

The Bridge of the Penn-York Valley Churches

Community Survey 2013-2014

Purpose and Survey Design

In the fall and winter 2013-2014 The Bridge surveyed various segments of the Bridge family. This included Board members, voucher writers, volunteers in the programs, donors, the general public and people using the services of the Bridge.

A paper survey was distributed at the Sleep Out, to business donors with the materials sent for the Sleep Out, and at the Helping Hands and Clothes Closet locations. Additionally, the survey was offered online from the Bridge web site www.thevalleybridge.org. Only a handful of surveys were entered directly online. Most were completed on paper and then entered online.

We asked questions to assess how people heard about the Bridge, what they know about it, what services we offer, how they are involved with the Bridge and what services are provided.

We next asked what services are most valued. It was hard for people to limit their answers to 4 as requested. We also asked how satisfied they are with services and why they donate.

Finally we asked questions about what services should the Bridge consider expanding and what new services the Bridge should consider pursuing.

Results

Fifty-three (53) surveys were completed during the 4 months. Most were from the Bridge family – Board members, voucher writers, pastors and other church members, and volunteers. Eight (8) surveys were completed by people who had been assisted by the Bridge. We tried several methods to gather surveys from them which were not effective. We did not have a strategy to reach the community as a whole. We had hoped the Sleep Out might have been a place to spark interest but unfortunately it did not result in many completed surveys.

The survey shows:

- 1) **People know about the Bridge.** 84% to 95% knew who the Bridge is with only a single response “Though I have heard of the Bridge, I don’t know what it is.” 78% to 90% identified services provided by the Bridge. The service less than 78% was the Mobile Food Pantry sponsorship which was identified by 56% of responses.
- 2) **Vouchers for financial help, Helping Hands and the Clothes closet were judged valuable** by from 71 to 74%. 57% identified the volunteers as most valuable followed by 51% Kids at Risk and Mobile Food Pantry. Free community meals and phone guidance from clearinghouse followed with 27% and 13% respectively.
- 3) **People are very satisfied by the services of the Bridge.** 100% of those indicating they received services of the Bridge, 8 surveys, noted they were very satisfied with the services of the Bridge.
- 4) **People trust the Bridge with their donations.** 84% trust the Bridge with their donations. 74% noted that items are given away rather than sold. 20% noted donations are tax deductible.
- 5) **Additional assistance for those suffering job loss or illness and expand hours of services.** 53% checked “Provide additional help beyond a regular voucher to those suffering job loss or sudden illness. 37% noted “Expand hours of current services. 29% suggested expanding geographical limits. 16% thought the amount of financial help ought to be expanded.
- 6) **Temporary housing and individual financial counseling suggested new services.** 42% checked temporary housing with 39% suggested individual financial counseling. 34% suggested a homeless shelter, 29% supporting group financial counseling and opening a thrift store was selected by 17%

Bridge Survey Data

1) How did you hear about “The Bridge of the Penn-York Valley Churches”? Select all that apply.		
a) Friends or family	23	46.9%
b) Volunteer of The Bridge	15	30.6%
c) My church	27	55.1%
d) Local event like the Sleep Out	16	32.7%
e) Newspaper or radio	7	14.3%
f) Website or social media	1	2.0%
g) I haven’t heard about the Bridge.	0	0.0%
2) What do you know about the Bridge?		
a) The Bridge is a Christian, non-profit organization.	48	96.0%
b) The Bridge is an all-volunteer organization.	46	92.0%
c) The Bridge serves the school districts of Sayre, Athens and Waverly.	42	84.0%
d) The Bridge provides financial help to those in need.	45	90.0%
e) Though I have heard of the Bridge, I don’t know what it is.	1	2.0%
3) To help us understand how you have been involved in the Bridge, please select all that apply.		
a) I live in Sayre, Athens or Waverly school district.	44	89.6%
b) I have received a voucher for financial help from the Bridge.	4	8.2%
c) I have obtained another service from the Bridge.	7	14.3%
d) I have volunteered in a ministry of the Bridge.	26	53.1%
e) I attend a church that is a member of the Bridge.	34	69.4%
f) I am a board member or voucher writer for the Bridge.	10	20.4%
g) I have donated money to the Bridge.	13	26.5%
h) I have donated clothing or furniture.	23	46.9%
4) Which of the following services are you aware of that the Bridge provides? Select all that apply.		
a) Vouchers providing financial help to those in need	45	90.0%
b) Clothing, furniture and household goods free of charge to those in need	48	96.0%
c) Clothing, backpacks, hygiene items to children through the schools	39	78.0%
d) Help for families who have suffered catastrophic loss	47	94.0%
e) Sponsorship of a monthly Mobile Food Pantry.	23	56.0%
f) I don’t know what services the Bridge provides.	0	0.0%
5) What do you value most about the Bridge? Select a maximum of 4		
a) Vouchers for financial help	35	71.4%
b) Free furniture and household goods	35	71.4%
c) Free clothing	36	73.5%
d) Clothing, backpacks, hygiene items through Kids at Risk	25	51.0%
e) Free food through Mobile Food Pantry	25	51.0%
f) Free community meals	13	26.5%
g) Phone guidance and referrals through Clearinghouse	6	12.2%
h) Volunteers who serve those in need in the name of Jesus Christ	28	57.1%
i) I don’t value the Bridge .	0	0.0%

Comments:

“A wonderful organization with many devoted, hard-working volunteers.”

“Although you can only pick 4, I believe the other 4 are also valuable and some an integral part of the other.”

“One of the teachers was helped by The Bridge during the flood. She felt bad about accepting the money (she thought there were people who needed it more than she) but she was grateful and appreciated the respect which she received during the process. Her perception was that there was a comprehensive plan (for dispersing the funds) and that it was done with a lot of planning and forethought. She is a strong advocate for The Bridge’s efforts.”

6) How satisfied were you with services received from the Bridge?		
a) Very satisfied	20	40.0%
b) Somewhat satisfied	0	0.0%
c) Not satisfied	1	2.0%
d) Not applicable as I have not received services	30	60.0%
7) What are the reasons you donate or might donate to the Bridge? Select all that apply.		
a) Items given away free rather than sold	37	74.0%
b) My church supports the Bridge	27	54.0%
c) I have confidence The Bridge will distribute items and money to people in need	42	84.0%
d) Donations are tax deductible	10	20.0%
e) I do not/won't donate to the Bridge	0	0.0%
f) Comments: Underscored FREE		
8) What service should the Bridge consider expanding? Select a maximum of 2.		
a) Provide financial help beyond regular voucher to those suffering job loss or	20	52.6%
b) Expand hours of current services	14	36.6%
c) Increase amount of financial help through the voucher	6	15.8%
d) Expand the geographic limits of service	11	28.9%
e) No existing service should be expanded	6	15.8%

Comments:

"Rides to Dr. appointments"

"Don't know which would be best to expand"

"Continue doing what you are doing"

"Same as is now"

"Maybe expanding the geographic limits might expand donations"

"N/A"

"Volunteers are already stretched to the limit"

9) What new services, needed in the community, should the Bridge consider pursuing? 1 or 2		
a) Individual financial counseling	16	39.0%
b) Group financial literacy	12	29.3%
c) Homeless shelter	14	34.1%
d) Temporary housing for homeless	17	41.5%
e) Individual Development Account	2	4.9%
f) Thrift store to increase revenue	7	17.1%
g) No new service should be considered	2	4.9%

10) Please tell us anything else you would like us to know about the services we provide, how they could be improved, and/or your impression of the organization

- "You are doing a great job! (2 times)"
- "Very Satisfied"
- "Your services are incredible and you help so many people/families in need."
- "Do you provide rides to Dr. appointments?"
- "It is a privilege to be a part of The Bridge. It makes it possible to work with other Christians in the community to serve those in need, people who God loves and instructs us to serve."
- "The executive committee needs to exist of one or more clergy. Too many rules and regulations have been imposed upon voucher writers. The Bridge has currently lost sight of their mission statement."
- "I believe a central location to get vouchers would be helpful. [Response came from Waverly UMC]"
- "I think the Bridge is a wonderful Christian help in our beautiful Valley. You've done so much. The 2011 flood comes to mind. Thank you and God bless you. A proud Valley citizen."
- "The Bridge is a wonderful contribution to the Valley. I applaud all of the volunteers for doing such a fantastic job. Thank you all."
- "Make sure that money given is not being abused by people going from organization to organization."