

Riverside and The Guidance Center's Intensive Family Services Recognized as Innovative Model, cont'd

Although this shift in emphasis to community-based services may prove radical for other human services providers, for Riverside and The Guidance Center it is likely to be seen as “business as usual.” When Beth Caldwell, member of the National Steering Committee of the Building Bridges Initiative (a group dedicated to ensuring that comprehensive mental health services and supports are available to improve the lives of young people and their families) looked at services in Massachusetts, she discovered that there already were programs in place in that had perfected a model for supporting youth and families in the community: The Guidance Center’s *Family Advocacy, Stabilization and Support Team (FASST)* and *Family Intensive Reunification and Stabilization Team (FIRST)*.

In fact, these teams have been so successful in preventing and/or shortening out-of-home placements that Building Bridges invited Charlene Zuffante, Associate Director of Child and Family Services for Riverside, and Alberto Rodriguez, Director of Intensive Family Services at The Guidance Center, to present on the topic of “Best Practices for Supporting Youth and Families in the Community” at a recent training for leadership staff at the New York State Office of Mental Health. We look forward to other opportunities to partner with Building Bridges in presenting our service model to other industry professionals.