonathan is responsible for setting up meeting space at the Renaissance Concourse Atlanta Airport Hotel—an important job as it shapes a guest’s first impression. According to Teresa Gleaton, Banquet Operations Supervisor, Jonathan has transitioned from learning to teaching others. Jonathan has been so successful that one supervisor admits, “It’s become like a phrase, ‘I need another Jonathan.’” The feeling is mutual. Jonathan says, “I see my future here and I want to keep moving on up.”

DALLAS: CATHY ALVAREZ

“Working in PetSmart is a very big dream job for me,” says Cathy. “I really love the Bridges program,” she says. “It helps you succeed; it helps you change your life to [become] a better person.” Looking to the future, Cathy hopes to become a veterinarian and stay on at PetSmart for many more years to come. As Cathy’s supervisor explains, “My relationship with Bridges has just been totally awesome. When we have a need, Bridges is usually the first place that I call.”
LOS ANGELES: JEREMIAH WATSON

After more than a year of searching, Jeremiah Watson realized he needed help convincing employers he had what it takes to excel in the workplace. “Marriott Bridges helped me with [knowing] what I was good at,” Jeremiah says. His hard work and perseverance paid off: The Los Angeles Superior Court hired him for a custodial position. “I have been doing this job for over two years. Now I teach the new hires the ropes, and about cleaning the courthouse.”

CHICAGO: LEVI THREATT

Levi started work at Treasure Island grocery store as a courtesy clerk but quickly moved up to the produce department. “We get about 3,000 customers a day in this store, and he’s an important part of keeping those customers coming back to us,” says Levi’s supervisor. Levi credits Bridges with helping him stay focused and with realizing his potential. Levi loves working and picked up a second job at Wrigley Field.

SAN FRANCISCO: FRANK MENNUCCI

Working at Noah’s Bagels in San Francisco is more than just a job for Frank Mennucci. It’s his ticket to a better life. “Anything that needs to be prepped, I can do it,” says Frank, who has received top marks for his performance at the store. Eventually, Frank would like to move to the front of the store, learn to drive, and perhaps make deliveries. “I like work; I have a lovely Mom and Dad; I have a home. So yeah, I’m very happy.”
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

BRIDGES BY THE NUMBERS

Bridges began serving businesses and young people in 1990. Here’s an overview of our work.

IN TOTAL SINCE 1990
- Total youth served: 18,235
- Total businesses who employed Bridges youth: 3,855 (35% of these businesses, or 1,354 businesses, employed multiple Bridges youth)

IN 2012
- Youth served: 1,083
- Youth placed in employment: 813
- Youth retained in employment for at least 90 days: 664
- Youth retained in employment for at least 180 days: 539
- Average hourly wage: $8.65/hr
- Average weekly hours: 22 hours
- Economic impact of retaining 539 youth for 180 days at average wage and weekly hours: Approximately $2.67 million
- Number of businesses employing Bridges youth: 358
- Number of high schools served: 242
- Youth at Bridges’ schools qualifying for free or reduced lunch: 77%

3,855
Total businesses who employed Bridges youth since 1990.

35%
of these businesses, or 1,354 businesses, employed multiple Bridges youth.
DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

Thomas (Tad) Asbury
Vice President & Executive Director

Linda Bender
Director of Administration & Board Secretary

Mark Hearn
Director of Finance

DIRECTORS OF BRIDGES SITES

Allen Brown
Senior Director, Atlanta & Philadelphia

Anthea Charles
Director, San Francisco & Oakland

Shelby Hill
Director, Washington, DC Metro & Baltimore

Therese Lyons
Director, Los Angeles

Rob Mollard
Director, Dallas

Ken Upshaw
Director, Chicago

MARRIOTT FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(LEFT TO RIGHT):

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Past President, Gallaudet University

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Executive Vice President and Head of
Enterprise Diversity and Inclusion, Wells Fargo

Dr. Florenta Dukes McKenzie (retired)
Past Superintendent and Chief State School Officer,
D.C. Public Schools

Mark R. Donovan
Vice Chairman

Richard E. Marriott
Chairman

Direct Services

$4,837,206

Fundraising

$406,400

Management and General

$1,784,691
Across the country, motivated young people with disabilities are looking for the right opportunity to start their careers, while businesses seek skilled and committed employees to bolster their workforce. Yet despite the clear benefits of workforce participation for both businesses and youth, notoriously high rates of unemployment for youth with disabilities persist. Programs such as Bridges cannot stem this tide alone. It takes the effort and collaboration of a wide range of local and national stakeholders working hand in hand. Thankfully, Bridges has many such collaborators.

Among the most critical of them are employers and school districts. Across the country, participating schools, their teachers, guidance counselors and administrators make it possible for Bridges to facilitate meaningful employment outcomes. But, of course, those outcomes would be impossible without a business—an employer—who understands that effective hiring isn’t about finding just any person, but about finding the right person. Many hundreds of such employers work with us every year, providing a world of opportunity while they fortify their workforce.

But none of this would be possible without the financial resources that have sustained us now for decades. Primary in this area has been the Marriott family who provided us our initial support and continue to keep us strong with ongoing core, legacy funding. And from that base we’ve been able to expand and grow—serving more youth in more communities—thanks to the generous contributions of funders from across the country, private and public, who have seen the value in offering a brighter future to challenged youth, and who have demonstrated confidence in us to make it happen. Their investments have paid dividends in the lives of young people seeking an opportunity, in the operational strength of the businesses that hire them, and in the communities in which both reside.

Sincere thanks to every one of you—to the educators, the human service professionals, the employers, the funders—for making possible everything that we do.

But there is so much more yet to do. And so an invitation to each of you: please help Bridges continue to expand its reach, lending a hand to thousands of additional young people who will otherwise face a future of limited options and bleak prospects. If you’re already working with us, please continue. If you’re not, please consider joining us. The opportunities are endless, as are the rewards. Make a contribution, start a program, hire a youth, change a life.

If you would like to know more about the Bridges program, please contact us. We look forward to hearing from you.