



This community profile is intended to provide insight on the conditions – both strengths and challenges – of a particular neighborhood through a variety of data gathered between 2010-2012\*. Bridges seeks to engage the collective resources of this community and take action to improve conditions for children and families.

The Belle Glade neighborhood that Bridges targets has approximately 1,300 households and a population of 3,984 residents. In 2010, approximately 16% of the population was 0 to 8 years old (633 children).

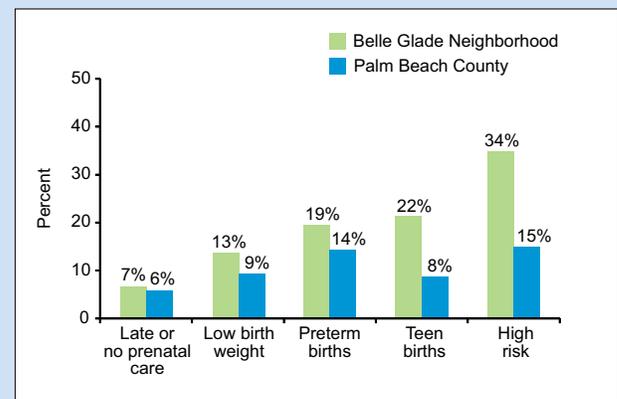
**Census Tract = 82.01    Population: 3,984    Population 0–8 years: 633**

**The first goal of the Bridges initiative is to increase the number of children born healthy.** Children born in the Belle Glade neighborhood in 2010 fared worse than children in Palm Beach County on all birth indicators (Figure 10-1). In 2010, 13% of infants were low birth weight, and 19% were born preterm. In addition, 34% of births in the Belle Glade neighborhood were considered high risk. Approximately 7% of women received late or no prenatal care, and 22% of births were to teen mothers.

The infant mortality rate in the Belle Glade neighborhood was more than double that in Palm Beach County. 14.4 infants died for every 1,000 live births in the neighborhood compared with 5.5 in Palm Beach County.

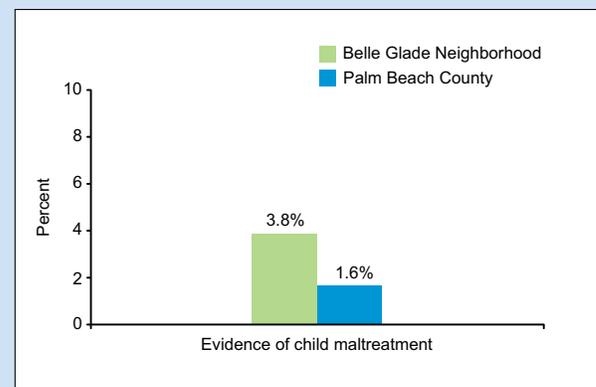
**The second goal of the Bridges initiative is to make sure children are in safe and nurturing environments and remain free from abuse and neglect.** Evidence of child maltreatment was higher in the Belle Glade neighborhood than in the county (Figure 10-2). Data provided by the Department of Children and Families of Palm Beach County show that 3.8% of children in the neighborhood had evidence of maltreatment compared with 1.6% of children in Palm Beach County overall.

Figure 10-1. Prenatal Care and Healthy Births in the Belle Glade Neighborhood (2010)



Source: Florida Department of Health

Figure 10-2. Evidence of Child Maltreatment in the Belle Glade Neighborhood (2010)



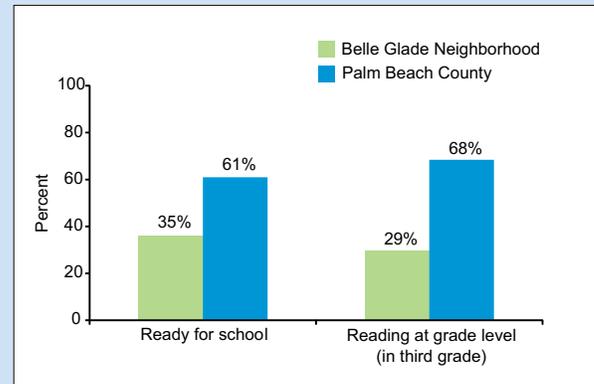
Source: Department of Children and Families in Palm Beach County. Note: Only 60% of children with evidence of maltreatment could be linked to a physical residence and geocoded to the neighborhood level.

\*Information contained in the profile represents a point in time; perceptions and staff insight may not express the views of the entire community.

**The third goal of the Bridges initiative is to increase the number of children who enter kindergarten ready to learn.** In 2010, 35% of children in the Belle Glade neighborhood were ready for school at kindergarten entry compared with 61% of children in Palm Beach County (Figure 10-3).

**The fourth goal of the Bridges initiative is to increase the number of children who are proficient readers in third grade.** In 2010, 29% of children in the Belle Glade neighborhood were reading at grade level in third grade compared with 68% of children in Palm Beach County (Figure 10-3).

Figure 10-3. School Readiness and Third-Grade Reading Skills in the Belle Glade Neighborhood (2010)



Source: Palm Beach County School District. Note: Measured by the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

## Belle Glade Neighborhood: At A Glance

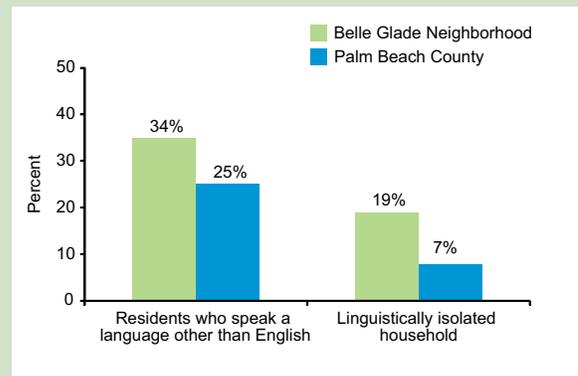
**Race & Ethnicity.** The racial composition in this neighborhood is 87% black and 8% white, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. Eleven percent of residents in this neighborhood identified their ethnicity as being Hispanic. The majority of individuals served by Bridges at Belle Glade describe their ethnicity as African American (41%), Mexican (37%), or Haitian (16%).

**Language.** Among Belle Glade neighborhood residents, 34% reported speaking a language other than English at home, and 19% of households are considered linguistically isolated. Linguistically isolated households are those where no one 14 years old or older can speak English fluently.

**Education.** High school graduates accounted for 57% of the population in the Belle Glade neighborhood compared with 87% in Palm Beach County, which indicates 43% of residents did not complete high school or obtain a GED. Among Belle Glade residents 25 years old or older, 12% completed an associates degree or higher compared with 40% in Palm Beach County.

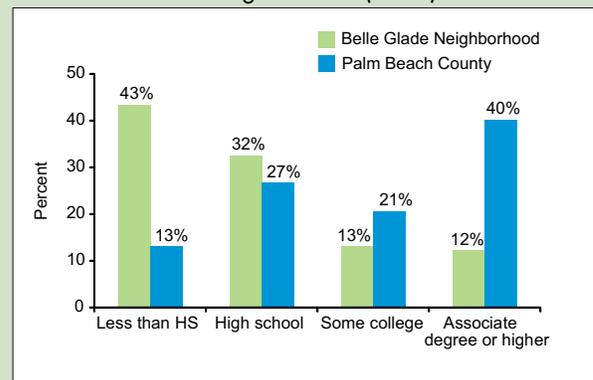
**Housing & Household Composition.** In this neighborhood, 23% of households are owner-occupied and the remaining 77% are renter-occupied. According to census data, 84% of residents report residing in the same household as one year ago (compared with 85% for Palm Beach County). Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the children live in single-parent households compared with 37% in Palm Beach County.

Figure 10-4. Language of Residents and Households in the Belle Glade Neighborhood (2010)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 10-5. Highest Education Level Attained by Residents in the Belle Glade Neighborhood (2010)



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

## Economic Indicators:

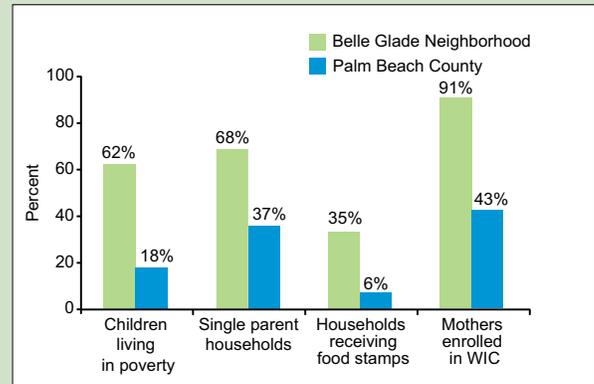
The median household income was \$14,789 compared with \$58,709 in Palm Beach County. The unemployment rate in the neighborhood was 22% compared with 9% in Palm Beach County.

Among children in the Belle Glade neighborhood, 62% lived below the federal poverty level in 2010 compared with 18% in Palm Beach County. (Figure 10-6).

Households receiving food stamps accounted for 35% of the neighborhood compared with 6% in Palm Beach County.

Births to mothers enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program was 91% in the Belle Glade neighborhood and 43% in Palm Beach County. (Figure 10-6).

Figure 10-6. Child and Family Socioeconomics in the Belle Glade Neighborhood (2010)



Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau.

WIC provides vouchers for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

## Neighborhood Strengths, Existing Resources, and Partners

**Staff at Bridges identified many resources as the community's strengths**, including the location of the Belle Glade site itself. Bridges at Belle Glade is conveniently and centrally located within the same plaza as a child care provider (Little Hands Early Learning Center) and a food pantry (Ruby & Dot's Helping Hand Program), which both partner with the Belle Glade Bridges. Additionally there is a neighborhood park adjacent to the site where Bridges occasionally hosts activities or events.

Bridges at Belle Glade is located in western Palm Beach County, and has much more of a rural small-town feel than eastern Palm Beach County. Belle Glade is sometimes referred to as "Muck City" because of the dark fertile soil in which sugar cane and other crops are grown. Agriculture and farming is a significant local industry where the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative employs approximately 550 people during crop season. Belle Glade is also notable for having several of its high school athletes selected to play football in the National Football League (NFL).

**Bridges staff described specific strengths that include:**

- **This is a close-knit community.** Most people have lived in this community for a long time and tend to live close to their relatives. Census data for 2010

shows relatively low mobility, with approximately 84% of residents reporting to be in the same household as one year ago (compared with 85% for Palm Beach County).

- **This community has family friendly events** periodically that are open to the public, including the Annual Community Health Fair each spring and the Annual Muck City Fest, which celebrates community pride. For the past two years, Bridges at Belle Glade and Pahokee have coordinated with Sigma Gamma Rho to facilitate the Project Cradle Care event, which is an educational fair for pregnant women and their partners to encourage healthy choices during pregnancy.
- **Most residents regularly attend a local church or faith-based organization**, and churches are willing to collaborate with Bridges in its endeavors. There are 24 churches in the larger community and a new church, Christ Fellowship, will be located in the Belle Glade neighborhood. Bridges is interested in further developing relationships with churches serving local families and children.
- **Residents are strong advocates** for their needs and are not afraid to ask for help when needed. In addition, Bridges staff report residents are willing to work together to improve neighborhood conditions.



**There are collaborative efforts and partnerships happening in the Belle Glade neighborhood.**

- **Bridges at Belle Glade is a member of the Glades Interagency Network (GIN)**, which consists of representatives from various social service and non-profit agencies in the Glades. Members of the Glades Interagency Network meet monthly to share information and discuss how to best serve local families. Via this forum Bridges has been able to connect with other agencies, including First Care Family Resources, Farm Workers Council, Workforce Alliance, Healthy Mothers / Healthy Babies to identify contact persons for services, presenters for capacity building workshops, and partners with which to conduct outreach and events.
- **The local elementary school (Belle Glade Elementary School)** views collaborating with Bridges as important. Bridges at Belle Glade serves as a member of the School's Advisory Committee (SAC) as a community partner. During Parent University activities and other school functions, Bridges at Belle Glade has been able to give presentations about the Bridges mission and the parent resources that are available, as well as pass out the monthly calendar of events at the beginning of each month. Bridges at Belle Glade also is involved in kindergarten transition activities to ensure children and parents are prepared and ready to start school.
- **Local government has been supportive of Bridges.** In fact, Bridges worked with the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office (PBSO) to launch a summer reading program called Books on Patrol.

- **Businesses are willing to collaborate with Bridges** in its mission and endeavors. Big Lake Snacks, A Won Trophies, Dixie Fried Chicken, Stitch Works, Little Hands Learning Center, Family Restaurant - all have been working with Bridges at Belle Glade to offer discounted services and/or volunteers.

**The map** (Figure 10-7) shows the census tract area that Bridges at Belle Glade targets for services as well as the location of the Bridges site. It also includes a one-half-mile area outside the census tract to show potential resources available to families living in the Belle Glade neighborhood. The services indicated in the map and descriptions below were those identified in a scan of area resources using 211 online registry, accessible registries for licensed child care providers, health, schools, libraries, parks, and locally developed resource guides that were believed to be current at the time the resource list was developed in fall of 2012. This may not represent all area resources.

**Services and resources exist in the Belle Glade area. These include the following:**

- Family planning/pregnancy prevention
- Non-medical resources for expectant parents
- Pediatricians/family medical practices
- Counseling/mental health services
- Licensed child care providers
- Parks/playgrounds/recreational facilities.

There are 16 social service and nonprofit organizations in the Belle Glade area shown on the map in light blue (e.g., Farm Workers Coordinating Council, PANDA, Lakeside Youth Empowerment Center, Family Preservation Services of Florida). Bridges at Belle Glade partners with Workforce Alliance to offer a workshop for parents who are interested in adult education and job training.

There are 16 organizations that provide health care or medical services in this larger area including the following: Children’s Clinic (pediatrician), First Care Family Resources, and Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies. Bridges at Belle Glade activities have been collocated at First Care Family Resources, which is a medical clinic that provides services to pregnant women. Just south of the map area is Lakeside Medical, which works collaboratively with Bridges in serving pregnant women, children, and families by offering capacity building workshops on health topics to Bridges members.

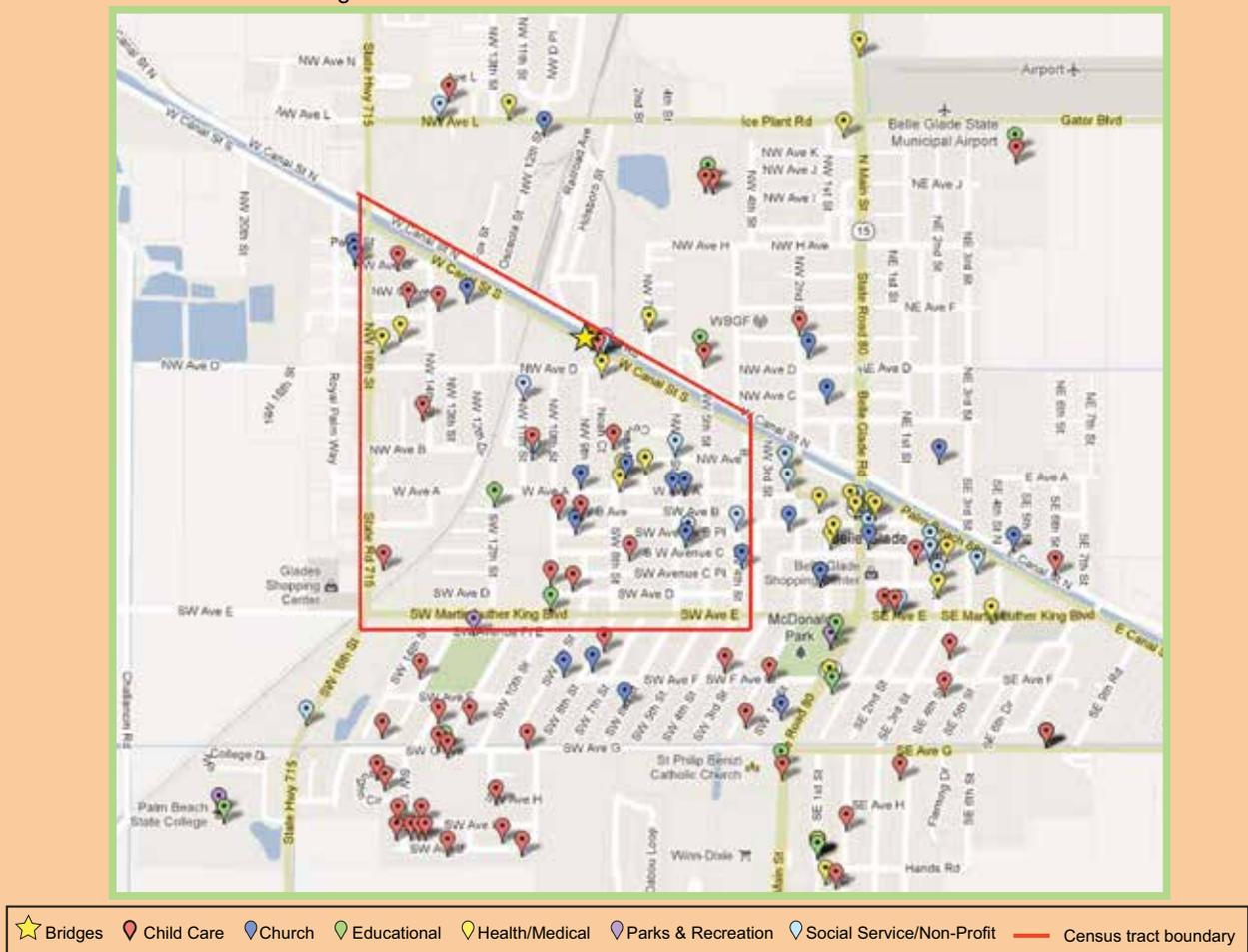
Three parks and other recreational facilities are shown in the map in purple. These include the Lake Shore Civic Center, McDonald Park, and the

Dolly Hand Cultural Arts Center located at Palm Beach State College, which offers cultural arts via educational plays, children’s theatre, musical and dance performances, art exhibits, holiday festivals, and cultural events.

Eleven educational resources are shown on the map in green, including Belle Glade Elementary, several other elementary, middle, and high schools, the Belle Glade Library, and Palm Beach State College. Bridges partners with the Belle Glade Library to provide parent-child activities for families, such as Children’s Story Hour.

Bridges at Belle Glade partners with several child care providers some include: Little Hands Learning Center, Peppi Head Start, and the Pre-Kindergarten Program at Belle Glade Elementary. There are 55 licensed child care providers in the larger area and of those, 18% participate in the Quality Counts system. Quality Counts is an early care and education improvement and support system that is designed to enhance the quality of child care so that children birth to five years of age are healthy and ready to learn when they enter school.

Figure 10-7. Greater Belle Glade Neighborhood



## Challenges to Improving Child Outcomes

### Staff identified several challenges to improving outcomes for children and families in the Belle Glade neighborhood:

Crime in the neighborhood and larger community is a concern for area families and children. In 2010, the Belle Glade Police Department recorded 4 murders, 11 rapes, and 267 aggravated assaults. The overall crime rate in Belle Glade was 94 per 1,000 compared to 41 per 1,000 in Palm Beach County.

Rates of unemployment and child poverty are high. This is also reflected in the median income, which was \$14,789 in 2010, and represents approximately a fourth of the median household income (\$58,709) in the rest of Palm Beach County. Moreover, 62% of children in this neighborhood lived below the federal poverty line in 2010.

Residential structures in the Belle Glade neighborhood include several buildings offering one-room rentals, which make surviving on low incomes possible. However, conditions in some rental structures are problematic.

More than one-third of residents speak a language other than English at home in the Belle Glade neighborhood compared to 25% in Palm Beach county. Additionally, 19% of households in the Belle Glade neighborhood are considered linguistically isolated compared to 7% in the county. Further, language barriers may impact access to services and make them reluctant to use services for which they are eligible.

The percent of residents 25 years old and older without a high school degree or equivalency is more than three times higher in the Belle Glade neighborhood than in the rest of Palm Beach County (43% vs. 13%).

More than one-third of births in the Belle Glade neighborhood were considered high risk (compared to 15% in the county). Additionally, 22% of births were to teen mothers (compared to 8% in Palm Beach County).

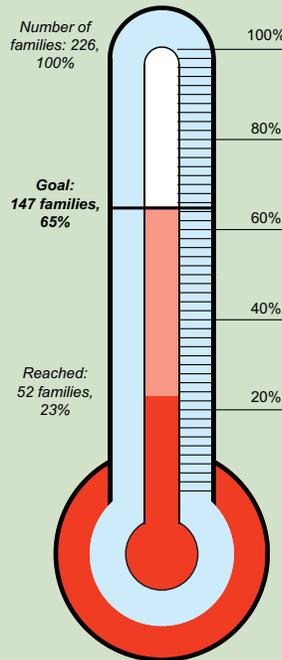


**Participation Rates: Of the families who visited Belle Glade Bridges,**

- 40% participated in parent-child activities.
- 22% participated in Triple P individual sessions, groups, or seminars.
- 100% participated in navigation activities.
- 40% participated in adult education or capacity-building workshops and activities.

**Service Reach (between June 2011 and December 2012):**

- 206 parents of children 0–17 participated in services or activities at Bridges at Belle Glade.
- 206 families participated, and of those families, 83% had children ages 0–5 (n = 171).  
—Of those families with children 0–5, 30% resided in a target neighborhood (n = 52).
- 226 families with children age 0–5 lived in the Belle Glade neighborhood during the 2010 census.
- 52 families with children age 0–5 who live in the Belle Glade neighborhood participated in activities at Bridges.



—Therefore, we estimate Bridges has been successful in reaching approximately **23%** of the families with children 0-5 in the Belle Glade neighborhood thus far.

Bridges works hard to meet the needs of families in order to enhance parents’ ability to promote the health, early development, safety, and school success of their children. The Bridges model is inspired by the Harlem Children’s Zone core principle of saturating a neighborhood with information and services to improve the environment for children and families living there. To achieve this saturation, Bridges hopes to reach at least 65% of families with young children 0–5 living in the neighborhood and cultivate an environment where children are healthy, safe, and ready to succeed in school.



## Serving Belle Glade since January 2011.

Bridges at Belle Glade offers activities to reach the goals of the Bridges initiative, such as outreach, parent support and navigation. Examples of some of these activities include the following:

- Child development through parent-child activities to promote early literacy, social, and motor skills for kindergarten readiness: Raise Me Up activities, Children's Story Hour, Kindergarten Transition summer camp, Creative Crafts activities, Cooking with Kids.
- Individualized and group parent support and education: Triple P, Mommy "Te" (Tea), Child birth classes, Health and Nutrition workshops
- Developmental screenings using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) for children ages 0-5
- Navigation services - connecting families with needed resources and helpful opportunities: FL ACCESS community partner (help with food, Medicaid, and cash assistance applications), Family Resource Library, car seat safety check/installations, and Business Center (allows members use of a computer, fax, copy, & notary service)

- Adult education and capacity-building workshops: Prosperity Center, which provides financial counseling, credit counseling, and tax return assistance, adult education, and job training
- Community engagement: Strong Starts Community Dialogue Circles, Community Chats including Let's Talk, Fun Family Fitness: "Doing it Together"



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Bridges is a program of

**Children's Services Council**

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Healthy. Safe. Strong.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

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**561-992-8210**

Monday–Thursday:  
9:00 am–7:00 pm

Evening events, activities, and appointments  
available when scheduled between 5:30 pm–7 pm

Fridays and Saturdays:  
9:00 am–4:00 pm

Office hours may vary  
based on scheduled community events