



## The Bridge Announces Strategic Affiliation with Weston United

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(New York, NY) The Bridge, a leading non-profit provider of supportive housing and mental health services in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens announced today that it has completed an affiliation agreement with Weston United, a leading Harlem-based agency. The new affiliation will bring together two storied agencies whose compatible client populations, service mix, and geography offer the opportunity to grow while staying aligned with the agencies' respective service missions. With the new arrangement, Weston United will become an affiliate of The Bridge, and their combined program services will reach more than 2,700 individuals annually.

Founded in 1954, The Bridge has long been a leader in providing supportive housing, case management, and behavioral health services to the most vulnerable New Yorkers. Recognizing the importance of housing in stabilizing persons with chronic mental health, medical and substance use disorders, The Bridge currently houses 828 individuals in 19 residences – affordable supportive housing with on-site services – and almost 400 supported apartments in communities throughout New York City. Additionally, its behavioral health and primary care programs, vocational training, and community support programs currently help some 2400 men and women each year to lead stable, healthy, and productive lives.

Weston United was founded in 1985 by Dr. M. Moran Weston to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals with mental illness in Harlem. Its history is inextricably linked with Harlem and its leaders, notably the members of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, the great house of worship that brought African-American professionals to Harlem over a century ago. Over the years it expanded to meet the community's changing needs. It currently serves 316 people. It was led by its founding Chief Executive Officer, Jean Newburg, until her retirement in June 2016. Weston United's longtime Chief Operating Officer, Patricia Bacchus will continue under the new affiliation arrangement.

The President of The Bridge's Board of Directors, Cynthia C. Wainwright, hailed the agreement. "Scale has become increasingly important for organizations in the healthcare and community-based mental health fields. The Bridge and Weston United are a good match, and affiliation with Weston United will make The Bridge an even stronger service provider. We are very pleased to have reached this agreement."

Chief Executive Officer, Susan Wiviott, joined in praising the move. "We see this affiliation as offering a very positive step forward for both The Bridge and for Weston United. As organizations work to survive and thrive in a shifting environment with undiminished demand for our services, our strength as affiliated organizations will improve services for all our clients. We were very grateful for the support of the New York Merger, Acquisition, and Collaboration Fund which helped to make this affiliation possible."

The President of the Weston United Board of Directors, Gregory Weston, applauded the move. "I cannot help but think that my father would welcome this important step. He worked tirelessly to ensure that Weston United's consumers had access to housing and program services that would help them to live fulfilling lives. The affiliation with The Bridge will offer our consumers the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of program services, and help to safeguard and improve the residential properties that our consumers call home."

With the new affiliation, The Bridge's executive and finance offices have moved from its headquarters facility on West 108<sup>th</sup> Street to join Weston United staff at their Lenox Avenue headquarters. The organization's vocational, art therapy, and treatment programs – including a mental health clinic, substance abuse treatment program, a PROS day program for adults with a serious mental illness, and a William F. Ryan Community Health Center for primary care services – continue to be based on 108<sup>th</sup> Street.

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