



Maria & her daughters after signing their lease renewal.

# Bridges Alliance

## End of Year Report FY2015

On June 30th, Bridges Alliance wrapped up its' first complete fiscal year. The year saw many changes, including tripling the number of tenant households, and increasing the number of housing units in Bridges Alliance 400%. Due to the hard work of many, the Alliance program has gained great momentum. New households are being leased, and new volunteers trained monthly.

The Circle of Support came together in several productive meetings, celebrations, as well as a financial education workshop and started planning for future workshops and socials. Tenants are moving forward with their goals and sharing resources with one another as they build community. One tenant finished her Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training and became a driver for a local assisted living facility. Another tenant finished an associate's degree and became a U.S. Citizen, and another is graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering this fall.

In the spring Bridges Alliance renewed leases for all three of the tenant households leased in FY2014.

Neighborhood Property Management has effectively been responsive to Bridges Alliance's Coordinator, and to the tenants.

It was a very exciting year for the program. The work continues as we enter FY2016 with new partnerships, and more rapid growth!

### The Bridges Alliance Circle of Support (COS)

	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter (Mar-June)	Fiscal Year 2015
Tenant Households	2 added	9 total
Volunteer Circle allies	4 added	9 total
COS Workshops	1 financial	1 total
COS Meetings	2	4 total
Attendance at COS activities	89%	100% (attended 1 or more)

**Nora & her daughter**



**Bridges volunteers & board members at the May 27, 2015 “Stand Up” for affordable housing in downtown Columbia.**

## Advocacy:

Following her speech at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Chili Cook Off in March, the Alliance’s first tenant, Nora Wood, gave a moving testimony of her struggle to provide housing stability for herself & her daughter in Bridges’ Spring Appeal letter. As she states **“Bridges truly provides stability for families and changes the trajectory of lives.”**

Nora is just one voice of many Bridges Alliance’s tenants, volunteers and staff that are active in advocacy for affordable housing for low wage workers in Howard County.

All of the Bridges Board’s **Education and Public Policy (EPP)** Committee Members spent time this spring involved in advocacy efforts in the community by promoting affordable housing and Bridges Alliance. This was done through involvement in the Full Spectrum Housing Coalition meetings & “Stand Up” event, attending county council work sessions & meetings on affordable housing, attending Howard County Housing Commission’s (HCHC) affordable housing advocates meetings, and hosting an informational breakfast. Jane O’Leary & Jen Broderick represented Bridges Alliance at the Board to Promote Self Sufficiency’s housing committee meetings to discuss using the Bridges Alliance/ HCHC partnership model to bring additional income-based housing to the county.

*Volunteers donated over 900 hours of service to Bridges Alliance in FY15, with more than 35 dedicated people donating time and additional in kind resources. Our committed Social Work intern spent an additional 720 hours with the organization and program from September-June.*

### One tenant’s story

In May 2015, a family that had struggled with housing instability for years was finally able to move into permanent income-based rental housing with Bridges Alliance.

This tenant had kept a steady job in Howard County for 12 years, and knew Howard County as home. Her adult child has developmental disabilities that prevent her from working full-time. The mom’s full time employment at a restaurant and daughter’s disability income were not enough to cover rent and monthly bills for this family. Every month was a struggle and they spent some months homeless.

By moving into Bridges Alliance, this tenant can now pay the rent without worry, and enroll her daughter in a day program.

In June, she attended the Bridges Alliance financial education workshop presented by Making Change, and learned more about saving and budgeting for the future. She set several goals, and was excited to put the new information to use.

## Bridges Alliance Year End Financial Summary:

	<b>FY2015 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2016 Budget</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Rental Income (BA-managed)	\$ 47,692	\$ 190,866
Vision Fund	\$ 10,000	\$ 0
Grants	\$ 45,418	\$ 25,000
Donations	\$ 0	\$ 26,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$103,110</b>	<b>\$242,366</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Program	\$ 688	\$ 2,800
Housing	\$ 45,199	\$ 98,082
Personnel	\$ 56,810	\$ 105,517
Administration & Depreciation	\$ 411	\$ 33,000
Fundraising		\$ 1,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$103,110</b>	<b>\$240,399</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$ 1,967</b>

With the income from the Weinberg Foundation, and the Bridges Vision Fund, Bridges Alliance ended the fiscal year with no deficit. There is a balance of \$22,000 on the Weinberg Foundation grant that will be expended in the first quarter of FY16. The community campaign *100 Homes for 100 Households* initiative began in Q4 to raise funds for FY2016- FY2018 and beyond.

**Bridge Alliance**

Performance Measures	FY14 Year end	Q1 FY15	Q2 FY15	Q3 FY15	Q4 FY15	FY15 Year end
% of households with housing burden less than 40% income	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% of households on entry that reduced their housing burden by at least 10%	67%	N/A	N/A	33%	100%	67%
# of housing units in program converted from market rate to income-based.	3	0	1	0	0	1
% of tenant households paying rent in full each month.	100%	67%	33%	82%	67%	62%

*Tenants increased their income during their first year in Bridges Alliance an average of 17.6%.*

**Bridges Alliance Committees**

Bridges Alliance Steering Committee has 6 active members- Staff: Jane O’Leary & Jen Broderick; Volunteers: Russ Snyder, Jackie Eng, Rev. Sue Lowcock Harris, & Bob Buchmeier.

- Rev. Sue Harris is the chair of the Bridges Alliance Steering Committee for FY2016. Bob Buchmeier, outgoing chair will continue to lead the Housing work group.
- 100 Homes for 100 Households initiative from the Funding work group held an informational fundraising breakfast on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Eleven people attended from 8 corporations/ organizations. Two corporations made commitments to become the first \$5,000 supporters in FY16, FY17 & FY18. The next breakfast will be held in September 2015.
- The Housing work group began recruiting new members for the group and met with the Community Foundation of Howard County and Howard County Housing Commission to discuss how real estate donations might benefit Bridges Alliance.

One third of tenants in Bridges Alliance did not pay their rent in full at least one month in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of FY15. To address this, Bridges Alliance & Bridges Housing Stability Program management staff, met to draft a MOU between the programs in which Bridges Alliance tenants can receive brief case management from Housing Stability Program staff. The goal is to work toward having 100% of tenants pay rent in full each month.

**Maintenance & Rehab Volunteer & In Kind Service**



During the last quarter of FY2015, First Presbyterian Church of Howard County spent almost 100 hours doing maintenance, repairs, and painting on their second Bridges property in FY15. They also donated much of the materials for the repairs and painting.

**Builders Care Foundation-** Partnered with Bridges Alliance for another turnover. Work and materials were provided by the **Rachuba Enterprises Group**. They have been working on extensive repairs and painting one of Bridges’ properties and will complete the work in August 2015.