



## B.R.I.D.G.E.S. GRANT APPLICATION

The HDS Foundation, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit Organization founded to provide mentoring services and opportunities to Teens and Young Adults who have Autism-related disabilities. The primary focus of the Organization is to promote the development of work and daily living skills, build socio-educational transitional experiences via specific school-based partnerships, and support the post-secondary journeys for this growing population. Bridging the gap that can support the diverse abilities of young adults and facilitating college-level and other post-secondary education will strengthen this population's chances for meaningful, long-term employment and self-sufficiency. Teens and young adults can be better prepared to meet these demands when they are addressed utilizing a spectrum of solutions.

The HDS Foundation supports and partners with various community-based groups, aiming to enrich the lives of this special population by providing an array of social opportunities. These are designed to further develop personal growth and independence. The BRIDGES Grant is a funded partnership with High Schools that meet the requirements of this Program. The HDS Foundation is poised to help educate and provide information related to available, safe, and affordable housing options, that can further the possibilities of attaining independent or semi-independent housing. These options may be available through Private, Federal, State and Community-based Programs.

### HDS Foundation Mission Statement

*To facilitate Services and Resources for the Autism Community, including the families and organizations who Mentor, Teach, Develop and Support the mission of enriching the lives of individuals on the Autism Spectrum, and, to promote and support the initiatives that create Independence, Employment Skills and the ability to access Safe, Affordable Housing opportunities as they reach maturity. This will be accomplished by the HDS Foundation's School and Post-Secondary based Programs, Community and Government Partnerships, and Business Enterprise Initiatives.*

### Vision Statement for HDSF BRIDGES Grant

*To address social and transitional needs of a niche group of ASD Students, who are seeking to navigate through high school, and, attend college or other post-secondary similarly to their non-ASD Peers who are looking to achieve the same. This will be done by creating a partnership with local High School's identifying these candidates who are typically underserved in these goals and providing certain financial and other resources and support to allow the teachers and students to engage in activities they would otherwise not have access to, separate and distinct from those provided by their school system.*

### About the Grant

- The Grant award is (up to) \$5000 per academic year, to a qualifying Florida-Based Public High School's ESE class. Grant funds can only be used for the program activities, based on the BRIDGES Grant criteria. This will require the class to have a separate [bank] account.
- The High School Must Be located in Miami-Dade and/or Broward Counties\*
- The School Administration, ESE Department and class must meet the requirements of the BRIDGES Initiatives.
- The High School should create a special class, designed to incorporate two periods of the student's daily school schedule (one academic period plus one lunch period) five days per week or its equivalent.
- The High School applying for the Grant must demonstrate the ability to create such a schedule/class for this purpose, we recommend that students participating in this class are scheduled for the same lunch period.
- Eligible students must be on the Diploma without Access/FSA Track (or equivalent)

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- The class population must not exceed 12 students. Even numbers are recommended for pairing and group activities, though not required.
- Ratios of students should focus on Juniors and Seniors. Some 10<sup>th</sup> graders may be accepted but must not exceed 20% of the class population.
- Students may only be part of the program two (2) academic years
- The availability of more than one GRANT per year is dependent on funds and resources available to oversee the Program.

The purpose of the BRIDGES Program is to offer students who are on the Autism Spectrum a specialized program of interactive community and school-based activities/lessons to help them transition through high school and into post-secondary. The BRIDGES GRANT will provide the class facilitators/teachers with extra funds to be able to engage in non-typical school activities, organize community-based trips, and learn to budget, make purchases, dine out, and engage in typical social activities for individuals of their peer age. In addition, these funds will provide for any typical school-based party, prom, and any other related activities that are not funded by the school that would benefit this specific population.

The Grant is structured as an annual application, available by mid to late January of each year, and submitted by April and awarded by May according to the schedule noted in this document, and/or any subsequent updates. The Grant maximum is \$5000 per school year, which is disbursed with part of the funds awarded at the student level. This is done to create an exclusive learning opportunity for shopping, eating out, etc. which are critical to the Budgeting component of the BRIDGES Program.

The HDS Foundation recognizes the diversity of each community and school, and as such has created a platform for each applicant to propose their own unique program that addresses the overall goals of the Grant. The applicant must provide a written plan of how their program will work, including proposed class and community activities, timelines, goals, stakeholders involved, inter-school social plans, and a budget for carrying out these activities. Additionally, the school must identify the school team and administrative staff who will oversee the program. (See attached Sample CBI Activities that meet the goals of the BRIDGES Grant)

The class shall obtain the necessary information to ensure parental involvement and communication, including a parent packet of essential household and contact information to ensure each student can participate fully in all activities. Additionally, the class teacher/facilitator shall have a legal guardian for each student sign the HDS Foundation Photo/Video Release for photos and videos that will be used exclusively to promote the program and give vision to the families related to activities. These photos and stories will be posted on the HDS Foundation Blogs and News ([www.hdsfoundaiton.org](http://www.hdsfoundaiton.org)), and the social media pages on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The teacher/facilitators shall take pictures of and provide details of any event the class participates in as part of the Program and provide them to the HDS Foundation in a timely fashion. If an HDS Foundation staff member attends the activity, the HDS Foundation member will be responsible for the pictures and will obtain the necessary information to write the story. It is helpful when the activity detail, location, etc. are made available ahead of time so that the posts can be readied for publication as early as possible. Some of these will be available in the Class Plan, considering that these are fluid and can change based on availability, logistics, etc. The HDS Foundation will supply the school with a small digital camera so that the pictures can be easily downloaded in the formats necessary.

The Initial Grant requires that a minimum of \$100 is designated to each student for the purposes of their bank account. The amount will be subtracted from the Grant of \$5000. After the winter break, the HDS Foundation will provide an additional \$100 to each student to deposit in the account to provide them additional funds for the activities. The amount designated for the initial deposit can be greater than \$100 if the program plan requires them to do so. Depending on the curriculum, a teacher may decide he/she wants more funds to go directly to the student's account so that they can manage more purchases directly throughout the year.



## **Program Goals**

Applying schools must be familiar with the HDS Foundation and BRIDGES missions and use the GRANT funds accordingly to fulfill both. The following are the Program goals:

- Budgeting
- Resources
- Independence
- Development
- Growth
- Empowerment
- Social Skills

## **Budgeting**

The skills of budgeting, expenditures, and managing money in general are important aspects for anyone but challenging at times for this population. Much focus of our program is put on this component as these are crucial aspects of adulthood and everyday life. Through the program, students should learn basic skills such as creating a budget, learning to save, opening a bank account, paying a bill, or calculating tips. These components can be taught with a mixture of different activities and CBI's (Community Based Instruction) such as creating a shopping challenge, where students will form into groups with a set budget and attempt to buy the most items closest to that amount (i.e., the Office Depot challenge). Other activities that can be organized would be a Banking and Budgeting event for students, alongside parents, to open their own account. This could be followed by a visit to the local bank to get more acquainted with their branch, learn about the teller and different transactions such as withdrawing and depositing money, and learning how to use the ATM.

## **Resources**

Many of us are unaware of the numerous local, state and federal community resources available to those on the Autism Spectrum. Though some are, at times, limited, services such as Public Transit, Community Outreach, and Vocational Rehab, are some of the many resources that are there to assist in helping our students with everyday life as they transition into post-secondary education or training, and adulthood. Learning about things such as local bus routes, nearby medical centers, community outreach, and understanding what resources they have around them and how to get there are critical skills. Some Resources/activities could include creating a map of your community and learning what bus routes are closest; learning to use transit apps on the phone to track where you need to go and what time to be there; visiting a community center and finding out about local events or programs they have available to the public. Another school/class-based activity that can include parents are visits by Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VocRehab) to explain what this resource can do for their students, and how they will need to plan for the available assistance as they transition to graduation. The HDS Foundation can assist with this event and work with other school resources to get the appropriate VocRehab representatives to come and speak to the parents and/or legal guardians.

## **Independent functioning**

Independent functioning is comprised of many different aspects of one's life and is something that many of us acquire slowly and take for granted. Students on the Autism Spectrum have different difficulties in learning independent living skills, as many young adults do, because of the lack of exposure and practice of these skills. An essential part of the BRIDGES program is helping students learn some of these skills in order to better prepare them for life after high school, whether in a post-secondary program or while away from family and on their own. Some activities to help teach these skills include going grocery shopping, doing laundry, and time management.



Students will reap the benefits of learning how to live on their own, but also gain confidence by having the ability to do these things independently.

### **Development**

Personal development is a large part of the BRIDGES program and comes on its own as well as along with some of the other program components. Students will learn development skills on their own while also increasing these skills in many of the other activities such as independent functioning and social skills. Some important lessons in development include learning about health and nutrition, learning coping strategies and stress management skills, and creating an exercise routine. Activities such as creating a school garden or doing different exercise activities such as creating a full body gym routine, going to a local park with a fitness trail, or organizing a yoga and meditation class, will help students create a healthier mind and body relationship for themselves which can help them live longer, more mindful, and more fulfilling lives.

### **Growth and Empowerment:**

In addition to more pragmatic skills, it is imperative for students in the class to learn self-awareness and self-confidence. The Growth and Empowerment component should include activities that encourage the students to familiarize themselves with their own strengths and weaknesses. The lessons should motivate them about the future (through outlining personal goals) while teaching them to deal with the present, through coping with daily challenges. Moreover, they must focus on understanding, managing, and communicating their emotions. Targeting Non-ASD Peers within the school population from clubs or organizations (or individual students who want to volunteer) and engaging them to be mentors and role models to the students will significantly impact their personal growth and feeling of belonging while in high school and beyond. Any student who volunteers for these mentorship opportunities may be eligible for service hours from The HDS Foundation Inc, a Non-Profit 501 © (3).

The BRIDGES Grant also aims to help students develop character and values with volunteering and community outreach to 'give back'. A greater understanding of themselves and others will help the students feel more confident in their abilities. The BRIDGES Grant requires at least one annual event aimed at giving back to the community. This can be done through visiting and serving at a soup kitchen, forming a beach or park cleanup, participating and fundraising in a walk (i.e. during April, National Autism Awareness Month) or other charitable activities. We want to instill philanthropic values as well as emphasize the importance of being involved in your community and "paying it forward".

### **Social Skills:**

The top component of the BRIDGES Grant is learning and practicing social skills. Students on the Autism Spectrum struggle with social skills that many of us take for granted. One of the more significant tangible advantages that students have received in the BRIDGES program, especially in their second year, is the improvement of social skills and the ability to communicate and spend time with their peers. Teachers should organize activities to make sure the students in the class get to know each other and form friendships. Still, the Grant wants to focus also on inclusive activities that will help them be more successful when dealing with their families and typical peers as well as those they'll encounter in everyday life. To achieve this, lesson plans can include the difference between verbal and nonverbal communication, developing teamwork, and understanding how one's actions can affect how others feel. During outings, the students should be encouraged to practice their skills and try to talk to new people, with the hopes of them feeling more comfortable making friends. Activities should also emphasize problem solving in social situations: what is appropriate versus what is not, and how to communicate if there is a problem or how to deal with emotions in public.



Social skills are critical; together with the other daily living skill components targeted by the BRIDGES Program, provide a wonderful teaching opportunity for the Autism Spectrum student population. Each month, the students should be participating in at least one field trip that works alongside the in-class lesson (like visiting a company), and one to two casual social outings (like going out to lunch). To fulfill these requirements, we encourage activities like holiday-themed events, such as a Halloween or a Winter party. School Activities such as Homecoming and Prom can bring an opportunity for the class to create an event and/or participate in peer-appropriate activities they may not have the chance to participate in otherwise. They can also work with organizations like Best Buddies, or social school clubs that actively work to make lasting friendships between special needs teens and their peers.

### **Curriculum/Requirements:**

- Written Plan of Goals, Budget, Class Info, Activities, CBI
- Bank/Financial activity – to open a bank account that will be used for the individual outings.
- Class Fundraiser – to gain additional funds for class activities
- 6-8 field trips/CBI trips (see examples)
- 12-15 Social Outings or activities such as parties, events. (See examples)
- Monthly meeting with an HDS Staff member to identify any issues (Can be over the phone)
- Bi-Annual Reporting, including demographics, what they have accomplished so far, any challenges that have presented themselves, and other pertinent information which can aide the HDS Foundation in assisting the class and ensuring their success.
- Photos, Videos and/or stories – for providing exposure to the successes of the class participants, their families, the school and community.
- End of the year financial report
- Other as needed

*Note: The BRIDGES Grant requires monthly/activity-based reporting and pictures for the HDS Social Media Pages and website in order to promote the activities and accomplishments of the Program by creating more awareness of the impact of such activities for this population. The class facilitator/teacher must obtain photo/video releases for each participating student for the HDS Foundation. No pictures or information is provided to any third party nor used for any purpose other than promoting the BRIDGES Program and HDS Foundation. The school/class will also provide demographic reporting to enable the HDS Foundation to manage the populations serviced. This will include high level demographic information available to standard programs such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, zip code they live in, and other necessary information. This information is never tied into the individual student but rather collected as general information that the HDS Foundation can use to report on communities served.*



## Grant Timeline

<b>January 15th - 30th</b>	BRIDGES Grant Docs Available for the upcoming Year
<b>February 28th</b>	Q&A Period
<b>April 28th</b>	BRIDGES Grant Submission Deadline
<b>May 15th</b>	BRIDGES Grant Award
<b>August 30th</b>	Awardee submits Draft Detailed Plan/Requirements
<b>September 30th</b>	Awardee submits Final Proposed Plan/Requirements & Funds Awarded

### If awarded, and Before the Academic Year begins....

- Detailed Draft Plan/Requirements:
  - School/Class should submit a proposed plan that address the BRIDGES Program Goals including a rough schedule and description of all activities.
  - School/Class should finalize the student selection process in the spring term before students will begin. Teachers and administration will select students on standard diploma without access, whose IEP and profile fit the guidelines as put forth by the BRIDGES Grant and the HDS Foundation. Parents will be given a packet along with a questionnaire, The HDS Photo Video Waivers, Class demographics, etc.
  - School/Class should have a schedule that provides a minimum of 8-10 hours per week. To achieve this with A/B scheduling, it is recommended that all students in the class be scheduled for the same lunch. Lunch on days that class will meet will be grouped with the BRIDGES class and students will be able to eat together on a CBI or with their peers or buddies on campus or in the classroom. This ensures that there will be enough hours per week practicing the skills they've been learning.
  - School/Class Submit a proposed budget, detailing high level expenditures i.e. "\$" amount for prom, "\$" amount for community-based field trip, "\$" amount for transportation, "\$" amount for parties and social events, etc.
  - School/Class should create an account where money will be deposited and accessible to teachers for use during activities and for supplies for the BRIDGES class. Account structure should be discussed with the HDS Foundation to ensure the check and deposit are done correctly and by the standards and specifications of The HDS Foundation and the Grant.

### By the end of September of the School Year, or earlier

- Final Proposed Plan/Requirements (Updated and/or complete, with all forms, waivers, etc. – see above)
- The School/Class must provide an email and phone number database of the parent(s) for all students attending the class. The purpose of this list will be strictly to provide parents with additional resources and activities as they come up and will not be shared to any third party for any purpose. (Note: The HDS Foundation and the BRIDGES Grant program require a certain amount of parental involvement for specific activities, which should be discussed with school administration during the student selection process).
- The School/Class must have complete student/parent questionnaire folders prior to the program start date. This is so that we can get to know parents and students as well as the populations we're serving. (Note: This will also assist in the student selection process and help to organize events during the year which the parents must be present for).



### Ongoing through the Academic year...

- The School/Class must provide a short story and pictures of each grant-related activity, as soon as the event happens, but no later than (3) days after the event takes place. The purpose of this is to create Blog stories for the HDS Foundation website and promote the school and program.
- Meet with HDS Foundation staff once a month to discuss program updates
- Ensure that the plan is being carried out, and that the school related activities are being incorporated as much as possible, such as homecoming, football games and other school sports activities, prom, etc.
- The School/Class must create a class service project or be a part of an autism related community service project.
- The School/Class must provide the HDS Foundation staff the opportunity to attend events as warranted; staff is not always available, but we want to make sure that we support the students and program at special events. This can be achieved by simply copying our staff on event calendar or upcoming activities, etc.
- School/Class must submit a bi-annual report, due no later than January 31st, and May 31st

### At the conclusion of the academic year...

- The School must create a final report, which can be an adaptation of the original plan, with added components, notes, and outcomes achieved from class goals. This report will allow us to evaluate the success of the program, learn from the class-room experiences and teacher input, and allow the HDS Foundation to improve future Grant Opportunities. The HDS Foundation may provide an additional questionnaire to assist in this process.
- The School must create a final budget report including expenditures for the year. We expect that the Grant Funds are used fully during the academic year. Any unused funds may have to be returned to the HDS Foundation and/or used for a subsequent year, if the Grant is re-awarded. No funds can go to the school at large for any purpose.

### Contacts and other info:

- General information: [info@hdsfoundation.org](mailto:info@hdsfoundation.org)
  - Program Manager: Liz Falk [liz@hdsfoundation.org](mailto:liz@hdsfoundation.org)
  - Board Member: Meagan Bouscher-Miranda [meagan@hdsfoundation.org](mailto:meagan@hdsfoundation.org)
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  - Twitter [@hdsfoundation](https://twitter.com/hdsfoundation)
  - Address: **HDS Foundation, Inc.**  
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- Any questions related to grant requirements can be submitted to **Liz Falk, Program Manager** [liz@hdsfoundation.org](mailto:liz@hdsfoundation.org).

## **Sample Community Based Instruction Options and Applied Skills:**

Here we have provided a list of options for community-based instruction and activities throughout the year to apply learned skills and offer positive social opportunities

- Office Depot- team work, problem solving, following a budget which includes tax.
- Homecoming Game Spirit party and luncheon- socialization with inclusion
- Halloween Party- Luncheon or afternoon activity- socialization, budgeting, costume planning and selection
- Home Depot- Team work, budgeting, tax, planning
- Gardening/Harvest day at HSH ASD Garden, with Home Depot Challenge items
- Publix- team work, problem solving, budgeting, tax, accessing store personnel.
- Florida Outlet Mall- Budgeting, Teamwork, Public Transit utilization, tax and tip
- Homestead Soup Kitchen- holiday soup kitchen event
- Holiday Party- location to be determined- budgeting, meal planning, tax and tip, social skills
- Homestead Trolley- public transportation, scheduling and time management, budgeting and trolley fare, learning trolley stops and where to go. CBI will include lunch or activity at the destination before returning to HSH.
- Miami Dade Bus- trip to park and ride or straight from school to US Post Office
- US Post Office- putting together a package, addressing a package or envelope, time management (hours and bus/CBI consideration) Interacting with personnel and learning about the postal system and job opportunities
- Texas Roadhouse- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving
- Walmart- Budgeting challenge, teamwork, socializing, learning appropriate clothing wear for job interviews, learning about job opportunities at Walmart
- H2O Healthy Month for November- social skills, teamwork, budgeting, putting together a 'healthy living' presentation, problem solving
- PAVASANA yoga training and mindfulness workshops 2 for the year, one per semester. Touching on different Stress management, personal fitness and mindfulness exercises
- Texas Roadhouse- Budgeting, tax and tip, socializing, trying to get gift ideas without letting someone know (to prep for the class' secret Santa and holiday party gift challenge)
- Chilis Holiday Party- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, understanding tipping
- Mayor Roscoe Warren Park- public transit coordination/planning, Scavenger hunt - socializing, teamwork, problem solving
- Publix- make your own sub – Teamwork, interacting with store personnel, tax, budget, problem solving
- Painting with a twist with Best Buddies – following directions, interacting with instructor, socializing
- Homestead Fire Rescue – following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language
- Bank of America - using deposit slips, ATM machines, interacting with bank personnel, problem solving



- City of Homestead Police Dept - following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language, what services are provided, what to do in cases of an emergency
- Walgreens- interacting with store personnel, problem solving, appropriately using ATM card.
- Prom Party- Socialization, Planning, Interaction with like peers
- Scavenger Hunt at HSH - socializing, teamwork, problem solving, public transit
- End of Year Party- location to be determined, with the help of Best Buddies
- Ice Cream Social with typical peers- Socializing, demonstrating appropriate body language
- Bank of America –using deposit slips, ATM machines, interacting with bank personnel, problem solving
- Panera- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving
- Tarantella- Halloween Party- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, understanding tipping
- Wings in Weston- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, understanding tipping
- Post Office-interacting with business personnel, understanding questions being asked, problem solving
- Cold Stone Creamery- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving
- Scavenger Hunt at CBHS- socializing, teamwork, problem solving
- A/C Moore – problem solving, following a budget which includes tax, interacting with business personnel.
- Chilis Holiday Party- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, understanding tipping
- Peace Mound Park- Scavenger hunt - socializing, teamwork, problem solving
- Publix- make your own Sundae’s – Teamwork, interacting with store personnel, tax, budget, problem solving
- Paint Fiesta – following directions, interacting with instructor, socializing
- Vista View Park – team building – teamwork, socializing, problem solving
- City of Weston Fire Rescue – following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language
- Bank of America - using deposit slips, ATM machines, interacting with bank personnel, problem solving
- City of Weston BSO - following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language
- Weston Diner - socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, understanding tipping
- Weston Regional Park – team building - team work, socializing, problem solving, following directions
- City of Weston City Hall - following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language
- YMCA - following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language
- Cavali Horse Ranch – following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language



- Walgreens- interacting with store personnel, problem solving, appropriately using ATM card.
- Lucille's Diner - socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, understanding tipping
- Japan Inn- socializing, interacting with restaurant personnel, problem solving, understanding tipping
- Scavenger Hunt at CBHS - socializing, teamwork, problem solving
- Ice Cream Social with typical peers- Socializing, demonstrating appropriate body language
- HDS Software Company tour- following directions, asking appropriate questions, demonstrating appropriate body language