

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Why is there a need for Bridging Families?

Crossnore Communities for Children and the Bridging Families program believe that children in out of home care belong with their families of origin and that maintaining those connections is vital to successful reunification. While children live in a Crossnore home during the reunification process, our mission is to help birth parents nurture and grow family relationships with their children through targeted therapeutic and skill building interventions as well as enhanced family time. These interventions provide an intensive and enhanced level of support during the reunification process.

### 2. What client group will Bridging Families serve?

Families with children in the custody of the Department of Social Services (DSS). The parents are highly motivated to progress through their court-appointed reunification plan and desire to partner with the Bridging Families team to accomplish that.

### 3. What services will be offered to these children and their families?

While in Crossnore's care, children will receive professional mental health services, medical services, case management, educational assistance, recreational opportunities, and a strong support network. They will have enhanced access to their family of origin through increased family time in a natural and nurturing home environment.

Birth parents will be part of the Bridging Families team and will receive an organized structure for collaboration with Bridge parents, parenting skills curriculum and coaching, psychoeducation on trauma, nurturing relationships with Bridging Families team members, and service access assistance to support additional elements of their reunification case plan.

These families will enjoy enhanced family time in a natural environment with the support and coaching of the Bridge Parents. Each family will engage in weekly family therapy.

### 4. What are Bridge Parents?

Bridge Parents are professional/licensed parents trained in trauma-informed care. They are not employed outside of the home and are able to commit to not only full time parenting but full time support of the entire family system. They bridge the foster care experience for all members of the family system by caring for children in a Crossnore home, coaching and supporting the birth parents in healthy and appropriate parenting skills, and ultimately serving as the bridge to reunification.

## **5. What are the steps to becoming a licensed parent?**

The Bridge Parent onboarding process and the process of becoming a licensed parent are merged for efficiency, over the first 1-6 weeks of employment:

- Complete new hire orientation
- Complete licensing paperwork, background checks, and home visits
- Complete 30 hours of TIPS-MAPP or Deciding Together Training
- Complete your foster home application with the Bridging Family team

## **6. What is it like to live in an on-campus house?**

Bridge Parent houses look a little different in each of our three regions; large cottage/group living style houses and smaller family homes on a campus to regular family homes within the community. Each home is furnished with the basics and can be personalized if you wish. Bridge Parents are provided housing (including utilities), an insured agency vehicle for transporting the children, a budget for food, household supplies, and clothing for the children. There is also an allotted stipend for family vacations. Each campus has a variety of planned recreational activities, including a community garden and a playground.

## **7. What types of support will be offered to Bridge Parents?**

Bridge Parents, as with all Crossnore employees, are trained in the Sanctuary Model that supports staff development on every level—spiritually, socially, educationally, and emotionally. Use of the Sanctuary Model and its toolkit provide support and resources for interacting and communicating with others and to help manage day-to-day stressors. All employees are provided with several training options throughout the year, regular supervision, in-person and virtual team building opportunities, and access to our Employee Assistance Program. Bridge Parents will have support within their team, the larger child welfare program, and the greater Crossnore community.

## **8. How long does the Bridging Families program last?**

Bridging Families is divided into five phases to support the gradual return of children to their homes. Progression from one phase to the next is based on the Bridging Families team recommendation, as well as confirming that each phase aligns with all court orders regarding family visitation. On average, a family can complete the Bridging Families program in six to nine months with additional post-reunification follow-up and support provided.

## **9. Why should I choose Crossnore Communities for Children?**

Crossnore's child welfare staff bring years of experience in child welfare combined with a personalized, compassionate approach in our work with children and families. The Bridging Families program is an exciting opportunity to be paid for being a full time parent, to help support the reunification of families, and to be a part of the changing face of foster care.

## **10. How can I find out more about Bridging Families?**

Visit [www.crossnore.org/bridging-families](http://www.crossnore.org/bridging-families) or contact our Referrals & Admissions team by calling (866) 892-6213 or email [referrals@crossnore.org](mailto:referrals@crossnore.org).