



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 Riviera Beach neighborhood that Bridges targets has approximately 1,594 households and a population of 4,379 residents. In 2010, approximately 13% of the population was 0 to 8 years old (586 children).

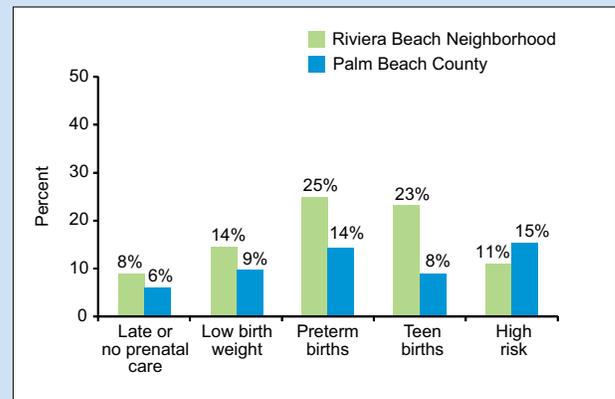
**Census Tract = 13.02    Population: 4,379    Population 0–8 years: 586**

**The first goal of the Bridges initiative is to increase the number of children born healthy.** Riviera Beach neighborhood in 2010 fared worse than children in Palm Beach County on all birth indicators except high-risk births (Figure 2-1). In 2010, 14% of infants were low birth weight, and 25% were born preterm. One in ten (11%) of births in the Riviera Beach neighborhood were considered high risk. Approximately 8% of women received late or no prenatal care, and 23% of births were to teen mothers.

The infant mortality rate in the Riviera Beach neighborhood was more than double that in Palm Beach County. 11.3 infants died for every 1,000 live births in the neighborhood compared with 5.5 in Palm Beach County.

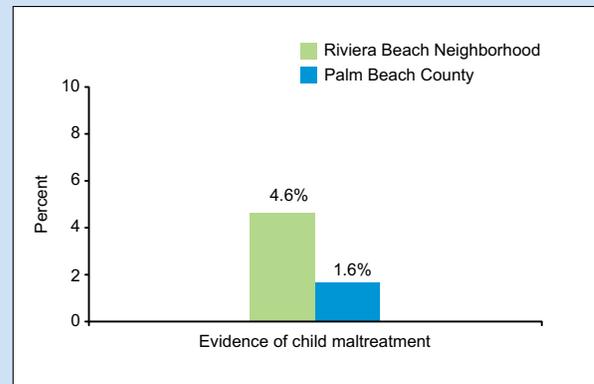
**The second goal of the Bridges initiative is to make sure children are in safe and nurturing environments and remain free from abuse and neglect.** Evidence of child maltreatment was higher in the Riviera Beach neighborhood than in the county (Figure 2-2). Data provided by the Department of Children and Families of Palm Beach County show that 4.6% of children in the neighborhood had evidence of maltreatment compared with 1.6% of children in Palm Beach County overall.

Figure 2-1. Prenatal Care and Births in the Riviera Beach Neighborhood (2010)



Source: Florida Department of Health

Figure 2-2. Evidence of Child Maltreatment in the Riviera Beach Neighborhood (2010)



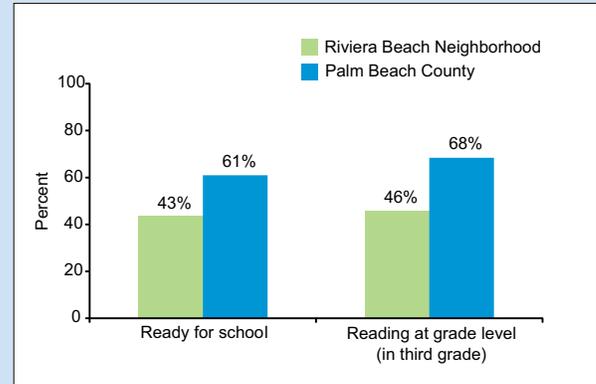
Source: Department of Children and Families in Palm Beach County. Note: Only 60% of children with evidence of maltreatment could be linked to a physical residence and geocoded to the neighborhood level.

\*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, 43% of children in the Riviera Beach neighborhood were ready for school at kindergarten entry compared with 61% of children in Palm Beach County (Figure 2-3).

**The fourth goal of the Bridges initiative is to increase the number of children who are proficient readers in third grade.** In 2010, 46% of children in the Riviera Beach neighborhood were reading at grade level in third grade compared with 68% children in Palm Beach County (Figure 2-3).

Figure 2-3. School Readiness and Third-Grade Reading Skills in Riviera Beach Neighborhood (2010)



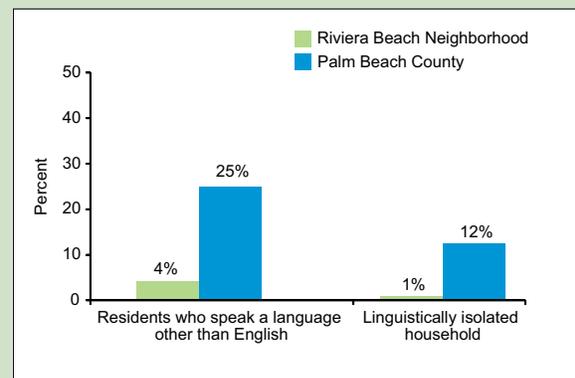
Source: Palm Beach County School District.  
 Note: Measured by the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).

## Riviera Beach Neighborhood: At A Glance

**Race & Ethnicity.** The racial composition in this neighborhood is 96% black and 1% white, according to the 2010 U.S. Census. The majority of residents in this neighborhood are non-Hispanic; just 2% identified their ethnicity as being Hispanic. The majority of individuals served by Bridges at Riviera Beach describe themselves as African American (77%) or Haitian (10%).

**Language.** (Figure 2-4). Among Riviera Beach neighborhood residents, 4% reported speaking a language other than English at home, and less than 1% of households are considered linguistically isolated. Linguistically isolated households are those where no one 14 years old or older can speak English fluently.

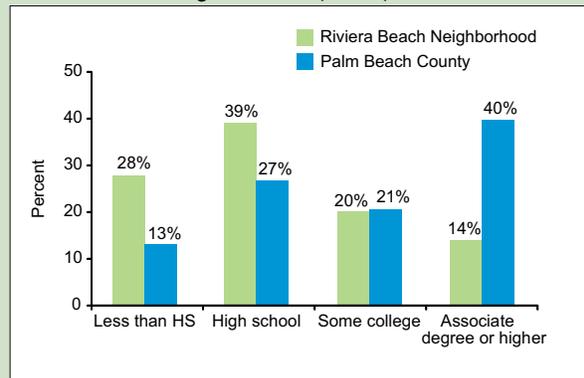
Figure 2-4. Language of Residents and Households in the Riviera Beach Neighborhood (2010)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

**Education.** (Figure 2-5). High school graduates accounted for 72% of the population in the Riviera Beach neighborhood compared with 87% in Palm Beach County, which indicates 22% of residents did not complete high school or obtain a GED. Among Riviera Beach neighborhood residents 25 years old or older, 14% completed an associates degree or higher compared with 40% in Palm Beach County.

Figure 2-5. Highest Education Attained by Residents in the Riviera Beach Neighborhood (2010)



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

**Housing & Household Composition.** In this neighborhood, 55% of households are owner-occupied and the remaining 45% are renter-occupied. According to census data, 97% of residents report residing in the same household as one year ago (compared with 85% for Palm Beach County). Most children (68%) lived in single-parent households compared with 37% in Palm Beach County.

## Economic Indicators:

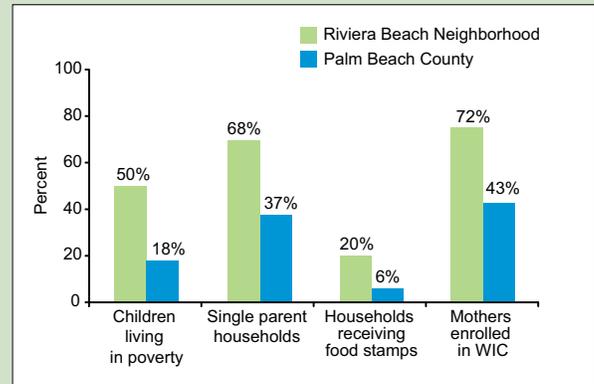
The median household income was \$26,051, compared with \$58,709 in Palm Beach County. The unemployment rate in the neighborhood was 17% compared with 9% in Palm Beach County.

Among children in the Riviera Beach neighborhood, half lived below the federal poverty level in 2010 compared with 18% in Palm Beach County. (Figure 2-6).

Households receiving food stamps accounted for 20% of the neighborhood compared with 6% in Palm Beach County.

Births to mothers enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program was 72% in the Riviera Beach neighborhood and 43% in Palm Beach County. (Figure 2-6).

Figure 2-6. Child and Family Socioeconomics in the Riviera Beach 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 and supports** as community strengths, including four grassroots organizations that are active in the neighborhood and provide services, including food drives and educational presentations on topics such as teen violence, domestic violence, anger management, bullying, fatherhood, and career development.

Bridges at Riviera Beach is located on the campus of Jesus and You (J.A.Y.) Outreach Ministries, a well-known social service provider in the community. Established in 1993, J.A.Y. Ministries is a multi-service organization that operates an emergency food distribution program, a thrift store, a men's residential recovery program, as well as a licensed child care center. This is located on a side street in a residential neighborhood not far from Blue Heron Boulevard, a major commercial roadway. The residential structures are mostly single-family homes along with several apartment complexes. The Bridges at Riviera Beach office is located close to the Atlantic Ocean.

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

- **Members of the community are one of the greatest strengths.** They are dedicated to improving conditions for families and children; are not afraid to ask for help; and are willing to work together

to improve neighborhood conditions. Grassroots organizations, including the Coalition for Black Student Achievement and Dominion Ministries, encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education. They, along with others, provide awareness and support so parents can advocate for themselves and their children.

- **Most people have lived in this community for a long time and live close to their relatives.** Census data showed very low mobility, with 97% of residents reporting to be in the same household as they were one year ago (compared with 85% for Palm Beach County).
- **This community has family-friendly events** periodically that are open to the public. In Riviera Beach, examples include the Martin Luther King Jr Day parade on Blue Heron Boulevard and the T.E.A.M. Elam "Day in the Park" family fun day with food, giveaways, live music and activities.
- **Residents regularly attend a local church or faith-based organization,** and the director identified at least six churches in the neighborhood that are active in supporting the community. Additionally, there are 26 churches in the larger surrounding area. Bridges at Riviera Beach itself is co-located at J.A.Y. Ministries.

## There are collaborative efforts and partnerships happening in the Riviera Beach neighborhood.

- Office space at Bridges is used by partners who provide services to Bridges members or volunteers who assist in activities or help to prepare for events. Bridges at Riviera Beach conducts outreach, parent-child activities, workshops, and presentations at child care facilities, churches, schools, the library, and community centers.
- In partnership, Bridges and the Riviera Beach Library facilitated a summer kindergarten transition program for preschoolers and their families. To get started, Kohl's provided volunteers for the kindergarten transition "kick-off event" and funding for the summer kindergarten transition program. This endeavor would not have been possible without help and support from numerous volunteers, including Andrea Peppers, who was the lead volunteer meeting with parents and children, facilitating activities, and training other volunteers.
- Bridges at Riviera Beach works closely with Palm Beach County School District's Adult Education Department to offer a Family Literacy program for parents and their children.
- Bridges volunteer Dr. Mary Ann DuPont, retired assistant area superintendent for the Palm Beach County school district, does empowerment presentations for parents on how to be more involved in their children's education, and accompanies parents as a liaison in school conferences or meetings when requested.
- Local media such as radio, television news, and newspapers have been helpful in advertising and bringing awareness of Bridges to local families. For example, radio station X102.3 helped co-facilitate the annual Bridges Baby Resource Fair, sending DJs to host the event, and providing giveaways to participating families.
- Businesses have supported Bridges in its endeavor. Since summer 2011, Wells Fargo has provided a "financial fitness" capacity building workshop several times with Bridges parents and children. Other examples include: Staples and the Law Office of Searcy, Denney & Dimick donating Thanksgiving meals to Bridges families in need, and Too Jay's Deli in Palm Beach Gardens donating food for events.
- Additional partners of the Bridges at Riviera Beach include some of the following community agencies: Community Voice, DCF (Florida ACCESS partner), Health Department (immunization and tooth fairy van), Councilman Shelby Lowe, Destiny by Choice, Estella's Brilliant Bus, Healthy Mothers / Healthy Babies, Our Father's Project, Safe Kids, Women's Health Initiative (WHIN), and YWCA.

**The map** (Figure 2-7) shows the census tract area that Bridges at Riviera Beach 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 Riviera Beach 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 of the resource list was developed in fall of 2012. This may not represent all area resources.

### Services and resources exist in the Riviera Beach area include the following:

- Medical care for pregnant women
- Non-medical resources for expectant parents
- Pediatricians/family medical practices
- Counseling/mental health services
- Licensed child care providers
- Parks/playgrounds/recreational facilities.

There are 13 social service and nonprofit organizations in Riviera Beach as shown in the map in light blue (e.g., Catholic Charities, Florida Resource Center for Women and Children, Housing Partnership, Homeless Education Assistance Resource Team (HEART), J.A.Y. Ministries, Haven House, Home Sweet Home Shelter). The Riviera Beach Bridges has partnered with the Homeless Coalition to outreach to area families struggling with homelessness.

There are 6 organizations that provide health care or medical services in this larger area, shown in yellow on the map, with the primary medical resource being the Health Department of Palm Beach County. Counseling and mental health services are provided by Parent-Child Center and Catholic Charities, which are both located close to the Riviera Beach neighborhood.

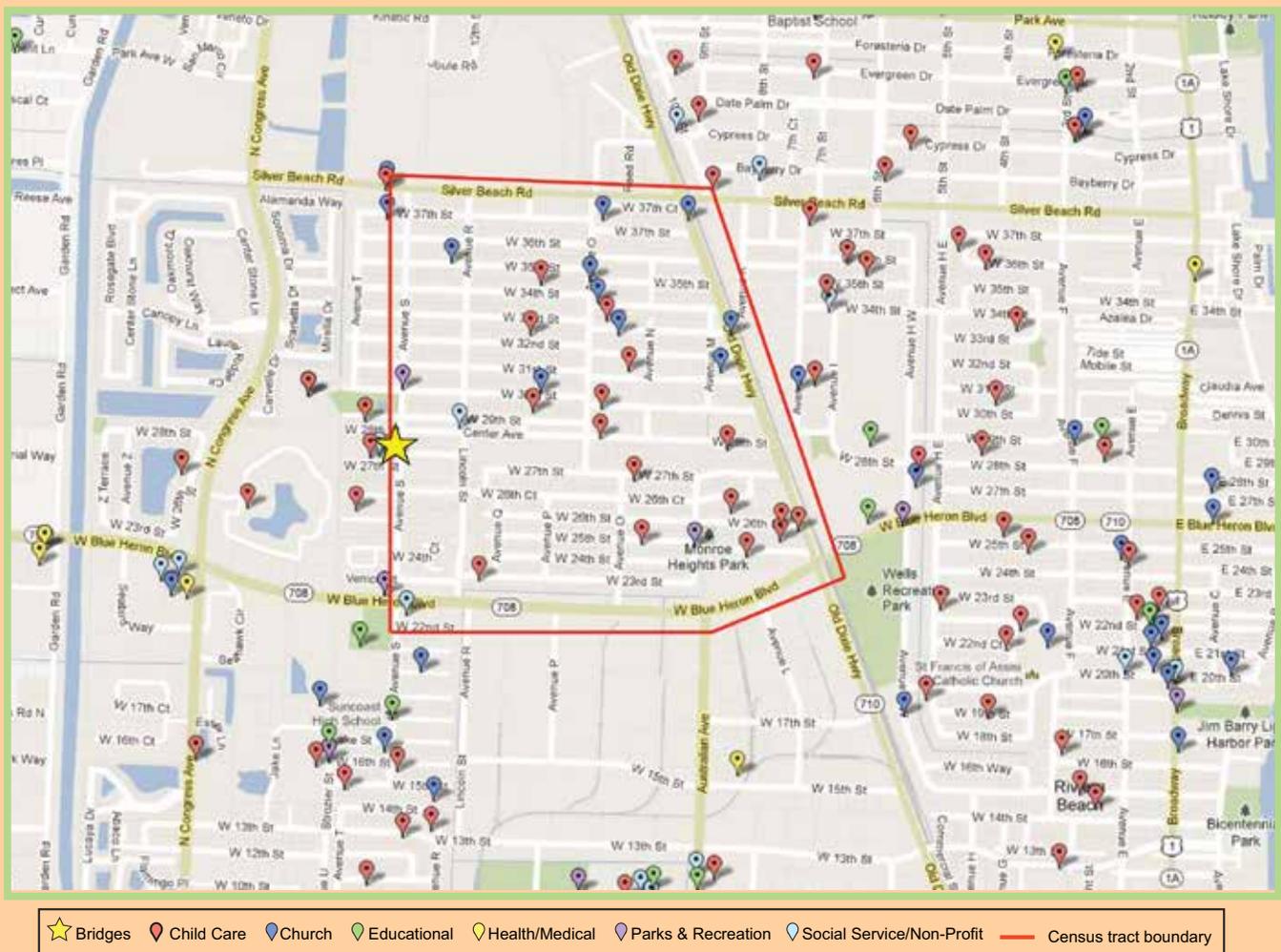
Five parks and other recreational facilities are shown in the map in purple. These include the Wells Recreation Park, Cunningham Park, Barracuda Bay

Aquatic Complex, Monroe Heights Park, and the Dan Calloway "Tate" Recreation Center.

Ten educational resources are shown on the map in green, including four public elementary schools, one middle school, two high schools, and the Riviera Beach Library. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School has been willing to collaborate with Bridges at Riviera Beach on behalf of community children and families.

Bridges at Riviera Beach works with several local child care providers including the following: Fannie Mae Tots, Pentecostal Child Care, Bentley's Child Care, and Atkins TLC Learning Center. There are a total of 66 licensed child care providers in the larger area and of those, 20% 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 2-7. Greater Riviera Beach Neighborhood



## Challenges to Improving Child Outcomes

### Staff identified challenges to improving outcomes for children and families in the Riviera Beach neighborhood:

The unemployment rate in the Riviera Beach neighborhood is nearly double the rate seen in Palm Beach County overall (17% in Riviera Beach, while 9% in Palm Beach County). High unemployment rates have an adverse impact on residents and are believed to have resulted in an increase in homeless families and individuals.

The percent of single-parent households is nearly twice as high in the Riviera Beach neighborhood (68%) than in Palm Beach County (37%). Families with fewer resources, including many single-parent households, are at higher risk for stress, poor physical and mental health, and other problems that can affect parenting.

Evidence of child maltreatment in the Riviera Beach neighborhood (4.6%) was nearly three times higher than the rate in Palm Beach County (1.6%).

While there are many licensed child care providers, access is difficult for most due to the cost and the eligibility requirements for child care subsidies.

The average income in Riviera Beach is much lower than in the rest of Palm Beach County; the median household income in the Riviera Beach neighborhood is \$26,051 compared to \$58,709 in Palm Beach County. Half of children in the Riviera Beach neighborhood lived below the federal poverty line during 2010.

Approximately one in four children (23%) in 2010 were born to teen mothers in the Riviera Beach neighborhood, which is nearly three times higher than seen in the county overall (8%).

Crime in the neighborhood and larger community is a challenge to building a stronger community for children. In 2010, the Riviera Beach Police Department recorded 14 murders, 13 rapes, and 432 aggravated assaults. The overall crime rate in Riviera Beach was 71 per 1,000 compared to 41 per 1,000 in Palm Beach County.



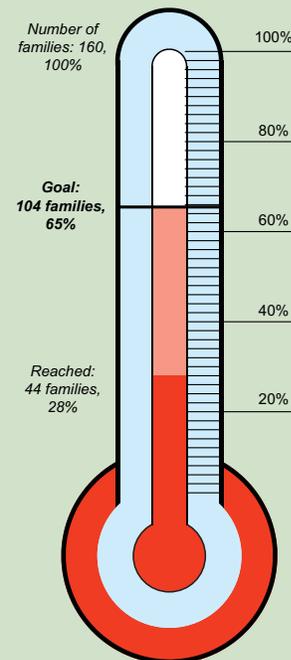
## Participation Rates: Of the families who visited Riviera Beach Bridges,

- 29% participated in parent-child activities.
- 16% participated in Triple P individual sessions, groups, or seminars.
- 100% participated in navigation activities.
- 39% 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 Riviera Beach.
- 200 families participated, and of those families, 72% had children ages 0–5 (n = 143).  
—Of those families with children 0–5, 31% resided in a target neighborhood (n = 44).
- 160 families with children age 0–5 lived in the Riviera Beach neighborhood during the 2010 census.
- 44 families with children age 0–5 who live in the Riviera Beach neighborhood participated in activities at Bridges.  
—Therefore, we estimate Bridges has been successful in reaching approximately **28%** of the families with children 0-5 in the Riviera Beach 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 Riviera Beach since January 2011.

Bridges at Riviera Beach 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: "It's Time to Play— A Developmental Playgroup," Parent and Child Together via Family Literacy
- Individual and group parent support and education: Triple P, Mommies and Babies support group
- 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, Holiday turkey and gift give away, and Business Center (allows members use of a computer, fax, copy, & notary service)
- Adult education and capacity-building workshops: GED, Family Literacy, career/education planning

- Community engagement: Workshop for families titled "Get Your Parenting Questions Answered," "It's Just a Get Together" parent forums, Waiting for Superman movie and discussion.
- Our Fathers Project is a local grassroots organization designed to support fathers and mothers who are co-parenting their children. The organization partners with Bridges at Riviera Beach to facilitate parent support groups, provide input at local town hall meetings, and sponsor community awareness events for fathers.



Director: Terri Ferguson  
tferguson@gocpg.org



Bridges is a program of

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Bridges at Riviera Beach  
Located at J.A.Y. Ministries  
2831 Avenue S  
Riviera Beach, FL 33404  
**561-899-1644**

Monday–Friday: 8:30am–7pm  
Evening events, activities, and appointments  
available when scheduled between 5:30pm–7pm  
Saturdays: 10:00am–2:00pm  
Office hours may vary  
based on scheduled community events.

