“We have gained better outcomes, better client and family experience of care, lower overall cost per slot (bed), relief to a degree for staff through empowering family and youth voice, fewer restraints/seclusions/injuries, more organizational flexibility (which is good for business), an expansion of business.”

– Robert Lieberman, Chief Executive Officer, Kairos

“As a residential treatment provider, the benefits of being involved in the Building Bridges Initiative include:

Inspiration toward improving services with and for youth and families;

Knowledge and endless examples of how to do so;

a Library of Tools available at your finger-tips;

a Community of Providers available for consultation

and the Evidence to back it all up.”

--Carolyn Carl, Senior Assistant Director of Residential Services, St. Joseph’s Villa

“NFI North benefited in ways unimaginable! our team grew stronger together, we enhanced and improved our services, and we now have found hope and a brighter future.”

--Jennifer Altieri, Program Director, NFI North Array of Services

“Why would residential providers be interested in learning about the national Building Bridges Initiative? Building Bridges provides a learning collaboration where evidence-based and evidence informed practices that are uniquely applicable to the residential provider is debated, discussed and shared. What is in it for residential providers? Increased efficacy!”

--Jeremy Kohomban, President & CEO, The Children’s Village

“We did not change everything all at once, but have slowly tried to incorporate changes. We are taking the time to really engage our families and ‘meet them where they are’. Our parent involvement is better than it has been in a year!! Staff are taking the time to think about what the clients individual needs are. We have our kids involved in community or home time activities almost every day! One of our challenging residents began volunteering at the SPCA 3 times a week and we have seen such dramatic changes that we are looking at discharge back home! There are many other good changes occurring, but [these are] just a few…”

--Diane Arnold, Program Manager-Community Residence, Glove House, Inc

"Why would residential providers be interested in learning about the national Building Bridges Initiative? If you believe that every child deserves a permanency plan with a family then you will want to participate in and implement a Building Bridges Initiative in your program. What is in it for residential providers? Satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment for your workers. Not only giving your youth hope for a permanent home, but giving your staff hope that this is not only possible, but can and will happen with changes made in the way you provide services. [Being part of the national BBI Initiative] has just challenged and excited our residential program to do things differently and think out of the box. It really drove home the idea that "the family is the unit of service". You cannot truly help youth without partnering with a permanent resource.”

--James Nyreen, Assistant Executive Director, SCO Family of Service
“There is a growing evidence base for many social service practices. Residential care continues to be governed mostly by a set of values and principles. For example, there is evidence that supports relational over coercive approaches. BBI has done a lot of the hard work that an organization would need to do in order to identify the values around which to develop a program model. St. Vincent's has, at its core, adopted the BB principles. There are some areas, mainly the child welfare group homes, that need a "program overhaul." The plan is to use the BB resources to shape the model and change the culture. The Outcomes Tip Sheet is most useful for this. Additionally, national bodies like AACRC had adopted the BB principles. It is in line with national knowledge bases. Failure to "get on board" would be detrimental not only to our clients but to our continued fiscal viability as well.”

--Matthew Smith, Associate Managing Director, St. Vincent's

“The partnerships and collaborations encouraged by the BBI Initiative have been transformative for the youth and families served by our UMMS (UMass Medical School) Adolescent Treatment Programs as well as for the staff, faculty and administration. Our organization signed on and formally committed to the Building Bridges Joint Resolution in 2010. Ensuring that interventions and services are family-driven and youth-guided have empowered our often “silenced” consumers, strengthened their relationships, and has given staff an exciting new clinical approach that has significantly impacted treatment outcomes and long term success. Implementing services and supports that are strength based, culturally and linguistically competent, individualized, evidence and practice informed, and consistent with the research on sustained positive outcomes has dramatically changed the model of how treatment and services are provided. Staff and administration are energized and those to whom we are ultimately accountable, the youth and their families, receive much improved services. Implementing the BB Initiative is a win-win for all.

The Building Bridges 4 Youth website is terrific. It has available several pragmatic tools to help organizations appreciate the values, guiding principles and framework of the Building Bridges initiative. For example, on this website there is the first guide that has been written about why and how an organization would want to hire young adults into paid peer mentor roles. There are also white papers and articles written about other states and organizations that have improved the outcomes for youth and families by implementing the BBI framework. Staff and faculty also have an opportunity to join the BBI national workgroups and develop relationships and products with colleagues from different states. The BBI initiative has helped to really focus all of our efforts on how we will most effectively help the youth and families we serve employ their strengths and build their capacity to live, learn and work in the community. We are focused on having the youth practice the many positive youth roles available in the community so that they can feel and be competent in overcoming the adversity and troubles they have suffered. Our Director of Family and Community Engagement and Young Adult peer mentors frequent the BBI website and have contributed to the " tip sheets " and use them with the families we serve.”

--Caroline McGrath, Executive Director, UMMS Adolescent Treatment Programs
“Residential providers are increasingly under fire as an expensive intervention with long-term impact that has not necessarily been substantiated favorably. The Building Bridges Initiative offers an opportunity for residential providers to align their efforts with state of the art practice information. It also supports residential providers by actively partnering with community-based providers so that long-term outcomes are achieved and the intervention that is delivered within the four walls is generalized into the community and ultimately sustained.”

--Jody Levison-Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary - Child & Family Operations, Louisiana Office of Behavioral Health

“The Building Bridges Initiative provides an evidenced based foundation to guide us in providing quality services in our residential programs. Having guidelines and principles developed by those family members and youth who have been through it for us to follow as care providers helps us to know that we are doing the right thing and not just doing what we think is best. The initiative pushes us to move beyond our own comfort zones in order to provide the best services to families.”

--Tara Roberts Goldman, Program Coordinator, Rehabilitation Support Services, Inc.