

# A BRIDGE AND BEYOND

October-November 2025



## From Fall Into Winter: A Season of Reflection and Renewal

As we wrap up both October and November, we reflect on a season filled with growth, resilience, and connection across our outpatient programs and residential services. These past two months have offered meaningful moments of progress, opportunities for healing, and reminders of the strength within our community.

Now, as winter approaches, we welcome a new season with fresh intention. The colder months invite us to slow down, practice mindfulness, and focus on warmth, both in our relationships and in the care we offer every day. This transition is a time to acknowledge how far we've come while preparing for the meaningful work still ahead.

Thank you for being part of the BRIDGES community. We look forward to entering winter together with gratitude, hope, and a continued commitment to supporting mental health and recovery for all.



## **Remembering C. Allen "Chuck" Braswell, Co-Founder of BRIDGES**

**July 24, 1936 – October 22, 2025**



It is with great sadness that we share the passing of C. Allen "Chuck" Braswell, co-founder of BRIDGES, on October 22, 2025. Fondly known as Chuck by many, his vision, dedication, and unwavering commitment to serving people with mental health needs played a pivotal role in shaping BRIDGES, the Agency we know today. His leadership and generosity were instrumental during critical moments in BRIDGES' history, ensuring the agency could continue its mission even during challenging times.

I will always remember how Chuck would take a moment to tell me how happy he was to see the Agency thrive; his encouragement was never about accolades, though he freely gave them, but about making sure the work we do for clients remained strong and meaningful. His guidance laid the foundation for a culture of care, compassion, and excellence that continues to guide us. Born on July 24, 1936, in Bethany, Oklahoma, Chuck was the fourth of six children. Growing up in a family devoted to faith, music, and service, he moved across Texas, Tennessee, Utah, and ultimately to Southern California. An exemplary student, Chuck skipped grades and graduated early from high school before attending Pasadena City College and Pasadena Nazarene College, earning a teaching credential on tennis scholarships.

In 1957, Chuck married Dorothy Drake of Victorville and began a lifelong dedication to teaching, ministry, and service. He taught elementary and high school students, preached in the Nazarene church, and worked in construction, always demonstrating an enduring commitment to community and hard work.

Chuck's entrepreneurial spirit and deep compassion for those in need led him to co-found Braswell Enterprises, Inc., building Towne Avenue Convalescent and other skilled nursing facilities in the Pomona and Yucaipa areas. He expanded into mental health care with Olive Vista Medical Center and additional facilities, discovering his true calling in advocating for and serving people with behavioral health needs.

A tireless champion for mental health, Chuck was instrumental in the growth of the California Alliance for the Mentally Ill (now NAMICA), advocating at both the state and federal level to build stronger, community-based systems of care. He also worked in education, mentoring young adults, and held leadership roles in civic and community organizations including Kiwanis, the Boys and Girls Club, Trinity United Methodist Church, and the Center for Spiritual Living.

At BRIDGES, formerly known as Braswell Rehabilitation Institute for Development of Growth and Educational Services, Inc., Chuck's vision and steadfast support were critical in shaping the agency's mission and culture. His legacy resonates every day through the lives of the people we serve and the compassionate environment he helped create.

Chuck is survived by his children Lorita "Lori" Ott, Greg Braswell, and Lynnae Hernandez; grandchildren, Amber Armentrout, Taylor Ott, Matthew Hernandez, Riley Hernandez, and Avery Hernandez; great-grandchildren Iris and Oliver Armentrout; and brothers James and Art Braswell, among many nieces and nephews. He is remembered by two prior wives, Dorothy Goodman and Nadir Lins.

**A fun fact!** Chuck lived in Banning surrounded by a menagerie of animals he loved dearly, including miniature donkeys, horses, llamas, a zebra, and a camel. His compassion was not reserved solely for people; he had a special place in his heart for his animals, caring for them with the same dedication and affection that he showed to everyone around him.

We honor Chuck's memory and the remarkable contributions he made to BRIDGES, the mental health field, and the broader community. His optimism, idealism, and compassion continue to inspire all of us to carry forward the mission with the same dedication and heart that he demonstrated every day.

Lori Pendroff, MS  
Executive Director



## NEWS FROM EL MONTE

### Celebrating Creativity, Community, and Connection

This fall season brought joy, creativity, and moments of togetherness to our El Monte residential site, where clients and staff came together to celebrate Halloween and our monthly milestones.

Our Esperanza and Tranquilas teams transformed the space with festive Halloween decorations, creating a warm and welcoming environment for clients to enjoy. Our clients participated in a variety of activities, including painting pumpkins, joining in games, and making memories that will last long after the season ends.

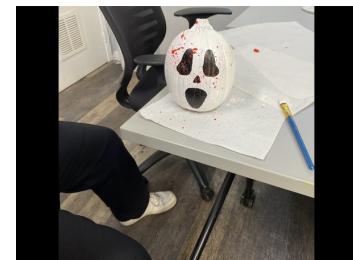
The photos captured from these moments highlight not only the creativity of our clients but also the supportive atmosphere that makes these events so meaningful.

In addition to the Halloween fun, staff prepared a beautifully decorated cake to honor our monthly celebrations and birthdays. These moments of recognition help strengthen our sense of community and offer clients the opportunity to feel seen, valued, and celebrated.

We are grateful to our dedicated staff for bringing these events to life and to our clients for their enthusiasm and participation. Together, we continue to build an environment where healing,

connection, and joy are part of each season.

As we move into the Thanksgiving season, we celebrate these moments of joy and connection, looking forward to sharing hope, warmth, and good food with our community.



## NEWS FROM WEST COVINA

### Spooky Creativity Shines at Our West Covina Halloween Door Contest

Halloween brought out the creativity (and a little spookiness) at our West Covina office with a fun and festive door decorating contest! Teams and individuals went all out, transforming their doors into imaginative scenes including *Nightmare Before Christmas*, the *Peanuts* gang, adorable ghost party, *Luigi's Mansion*, and *Beetlejuice*.

This year's winning door was *Beetlejuice*, masterfully decorated by our talented case manager, Jessica. Her attention to detail and Halloween spirit made her entry stand out, delighting staff and visitors alike.

Contests like these are more than just fun; they bring our team together, encourage creativity, and create a festive atmosphere that everyone can enjoy. Congratulations to Jessica and all participants for making this Halloween memorable!





# NEWS FROM WOODLAND HILLS

## Strengthening Our Community Through FSP Services

We are proud to announce that BRIDGES is partnering with LACDMH to expand our Full-Service Partnership (FSP) program in Woodland Hills, just in time for a thankful Thanksgiving. This program serves one of our community's most vulnerable groups, adults living with serious mental health challenges and co-occurring disorders.

The program delivers services primarily in the community, providing comprehensive support to help participants achieve stability, wellness, and independence. With this expansion, we can reach more clients and provide the community-based support that helps people thrive, maintain housing, and live fulfilling lives, reducing the risk of chronic institutionalization or homelessness.



## MONTHLY SHOUT-OUTS



### OCTOBER

Happy Birthday to all our October team members! Thank you for all you do—may your day be as special as you are. 

Congratulations to our team members celebrating their work anniversaries this month! Thank you for your dedication and the positive impact you make every day. 

### Celebrating World Mental Health Day

This October, BRIDGES joined the global community to recognize World Mental Health Day, a time to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote well-being.

Across our programs, we reflected on the importance of mental health, encouraged self-care, and supported one another in creating a positive and caring environment.

At BRIDGES, we celebrate mental health every day, finding joy in connection, growth in resilience, and hope in each step of our community's journey.

## NOVEMBER

Celebrating our November birthdays! Here's to another year of health, happiness, and success both at work and beyond. ♡

Congratulations to our staff celebrating their work anniversaries in November! Thank you for your dedication and hard work. ☀

### ❖ Honoring Native American Heritage and Mental Wellness

November is Native American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate culture, tradition, and community, and to reflect on the connection between heritage and mental health.

#### ❖ Holistic Wellness

Traditional practices like storytelling, talking circles, drumming, and connection to nature support emotional balance and resilience.

#### ❖ Community Support

Mental wellness is strengthened through belonging, connection, and shared experiences.

#### ❖ Culturally-Informed Care

Recognizing and respecting traditions enhances healing and fosters supportive environments for all clients.

This month, we honor Native American heritage and the lessons of resilience, community, and connection. By embracing these values, we continue to grow stronger together.



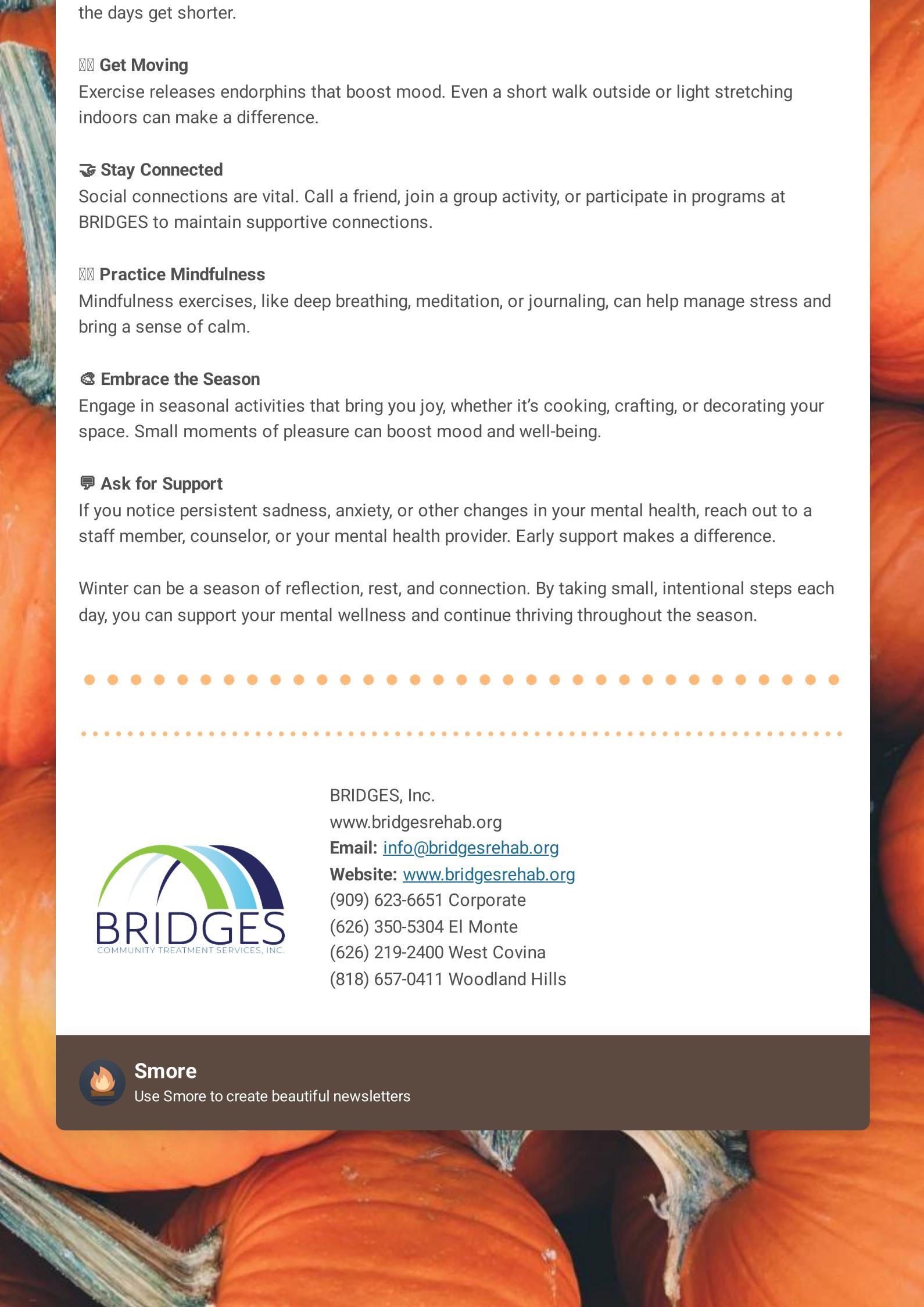
## WELLNESS CORNER

### Staying Well Through the Winter Months ☀

As winter approaches, shorter days and colder weather can sometimes affect our mood and energy. This season, it's important to prioritize mental health and find ways to stay connected, active, and mindful. Here are some practical tips to support your wellness:

#### ❖ Keep a Routine

Maintain a daily schedule for meals, sleep, and activities to provide structure and stability, even as

A close-up photograph of several orange pumpkins of different sizes and textures, some with green stems and leaves, creating a warm, autumnal feel.

the days get shorter.

## **Get Moving**

Exercise releases endorphins that boost mood. Even a short walk outside or light stretching indoors can make a difference.

## **Stay Connected**

Social connections are vital. Call a friend, join a group activity, or participate in programs at BRIDGES to maintain supportive connections.

## **Practice Mindfulness**

Mindfulness exercises, like deep breathing, meditation, or journaling, can help manage stress and bring a sense of calm.

## **Embrace the Season**

Engage in seasonal activities that bring you joy, whether it's cooking, crafting, or decorating your space. Small moments of pleasure can boost mood and well-being.

## **Ask for Support**

If you notice persistent sadness, anxiety, or other changes in your mental health, reach out to a staff member, counselor, or your mental health provider. Early support makes a difference.

Winter can be a season of reflection, rest, and connection. By taking small, intentional steps each day, you can support your mental wellness and continue thriving throughout the season.

A decorative element consisting of two rows of small, orange, circular dots, separated by a thin horizontal line.

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