



**For Immediate Release:**  
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**Statement from Lori Costantino-Brown, CEO of Bridges of America,  
Regarding Agreement Reached with DOC to Keep Programs Open**

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** –Lori Costantino-Brown, president of Bridges of America, a faith-based, not-for-profit, issued the following statement after reaching an agreement with the Florida Department of Corrections to keep open effective transitional and work release programs in Bradenton and Pompano Beach:

“We consider this nothing short of a miracle. The staff, participants and families of the Bridges program are amazingly grateful that we are able to reach an agreement to keep these successful programs open.

“I want to thank Governor Rick Scott and his staff; Secretary Ken Tucker and the Department of Corrections; concerned lawmakers including Representative Eric Eisnaugle, Senator Ellyn Bogdanoff and other legislators whose efforts helped turn the tide in our discussions; and vocal local elected officials and community supporters – including private-sector employers – for the efforts that made this agreement possible. Thanks to the agreement, several hundred program participants will continue receiving services and will not be forced back into general prison populations.

“From the beginning, we all shared the goal of ensuring public safety in the most affordable and effective way possible. We did not always agree on the best approach to reaching this goal, but the spirit of cooperation exhibited by the Department in the last few days played an important role in reaching this resolution.

“As with any good compromise, both sides had to give a little to bring this important issue to closure. The compromise agreement serves the public interest in Florida far better than a complete shutdown of our valuable programs. In the end, both sides agreed that it is not just about what these programs cost – it is about the lives they save.

“This agreement would not have been possible without the overwhelming support of community leaders, who recognize the value of Bridges programs. The people of Manatee and Broward counties understand that Bridges graduates are strongly committed to living within the community and within the law, and their enthusiastic support for our programs was instrumental in making the Department aware of the need for these programs to continue.

“Our program shows participants the light and the right way to succeed in society. We were adamant that these individuals should not return to prison, and in the end the Department agreed. For that, we are most grateful.”

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