Building Bridges

The Story of Bridges at St. Paul’s School

19 Years and Counting
My Four Goals for Today

1) Share Bridges’ story and its evolution

2) Explain how Bridges positively impacts the St. Paul’s community and delivers on the school’s mission

3) Share considerations for launching a program like Bridges

4) Answer your questions and hear your thoughts
Bridges’ story and evolution
First Coldstream summer program labeled a ‘success’

by John Greene

Early last school year, Mr. Judd Anderson, head of the community service program, decided to make a difference. “I wanted to start a five week summer program for inner-city kids,” Anderson says. “The campus is underused. There should be kids running around here during the summer,” says Anderson with a large smile.

A correspondence was started with Coldstream Elementary, located at Loch Raven Boulevard and Exeter Hall Rd. in downtown Baltimore. Anderson along with his partner, a Coldstream second grade teacher Mrs. Bertha Watts, started a preliminary program last winter which involved SP students going downtown and tutoring the kids.

Anderson comments with another gigantic grin, “It was a success.” With the school re-opened, Anderson saw his idea into action.

The camp usually followed a daily routine. “We established a routine that we followed each day,” said Andrea Batfield, a trustee and mother of Garth Timmell ’95, started us off with a prayer and a word of inspiration to the nervous boys and girls who stood in a circle. The practice which we call ‘counsel’, continued throughout the five weeks,” says Anderson in his written report to the Board.

After ‘counsel’, daily projects are introduced which usually involved academic skills that related to real-life situations. For example, students are given a make-believe salary and are required to make a practical budget. The practicality of these educational problems made them more interesting for the students. Melvin Lee, a camper, continually declares how much fun SP is and when asked about how he likes the schoolwork each morning at camp, he says, “That’s fun too!”

Once the morning project is finished, it is time for lunch. After the brown bag nourishment, the afternoon, from 1 to 4, is designated for fun time. Among the activities are art projects, low level exercise on the ropes course, a trip to Oregon Ridge Lake to swim, and trips to Worthington Valley Swim Club.

Almost everyone involved finds the camp rewarding and fun. Steve Pratt ’94 says, “I started out working at the camp just to get my community service out of the way, but I ended up enjoying my work.” Ashton Newhall ’94 says, “Coming from two different backgrounds, we were able to learn a lot about each other.”

Brian Reese ’94, who put in the most volunteer hours, also had pleasant things to say. “There were some really great kids and they were fun to work with. I actually ended up doing over forty hours (the required community service hours).”

Anderson says that he is very pleased with the results of his summer program and hopes to build on this success next year.

“Discipline, however, can be a major obstacle. Their tendency to react aggressively, verbally abusive, even violently, is common. Girls and boys both hit andlash out with equal force. On the other hand we were usually able to resolve what seemed like large differences rather easily by calming kids down and talking through the difficulties. We must be careful to screen next year’s participants more carefully in regards to their behavior,” says Anderson.

He ends on a positive note, “I think that next year we will double the program. Hopefully we will have another 20 talented students and our funding will double.”

More than just a teacher...

Anderson brings a sense of community responsibility to the camp and his students. He is a good role model and enjoys working with kids. "I really enjoy their company," Anderson says. "I think kids are the future of this country and if we don’t teach them the right thing they will grow up to be bad people."
After school one sheeter

Bridges Winter After School Program 2011-2012

November 2011-February 2012

This winter, 27 high school students from the St. Paul's Schools volunteered in the Bridges Winter After School Program, providing weekly tutor-mentoring to 40 Bridges fourth and fifth grade students. After School sessions ran Tuesday through Friday from November to early February. Each ninety minute session began with sports, followed by group reading from The Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days, and finished with one-on-one homework help. In addition to tutoring, all volunteers participated in a weekly training session on Monday afternoons.

Students and tutors decorate gingerbread people during a holiday themed activity.

Volunteers write “personal mission statements” during a Monday training session.

Tutor Will reviews Damon’s fifth grade math homework.

Participants in the Friday session enjoy a game of dodge ball in the gym at Harford Heights Elementary.

Nikki tests students’ knowledge in a game of BrainQuest.
Bridges Summer Jobs Lays Down the Law at DLA Piper
June-August, 2012

This summer, DLA Piper is providing incredible summer job experiences to four Bridges high school students. Alex, Jazzmine, Shionna, and Antoine are working in four back office areas of the firm - new business intake, administration, accounts payable, and information technology. In addition to work responsibilities, the students have also learned about careers in law through meetings with lawyers at the firm.

Alex and Jazzmine are in their second summer of work at DLA Piper, while Antoine and Shionna are both in their first summer at the firm. Alex remains in Administration, spending most of her days helping with purchasing and special events. Jazzmine has moved from accounts payable to new business intake. Shionna’s first summer at the firm has focused on accounts payable while Antoine has been assisting with projects in the IT Department.

Alex and Jane Robinson, Office Administrator at DLA Piper, discussing a special project for the firm.

Jazzmine with her supervisor, Bill Kuntz, Manager of New Business Intake at DLA Piper.

Shionna and Jacqueline Savage, AP Team Leader at DLA Piper, status on accounts payable.

Antoine removing background noise from a presentation as part of a project for the IT Department.

Alex, Jazzmine, Shionna, and Antoine, catching up for a few minutes at work.
Weekend Mentoring visits St. Paul’s Campus!

March 3, 2012

On Saturday, March 3rd, the Bridges eighth grade spent an afternoon at St. Paul’s School with their weekend mentors. Highlights of the day included board games, a goal setting activity, and sports in the Kinsolving gymnasium. The 11 students and 4 mentors in attendance were also treated to a delicious lunch provided by Miller’s Deli in Pikesville. Miller’s has signed on as the official food sponsor of Weekend Mentoring and now provides deli lunches on all Weekend Mentoring trips.

The group gathers for an ice breaker to start off the afternoon.

Mentor Andrew talks about his personal goals with Kayla, Brandon, and Evan.

Mentor Maureen teaches Chinese Checkers to Gilea, Dejah and LeiAndra.

Mentor Jim and Joseph watch as Danaeja moves her piece closer to the finish-line.

The day ends with sports in they gym.
Bridges High School Tutoring with Loyola University
Fall/Winter 2011
This year, with the help of Loyola University and its Center for Community Service and Justice, Bridges has partnered with Loyola Professor Lisa Zimmerelli, whose 10 students are providing weekly one-on-one tutoring to a select group of Bridges high school students. Monday evening sessions take place in the Loyola Writing Center and provide Bridges students with 90 minutes of homework help, grammar enrichment, bonding, and pizza. Given the success of the fall pilot, both sides are excited to continue the program into the spring semester.

Loyola student, Becca, provides a grammar lesson to the group.

Brandon receives homework help from his tutor, Andrew.

Gerald and his tutor, Kathleen, research a homework assignment on the computer.

Michael helps fellow Bridges student Chelsea with a math problem.
How Bridges positively impacts the school community and delivers on the school’s mission
When you think about the word, “bridges,” you probably consider structures joining one piece of land to another. Some people, like my grandparents, might think about the card game. But now, when I think about the word bridges, I think about a great program that I participated in during the summer of 2006.

This summer, I volunteered for two weeks with the Bridges program at St. Paul’s and got to work with some great kids from Cold Stream Park Elementary and other Baltimore City schools. I helped my students with class work, transported them between activities, chaperoned them on field trips, and managed their recess. I also took my students swimming. They always got excited when I got in to swim at the pool and little hands would tug at me to play games. Many enjoyed watching me go underwater and hold my breath.

Each day I went home exhausted, but feeling good. The kids that participate in Bridges are mostly from disadvantaged families, but this program seems to help literally bridge the differences between their world and ours at St. Paul’s.

The kids loved my “Pterodactyl call” where I screech very loud and flap my arms like wings (like the big dinosaur birds). I liked making my students laugh and have a good time, and it helped me achieve “Counselor of the Week” for one of the weeks.

One thing I will remember for a very long time is that on the last day of my time at Bridges, we were on our way back from the trip to Washington D.C. and a fifth grade girl in my group named Leasha gave me her little purple bracelet to remember her by. It made me so happy to see that I had made a good impression on her. It was also very nice to see that all of my fifth graders were giving me hugs and saying goodbye to me on my last day. They were sad that I had to leave.

The teachers at Bridges were very talented educators and I really got to connect with them as time went on. I also earned all my service hours needed to graduate in those two weeks.

I have signed up to be a head counselor next summer for the entire five-week program, and I’m looking forward to another busy, yet very rewarding summer at Bridges.
Bridges Inducts Thirteen New Members into Bridges 3+

On May 23, 2012, Bridges welcomed 13 high school students from the St. Paul’s Schools into Bridges 3+, the Bridges volunteer honor society. The induction ceremony included a long list of guest speakers. Tom Reid, Headmaster of St. Paul’s School, opened the ceremony with a speech on the importance of service and some reflections from his experience working with Ice Hockey in Harlem. He was followed by seven Bridges students. Each shared a reflection on one of the volunteers being inducted into Bridges 3+.

Bridges 3+ has inducted 33 high school students from the St. Paul’s Schools since the recognition program was started in 2010.

Below is an excerpt from an appreciation letter.

Dear Winston- My favorite memories of you are in last years English classes with Mr. Tittle where you always had jokes... What I appreciate most about you, is how you were able to balance your strictness and playfulness inside and outside of the classroom. Not many counselors could do that, but you were the best. For that I’ll always look at you as a role model. Also, because you are a young-black male who’s going to college and that’s what I aspire to be. I hope you come back down during the summer after your first year at Bowdoin is finished.
- Alex

Bridges Director, Rob Paymer, welcomes guests to the 3+ Induction Ceremony.

Presenting the third class of Bridges 3+ (minus six seniors who were away on senior projects).

Hosea Chew from the Office of the City Council President presents Emma with a service citation and poses for a photo with her and fifth grader, Khalia.
Third Annual Bridges Kickball Classic!
October 1, 2011

On October 1, 2011, Bridges held the third ever Kickball Classic, an afternoon-long kickball tournament on the lower fields of St. Paul's School. Fifteen teams consisting of Bridges students, volunteers, and members of the St. Paul's communities competed in the tournament, which was eventually won by a repeat, championship performance by The 2009 Fresh-Soph Soccer Team. Players and volunteers enjoyed hot dogs and hamburgers as well as snacks, waters and homebaked goods throughout the afternoon. Bridges received $7,500+ in registration fees and contributions from the day’s events.

Team Ravens takes on Team Boys Hope Girls Hope in a crucial semifinal contest.

Recent Bridges graduate, Matthew, performs the National Anthem to start the day.

The 2009 Fresh-Soph Soccer team tracks down a fly ball in a heated quarterfinal match.

The 2009 Fresh-Soph Soccer Team captures their 2nd championship in as many years!
Considerations for launching a program like Bridges
College Admissions

Four classes of students to complete the Summer Institute are of college going age. Of the 62 students in these classes, 48 entered colleges or community colleges, including:

Baltimore City Comm. College (MD)  
College of Notre Dame (MD)  
Comm. College of Baltimore Co. (MD)  
Coppin State University (MD)  
Delaware State University (DE)  
Drexel University (PA)  
Florida A&M University (FL)  
Frostburg State University (MD)  
Johns Hopkins University (MD)  

Marietta College (OH)  
McDaniel College (MD)  
Morgan State University (MD)  
Norfolk State University (VA)  
Salisbury University (MD)  
St. Mary’s College of Maryland (MD)  
University of Maryland (MD)  
University of MD. Balto. Co (MD)
Questions / Discussion
To learn more...

1) Visit us at www.bridgesatsps.com
2) Like us on facebook –
   www.facebook.com/bridgesatsps
3) Read the Bridges Kickball Guide
4) Contact me at rpaymer@stpaulsschool.org
Thank you