



- 1971 Westborough Human Rights Council submits proposal to Dept. of Youth Services to establish "halfway house" for boys upon closure of Lyman School.
- 1973 This first program, called The Bridge, opens on Grove St. in Westborough (Agency budget: \$80,000 a year).
- 1973 Community Treatment Complex (CTC) founded by Barry Walsh, PhD and others starts the first after school program at Worcester State Hospital.



Community Treatment Complex (CTC) founded

Westborough Human Rights Council opens The Bridge

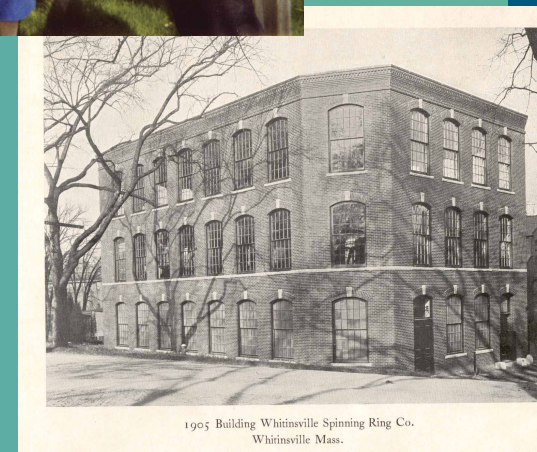
1970's

- 1976 Sharon Rinkus and Dennis Rice found Alternatives Unlimited with an agency budget of \$300,000, supporting three programs.
- 1977 Alternatives purchases Spinning Ring Mill in Whitinsville and opens Sheltered Workshop serving 200 individuals.
- 1979 Dennis Rice becomes Executive Director of Alternatives.



Alternatives Unlimited Founded

Spinning Ring Mill Purchased to open Sheltered Workshop



1905 Building Whitinsville Spinning Ring Co. Whitinsville Mass.



- 1981 CTC establishes Adolescent Day School at 340 Main St., Worcester.
- 1982 Northborough Community Residence (NCR) opened as first Mental Health program of The Bridge.
- 1982 CTC establishes a DMH-funded Adult Graduate Service.
- 1983 Community Treatment Complex (CTC) opens the Ives Program for 8 adolescents with mental illness.
- 1984 The Bridge opens services in Southbridge, Webster and Dudley.

- 1986 The Bridge expands services for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD).
- 1988 The Bridge Childrens' Residence for six male youth ages 8 to 12 opens on Charles St. in Westborough.

Programs Established	
Adolescent Day School	Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (I/DD)
North Community Residence	Childrens' Residence
Adult Graduate Service	
Ives Program	

1980's

- 1980 Alternatives Unlimited affiliates with Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation and is one of three nationwide implementing psychiatric rehabilitation approach.

- 1985 Alternatives holds first "Bike-A-Thon," which later becomes known as the Valley Friendship Tour.



- 1986 Alternatives expands day and residential services in the South Norfolk area.

- 1986 Total budget is \$4.5 million, with 18 programs and 135 employees.

- 1989 Alternatives joins the International Work Exchange program, hiring 8 employees from the UK.

1st Bike-A-Thon

18 programs

135 employees

Joins the International Work Exchange program



- 1990 The Bridge's Vernon Street Boys Home opens in Worcester.
- 1991 The Bridge's Supportive Housing services begin in Southbridge.
- 1991 CTC renames high school for special needs "The G. Stanley Hall School" and opens the School House program for children ages 8 to 12.
- 1995 A new home sharing program "Shared Living" is initiated at The Bridge.

- 1996 The Bridge and CTC merge to form The Bridge of Central Massachusetts, Inc.
- 1998 The Safe Homes program for LGBTQIA+ youth is established in Worcester.
- 1999 The Bridge of Central MA is awarded a contract from HUD to provide services for homeless individuals and families in the South County area (SCHAP).

Programs Established

Vernon Street Boys Home

Supportive Housing

School House

Shared Living

Safe Homes

SCHAP

1990's

- 1991 Alternatives Unlimited creates two seats on their Board of Directors for individuals served.
- 1992 Alternatives Supported Living program receives Dept. of Mental Health Quality Award.
- 1995 Alternatives offers "Shared Living" for the first time.



- 1996 Alternatives acquires the North County Residential Network through DMH, adding \$1.9 million in new funding. Total budget is \$10 million with 280 employees.



Supported Living program receives award
 Shared Living offered
 Acquires North County Residential Network



2000-2010

2001 The Safe Homes program merges with The Bridge.



2001 The Bridge receives national accreditation from the Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services.



2001 The Bridge implements state of the art clinical innovations including Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Project Adventure and specialized Dual Diagnosis treatments.

2003 Following a successful capital campaign led by J. Christopher Collins and Meredith Wesby, a factory building on Mann Street is renovated to become the new headquarters for The Bridge and the new home for the G. Stanley Hall School.



2006 Buildings named in honor of long-time Bridge trustees – the J. Christopher Collins building at 4 Mann St and the Holt House in honor of Nita Holt.



2007 The Saunders Street program serving four women with brain injuries opens in Gardner.

2009 The Bridge opens the Bridge Training Institute.



2009 The Bridge in collaboration with Alternatives Unlimited is awarded contracts for five new programs in north county by DMH.

2010 Supported Employment program to help individuals find and keep jobs implemented by The Bridge.

Safe Homes and The Bridge merge

National accreditation

Mann Street building is new headquarters

2000-2010

2000 Alternatives Unlimited embraces a community engagement paradigm shift to maximize real community membership – real homes, real jobs and real relationships.

2000 Alternatives acquires a Worcester residential network through DMH.

2000 Boston Globe lists Alternatives among the top 100 non-profits in Massachusetts.

2001 Alternatives closes the sheltered workshop in Whitinsville and shifts to store-front career centers.

2003 Board votes to renovate the Whitin Mill into a multi-purpose, inclusive, community treasure for the region to enjoy.

2008 ValleyCAST (Blackstone Valley Culture, Arts and Sciences Together) is incorporated by Alternatives Unlimited.

2008 Alternatives renovates Whitin Mill, after completing successful \$4m capital campaign.



Top
100
non-profits in MA
Boston Globe

25th
anniversary



Announcement to remodel Mill



Mill Renovation



Mill Renovations Completed





2012

The Bridge opens program in Hyde Park to serve individuals with I/DD and continues to focus on evidence-based practices throughout its services.

2015

Barry Walsh, PhD retires as Executive Director of The Bridge and Ken Bates becomes President and CEO.



2016

Open Sky becomes a licensed outpatient clinic serving individuals with Medicaid, Medicare and other insurances.

2010-2018

Affiliation becomes official on July 1, 2018.

2010

Alternatives Unlimited is awarded new contracts by DMH and assumes the operation of North Central Human Services, Inc. in Gardner. The Bridge and Alternatives collaborate on five north county programs.

2011

First "Club 21" launched in Worcester – a social club matching 10 individuals served with 10 community volunteers.

2012

Adult Family Care program grows to **75** individuals and their families

2016

Alternatives ends its **40th year** with **700** staff and budget of **\$45** million.



The Beginning of

2018

Dennis Rice retires as Executive Director of Alternatives Unlimited, and Ken Bates becomes President and CEO of the merged entity.

Together the two agencies become Open Sky Community Services, Inc., representing the idea of limitless possibilities for people who face a myriad of challenges.

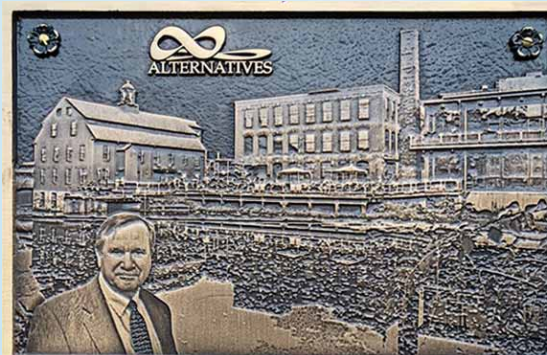
Open Sky forms Central Community Health Partnership (CCHP) and participates in the MassHealth Accountable Care Organization (ACO) Pilot.



Open Sky is awarded our first SAMHSA grant and becomes a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC).

Open Sky collaborates with MassHealth to pilot Behavioral Health for Justice Involved (BHJI).

Open Sky opens our first DPH/BSAS funded program – Co-Occurring Enhanced Residential Program in Douglas. Open Sky expands homeless services and services for justice-involved.



Dennis H. Rice Community Plaza

Dennis co-founded Alternatives Unlimited, Inc. in 1976, to help people of all abilities obtain real homes, real jobs, and real relationships.

His vision led to the renovation of the Whitin Mill as headquarters for Alternatives and as a center for cultural events, the arts and community membership. This plaque is dedicated to commemorate Dennis' life's work and his 2018 retirement.

2022

The agency is awarded a contract from DMH for Tradewinds Clubhouse in Southbridge and from DDS for the Family Support Center of Blackstone Valley.

2023

Open Sky collaborates with Seven Hills Foundation and other partners to form new Career Pipeline programs for immigrants and refugees and BIPOC staff, receiving \$6 million in grant funding over three years.



Today

100+
Programs

\$118+
Annual Budget

1300+
Employees

50
Years

A Legacy of Leadership Executive Directors

The Bridge of Central Massachusetts, Inc.

Daniel Hanrahan 1973–1980
Karl Krantz 1980–1984
Barbara Brown 1984–1988
Stephen Murphy 1988–1990
Daniel Hanrahan 1990–1996

Barent Walsh 1996–2015
(CTC, 1973–1996)
Ken Bates 2015–present
(President/CEO)

Alternatives Unlimited, Inc.

Sharon Rinkus 1976–1979
Dennis Rice 1979–2018

