Miami Bridge Youth & Family Services, Inc.

Miami-Dade's only 24-hour emergency shelter for runaway teens and youth escaping violence, abuse, neglect and human trafficking.

Monthly Electronic Newsletter
June 2016

“The problem with bureaucratic organizations is not only that they implement too many rules and regulations, but that those rules and regulations seem to serve no clear strategic or cultural purpose”
- Patrick Lencioni

Greetings:

Happy Fourth of July to one and all! Let me also take a moment to thank the men and women of the armed forces who fight to ensure America maintains its freedom and independence.

By the time you read this, Miami Bridge will have a new President and Chairman of the Board in place. Since my arrival and eventual assignment as CEO at Miami Bridge, I have only known one Chairman, Attorney Adrian Delancy. Anyone who knows Adrian can attest that he is a perfect gentleman. Personally, I found him to be an ideal Chair. His passion for the youth showed in all he did and said, but he never let bureaucracy keep us from pressing toward our mission. Thank you Adrian, for the fine example you set for the youth, staff, and community. You will TRULY be missed.

And the new Chairman is?... None other than our very own Attorney Marlene Quintana! For the ten people in Miami who may not know her, you will! At Miami Bridge, she also stays away from the bureaucratic nonsense that keeps us from attaining our purpose. She, too, is a powerhouse who focuses her passion on our mission, “to promote positive youth development...” How did we get so lucky to nab her? My only answer is that I pray.

Thanks to our community for all of your support!

Your humble servant,

Dorcas

Miami Bridge Youth Testimonial

All the staff at Miami Bridge have extensively helped me during my stay here so far. They always go out of their way to make sure that all of my needs have been met, whether its making an extra cup of tea for me when I'm cramping or talking to me when I am going through a difficult time. They always put the needs of me and all the other clients here [first].

- Pepper, 17

Miami Bridge named "Best Charity"
Miami Bridge has been named “Best Charity” in the "Best Of Miami 2016" by the Miami New Times.

Many thanks to our donors, supporters, volunteers and staff for making it happen.

End of an Era - A New Beginning

Miami Bridge and the Board of Directors wishes to thank our outgoing Board President Adrian Delancy for his many and continuous efforts to the organization. A member of the Board for more than a decade, our President steered the organization through some very difficult events and put in an enormous amount of time that no doubt added pressure to his professional and personal responsibilities.* You’ve given incredible and generous service over the past few years as our president. You have been an incredibly strong, fair and decisive leader that resulted in some true improvements in our organization. Thank you for all you’ve done for the kids we serve and for your friendship.

*Note: Please see Miami Today, June 10 “Best of Miami” edition, where our very own Adrian was featured in an article entitled, "Top nonprofit executives reveal uncommon dedication..."

Welcome Marlene Quintana to your new post as Board President.

Nike Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

- Our Outreach Counselors have served both kindergarten and first graders who have in excess of 50 unexcused absences.

- We recently provided services for a single-parent family with four truant children. The children had contracted head lice and could not afford the treatment. Miami Bridge purchased the treatment to get the children back in school.

- Some children are truant because they are made to stay home to care for younger siblings.

- MB works in conjunction with MDCPS (Miami Dade County Public Schools) and DJJ (Department of Juvenile Justice) to initiate court proceedings against parents for educational neglect. This can result in revocation of driver’s license, loss of governmental assistance, or even incarceration.

- We provide services in English, Spanish, and Creole.

THANK YOU!!!

June Donors

Adrian Delancy
Amy Zambrano
Betty Park
Bronwyn Miller
Candace Borja
Dorcas Wilcox
Joe Cantrell
Juan Cordino
Nike employees came out to Miami Bridge Homestead for the ribbon cutting ceremony and inaugural game of our new court. One of our own Youth Activity Workers, Jimmy Brown, who also works at Nike, spearheaded a fundraising campaign, through Nike, to make this possible. Thank you Nike and thank you Jimmy!

Youth Success Story - From His Counselor

On May 31, 2016, I received a telephone call from a former client. He asked if I could attend his upcoming high school graduation. I was honored and proud that a client would call after leaving Miami Bridge for such a long time. Even more honored to have left such an impact that he felt the need to have me as a guest at such an important milestone and event in his life. I responded by telling the client that it would be an honor to be a part of his special day.

When the client arrived at Miami Bridge in just less than a year ago, in August 2015, he was having a lot of challenging and negative issues with his grandmother and so she refused to care for him any longer. At that point, the client accepting his reality continued to make progress at the shelter. He worked hard in our on-site school and in our clinical group sessions and continued to show improvement. He learned to communicate effectively and took responsibility for his actions. He also began to focus more on his short and long term goals. For example, he told me that when he finished high school, he would become a soldier.

At the graduation, while talking to him, he reported that he will be joining the army. This was after he told me that he had made his graduation by the “Skin of his teeth”, meaning was so close to not attaining it. I had to reassure and remind him that he had a lot of upheaval and trauma in less than a year and so it was remarkable that he should graduate and move on to the next phase of his life. While he was telling me this, I saw how determined he was to continue to reach his goals.

Volunteer Opportunities

We encourage our community to volunteer and participate with our youth. Any assistance can make a difference in a child’s life.

Here are ways you can help:

- Data entry (up to 10 hours per week)
- Become a mentor through our Mentoring Program
- Tutor our youth
- Give a youth job training
- Plan an activity for our children and teens

Volunteer Event:

Dinner is an opportunity to dine and fellowship with the Bridge Family. We are looking for individuals, families, or groups to come in, prepare dinner and eat with our wonderful staff and kids. We can provide the food or you may bring your own food as well! Please note: Uncooked food must be prepared on our premises. We WILL welcome you with a huge smile and a loving environment.

The volunteer hours for cooking dinner for the youth are 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM. (daily)

If you would like to volunteer, serve as a mentor or plan an activity for our youth, please call 305.636-3529 or email info@miamibridge.org.

Shelter Needs

Many of our children arrive with little to no personal belongings. We can always use NEW pajamas and undergarments. New sneakers are always helpful too. Your donations are very much appreciated!

Upcoming Events!
Here we have a young man who was abandoned by his mother, father, aunts, and uncles and placed into the foster care system. However, through self-perseverance and his desire to better himself, he still found a way to make it through high school and achieve some of his goals. This young man makes me proud and has helped me reflect on why I wake up every day and do what I do, which is to make a difference in young people's lives.

Submitted By: Jose Ortega B.A

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**Everglades Expedition**

Youth from both our shelters visited the Everglades this month. They learned about alligators and other wildlife while enjoying a tour through the swamp.

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**Corporate Social Responsibility Day**

Many thanks to Ultimate Software who gave our living and dining rooms a paint makeover. After a morning of painting, the team enjoyed a pizza party with the youth followed by a game of volleyball.

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**End of School Year Dance**

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We brought both shelters together for an end-of-school-year dance at our Homestead Shelter. It was a luau theme and so much fun for our youth.

Miami River Beautification Project

Police Academy Class 115 (PAC115) partnered with our youth for a neighborhood beautification project along the Miami River/Canal. After the work was finished, the police took our youth out for a boat ride on the river.

Smoothie Night

At Miami Bridge, healthy eating is important. One of our Youth Activity Workers, Delris Martin, brought in her Nutri-Bullet for a fun night of smoothie making with the youth. The youth enjoyed making their own customized flavor smoothies with a wide variety of fresh and frozen fruit and fruit juices.
Summer Outing - Venetian Pool

Our youth enjoyed a summer day at the Venetian Pool. This is a luxury trip for the majority of the youth we serve, who would not be exposed to places like this without the programs at Miami Bridge. We take pride in offering enrichment experiences for our youth all year long.

Miami Bridge Board of Directors

We are accepting candidates for the Board of Directors.
For more information please email mjohnson@miamibridge.org or call (305) 636-3520.

Adrian Delancy - President
Attorney, Markowitz, Ringel, Trusty & Hartog

Jahan Islami - Vice President
Attorney, Cozen O'Connor

Beatriz Martin - Treasurer
Partner, Vizcaino Zomerfeld, LLP

Alexander Lian - Secretary
Attorney, Lian & Associates

Michael Alvarez
Partner, BenTrust Financial

Monique Matley
Co-Founder, Always Believing Foundation

Dr. Todd Giardina
Licensed Psychologist -
Coral Gables Counseling Center

Jahan Islami - Vice President
Attorney, Cozen O'Connor

Joseph Cantrell
Process Manager, Greenspoon Marder Law

Patrick Erin Murphy
U.S. Congressman, FL 18th District

Maria Carvalho
Owner, Miami Chic, LLC

Marlene Quintana
Shareholder, GrayRobinson P.A.

Mayling Espinosa
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George White
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Dee Dee Fischer
Partner, Akerman LLP

Province "Boo" Zamek
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Peggy Fucci
President & CEO, OneWorld Properties

Judy Reinach - Director Emeritus

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