



# BRIDGING HEARTS

CONNECT. BELONG. MATTER.

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE BRIDGING HEARTS COMMUNITY - WINTER 2016 - [WWW.BRIDGINGHEARTS.ORG](http://WWW.BRIDGINGHEARTS.ORG)

## Goodbye from the Director's Chair:



This will be my final message from the Director's Chair as I have vacated that seat for Bridget Kzaley. I have confidence she will continue to move our organization forward.

This issue, I am going to feature the people who help make Bridging Hearts successful. We now have more than 100 members and continue growing with new members joining every month.

Thank you for trusting Bridging Hearts and me with your adult children. This entire process has been enlightening, rewarding, and life changing. I have met so many wonderful people including the members, their families and the board of directors. I have learned so much from all of you. I also want to thank my family and friends for their continuous emotional and financial support for BH. I appreciate you all.

Thanks to Andi Million for hosting my retirement picnic and her touching comments. We had a wonderful turnout and I appreciate all your kind words and gratefulness.

I will still be involved as board chair and also assisting with grant writing and marketing. Thankfully for me, it will be a long good-bye.

**"Promise me you'll always remember: you're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem and smarter than you think."** (Winnie the Pooh)

Good bye dear ones. Thanks for the wonderful memories. I am honored and humbled to have known you.

Denise



## Thanks Natalie Nauman!

I could not have created Bridging Hearts or had the success we have experienced without Natalie's contributions. Natalie was the inspiration behind Bridging Hearts. Natalie created our original logo, attends all the initial meetings with new members, creates our yearbooks, makes cards, communicates frequently with members, encourages members to attend events, and chooses the pictures for our events. You are the best!

Member since: Focus Group 2006

Favorite way to Chill: Music, Kayaking, Swimming, paddle boarding

Something I would like you to know about me: I like to try my best in life, and think about each day, and how I am alive. Then also, like being me AND LIVE IN THE NOW.

## Hello Bridget Kzaley!

Bridget lives in Farmington with her husband Kevin and two young children, Morgan and Brayden. They have two black labs, and one cat who thinks he is one of the dogs. Her interest in this position comes from her background in nursing. Through her varied experiences she has found compassion and inspiration when working with persons with autism and intellectual disabilities. Her nursing skills and experiences have directed her towards advocacy, coordination, and encouragement. In her free time, she enjoys hockey, fishing,





Thank you board members for your guidance and all you do!

Board members:

Denise Martin – Chair (founder and parent)  
Andi Million – Secretary (parent), helps with numerous events  
Scott Madson – Treasurer (parent), CPA  
Pat Gray – Social Work/Case Manager/DD Unit  
Kelsey Nauman – sibling, designs and edits newsletter  
John Sugimura – Autism Specialist/  
Restaurateur  
Rebecca Levine – Attorney  
Kevin Roth – Senior Web Developer  
Elizabeth Reeve, MD – Psychiatrist (parent)



Board Member Profile:

## John Sugimura

John Sugimura has referred many members to Bridging Hearts. He is an autism specialist; having worked with young adults with autism since high school. He has been a vocational consultant with Autism-Works. John has also helped edit and write grants, and accompanied me on two site visits where he brilliantly articulated our mission. We received both grants! Something people may not know about John is that he is a Master Sushi Chef. He shared his skills with us teaching a sushi class. Believe me, it was the best sushi I ever ate! He is now channeling his food passion, expertise, and entrepreneurship into a restaurant called PinKU. Pinkujapanese.com, 20 University Ave. NE, Minneapolis. It is well worth a visit!

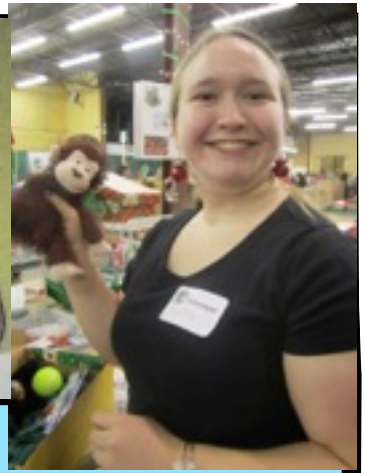


### Members working for us:

**Jeffrey Machacek** (performed website work for us ending in August) – Web development, tech maintenance/support – Thank you Jeffrey for all your efforts with our new website and your presentation at the New Website Unveiling. (Jeffrey was profiled in our Fall 2014 Issue)

**Betsy Truax** – Membership Outreach –Betsy has recently completed certification to be a Personal Care Assistant. She has been a tremendous asset in reaching out to Bridging Hearts members who are her peers. “It feels like it’s taken me a while to find my direction in life, and Bridging Hearts has been a great help.” She is interested in forming an Alumni group when she ages out at 40.

About: If my hair is Frizzy and I'm limping it means there's a thunderstorm on the way. The pins in my ankle feel tight when the barometric pressure rises, and the humidity makes my hair frizzy. (Betsy had a fractured ankle)



Bridging Hearts currently has 2 active clubs which were started by members. We are in the process of developing a music CD and music video. Mason is our songwriter. We would also like our musical family members and friends help us out. Please let us know if you have experience in production or can sing or play an instrument!.

Music Club: Mason has always had an interest in music. Without any formal music training, he writes his own songs and parodies existing songs. One of his inspirations was on the bus on the way to school when he was a freshman. He said he met a girl on the bus who was new to the school and black. She was being harassed. He said he felt like they were "two misfits". He wrote a song about being mean to people who are different from you.

About: Mason works as a CSA at Walgreens but his dream job would be in the music industry. His favorite place is Italy and favorite soda is Manzanita Sol.

Jewelry Club: Jennie loves to keep her hands busy and has many interests in crafts. She thought it would be fun to get members together to work on a variety of crafts. They have done beading, made jewelry together and made blankets to donate to a worthwhile organization. Betsy and Jessica are active participants. Betsy likes to quilt, crochet and bead and Jessica makes amazing jewelry and designs, makes, and sells the coolest Bridging Hearts hats!

About: Jennie enjoys spending time with family and friends. She would like to travel to California. She likes the Beach Boys!

## Our membership mentors/volunteers:

**Meghan** - Meghan initially took on the director position but did not feel she could give it the proper amount of time and attention that was needed. She so graciously offered to volunteer. You may have noticed her work with "Mailchimp" and sending out informative emails. She is also active online connecting with our members and helping with website issues. She is very knowledgeable in working with social media.

**Michelle** - Michelle has been a volunteer for several years helping out at various events. She offered amazing insight at our Grief Group in January. Both of her parents have passed away and she is only 26! She is a preschool teacher in Lino Lakes and Andi Million works with her.

**Caitlin** - Caitlin was our summer intern last year and stayed on as a volunteer. She recently graduated in Music Business from St. Thomas. She had her dream summer job doing inventory for Bremer Bank at Paisley Park! She is a classical soloist who performed with a choir at Carnegie Hall. She also loves to travel and has been many places.

Thanks to 33 volunteers who helped us out last year in some capacity. We appreciate your efforts. You have contributed to our success.

# Bridging Hearts Upcoming Events

**December** – Holiday Lights Tour

**January** – Mini Golf – Grief Group

**February** – Hobby Night – Profile Trivia

**March** – Game night playing member designed game

**April** – TBD

**May** – Grease at Chanhassen Dinner Theater

