

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
March 2, 2021
DMHAS BUDGET HEARING
H.B. No. 6439, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS
THEREFOR
By Ronda McClain

Good evening, Sen. Osten, Rep. Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Ronda McClain and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport.

I am testifying regarding the budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, *H.B. No. 6439, An Act Concerning the State Budget for The Biennium Ending June 30, 2023 And Making Appropriations Therefore.*

Bridge House (a program in Bridgeport for people living with a mental illness) for me became a resource lifeline and second home for me since day one upon becoming a member. As I reflect back to that day entering the house I was homeless. Bridge House staff guided me through the process to find housing through their housing resource unit and helped me find me an apartment. I finally found one and moved in. Bridge House helped me with provisions for me to furnish my apt with furniture and household needs from their in-house boutique and their second-hand furniture shop funded by community donations.

After I was situated in my new apartment, Bridge House staff introduced me to a program for creating goals and motivated me to follow through with them within a timeframe set by my own schedule that would fit my lifestyle and to complete them periodically with no stress.

I was curious about how each unit in the program functioned, because I needed to find out which unit I wanted to do my volunteer work in. My choices were to start with the boutique, media and communications, housing, the food bank, the member bank, the cafeteria, the membership services unit and the education area. There was more, but these were my picks.

The education unit became my favorite part of the program because, at the end of the day, I wanted to go back to school. I was also involved with other programs outside of Bridge House which helped me to find pathways to maintain my wellness through my strengths.

I am so grateful that Bridge house had a scholarship program, which helped me pay for some of my classes and books. I eventually got my degree in Human Services.

During the pandemic, Bridge House always calls me to find out if I need any food from the food bank, or if I need anything else. They are such a blessing for me.

Please consider this when the budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services comes up and consider increasing funding this year. These services are very vital to those of us living with mental health conditions.

Thank you for reading my testimony.