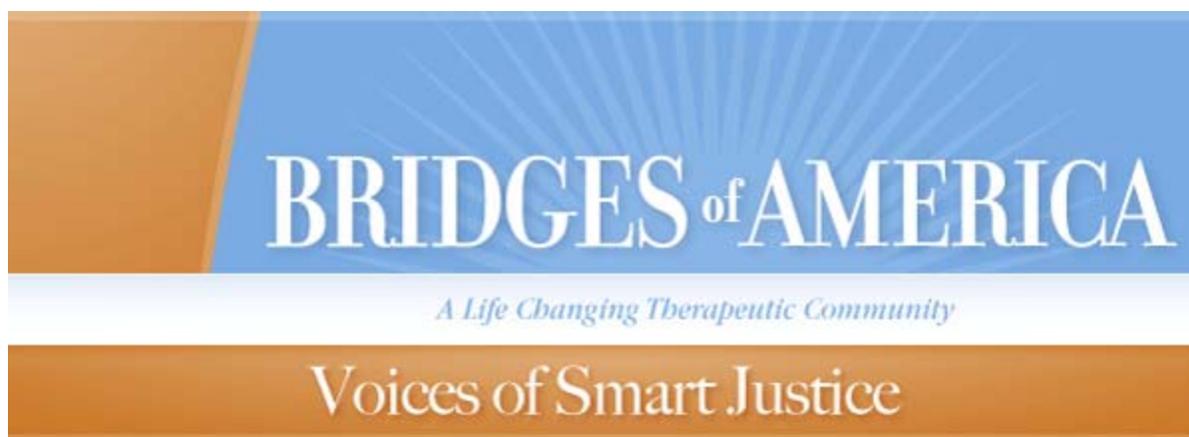


Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Welcome to our newsletter!

We are at an exciting and historic time in the world of criminal justice and substance abuse treatment. In overwhelming numbers, people across America, including the State of Florida, support smart justice - the idea of ensuring public safety with proven, effective programs that also save millions of taxpayer dollars.



In this monthly newsletter, we will share these exciting updates on criminal justice issues in Florida - like two important studies on smart justice below - and will spotlight effective programs and personal success stories from our nine Bridges across the state.

Each life we turn around is a miracle and changes not only the lives that person touches but generations to come. We couldn't do it without the support of our communities, families and government. You have our heartfelt thanks.

Lori Costantino-Brown  
President and CEO

## SPOTLIGHT

### Bradenton Bridge Connects Women to the Web

Connect Your Community, a nonprofit program that helps disadvantaged people gain access to the Internet and computer skills, donated 20



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Florida Legislative Session  
Now through March 9

The Orlando Bridge Non-Secure  
Graduation  
Feb. 16, 7-9 PM

## TESTIMONIAL

### A Culinary Success Story

Bridges of America is built on the simple but heartfelt belief that people can change. We will be sharing some of our many success stories each month. You can read more at Bridges of America's Facebook page.



"When I first got locked up, I didn't really have a passion for anything. The Bridge gave me a lot of guidance. Chef Mike showed me a lot, and I studied whenever I could. After graduating from the Culinary Arts program and being promoted twice, I am now a manager chef at a restaurant on

computers to the Bradenton Bridge's new interactive lab.

The 120 Bradenton Bridge women, who have been convicted of nonviolent offenses or were referred by the drug courts, now have a variety of programs to help develop skills that will help them get jobs after release.

Programs include:

- Basic Computer Education course
- Continuing education with Manatee Technical Institute or State College
- ABE/GED programs
- A+ certification and Florida Ready-to-Work certification process

Raul Banasco, director of the Bradenton Bridge, said that programs such as Connect are one of the reasons Bridges' graduates are so successful in re-entering their communities.

## FLORIDA SMART JUSTICE

### New poll: Conservative voters back reforms for non-violent offenders

A study just released by Florida TaxWatch's Center for Smart Justice, a non-partisan research institute, found overwhelming support for prison reforms, such as work release programs, pre-trial diversion and alternative sentencing.



The poll of 800 registered Florida Republican voters found that 84 percent support more cost-effective alternatives for non-violent offenders who are currently in the state prison system costing taxpayers millions.

Key findings of the study include:

- 88% support supervised work-release programs with earnings used to pay back victims and support dependents.
- 86% believe a person who is "tough on crime" can also support cost-effective programs, such as community supervision and drug treatment.
- 81% are more likely to vote for state legislators who support alternatives for non-violent offenders, such as work-release programs.

The new poll follows a recent Florida TaxWatch study that showed Florida taxpayers spent \$2.4 billion to incarcerate more than 102,000 people in prison with 83 percent of admissions for non-violent offenses.

The poll was commissioned by Florida TaxWatch, Associated Industries of Florida and Right on Crime. Read both reports at [www.BridgesofAmerica.com](http://www.BridgesofAmerica.com).

Park Avenue. It is one of the most demanding stations in the culinary field. I have my own station and responsibilities. Now I wake up and strive for excellence every day."

Anthony Cruz, Graduate,  
The Orlando Bridge.

Like us on **Facebook** 

Follow us on **twitter**

[www.bridgesofamerica.com](http://www.bridgesofamerica.com)

Bridges of America is a nonprofit organization founded in 1972 with the mission of changing criminal behavior through a practical, comprehensive approach that includes intensive substance-abuse counseling, parenting classes and work-release programs. Bridges' core value is a belief that people can change.

[Forward this email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to [kkuehn@bridgesofamerica.org](mailto:kkuehn@bridgesofamerica.org) by [change@bridgesofamerica.org](mailto:change@bridgesofamerica.org) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Bridges of America | 2001 Mercy Drive | Orlando | FL | 32808