

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 9, 2017

LifeBridge Community Services

475 Clinton Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06605 www.LifeBridgeCT.org

For Media Inquiries Contact: Eileen Brennan, Manager – Marketing and Communications

203-368-5581 or ebrennan@LifeBridgeCT.org

JOINING FORCES TO ACHIEVE GREATER IMPACT IN BRIDGEPORT

BRIDGEPORT, CT February 9, 2017 - LifeBridge Community Services, one of the largest human service organizations in the region, and the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) one of the region's most respected research and advocacy organizations, are pleased to announce their merger effective February 1, 2017. BCAC's mission and important work will remain unchanged, and it will now operate at 475 Clinton Avenue, Bridgeport, as *Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition: The Center for Research and Advocacy at LifeBridge Community Services*.

The merger will provide both LifeBridge and BCAC with a larger platform and greater reach while helping to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of each other's services. Both organizations share a commitment to providing greater Bridgeport's most vulnerable children and families with the high-quality social services, research and advocacy and resources they need to reach their full potential.

LifeBridge Community Services annually provides comprehensive social services to over 17,000 low-income individuals and families through four core programs: Economic Empowerment, Youth Services, Behavioral Health and Social Enterprises ranging from Meals on Wheels to Deaf Interpretation Services. LifeBridge will work closely with BCAC to research and analyze data to identify unmet needs in the community, measure program effectiveness, generate support for programs and services with proven results and mobilize the wider community to achieve greater impact.

"Maximizing our collective impact is the driving force behind this merger" says Bill Hass, President & CEO of LifeBridge. "BCAC brings over 30 years of experience and leadership focused on building a broad-based and effective coalition of local and state-level policy makers, educators, law enforcement, health care providers, clergy, community leaders and families. They are a strong and independent voice for grassroots advocacy, research and policy development, and systems change. Public and private organizations throughout the state rely on BCAC's annual *State of the Child* report, and the critical data-based information it contains on the health, safety, education and economic status of greater Bridgeport's children and families to help guide their efforts."

Mary Pat Healy, immediate past executive director of BCAC, will continue to lead the program at LifeBridge. She is also excited about the collective impact of the merger. "We believe this will enable LifeBridge to more effectively serve their clients and advocate on their behalf, while enabling us to continue our research and work to effect policy and systems change that address the impact of poverty, injustice and inequality on our community. In today's economic environment, cost savings and efficiencies are important considerations but, at the end of the day, this merger brings both agencies more vigor and creativity in developing "champions for change".

About the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition

The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 1985 that consists of over 50 organizations, parents and other concerned individuals committed to improving the well-being of Bridgeport's children through research, advocacy, education, and mobilization. Over the years, BCAC has played a leading role in hundreds of initiatives, including: securing federal funding to expand children's mental health services in Bridgeport; launching a school breakfast and lunch program in the Bridgeport public schools; advocating for additional affordable-housing apartments in the city; assisting thousands of families to secure HUSKY state healthcare; and producing dozens of reports. To learn more about BCAC and download copies of its reports, visit www.bcacct.org.

About LifeBridge Community Services

LifeBridge is a 168 year-old 501(c)(3) social service agency whose mission is to empower people to build a brighter future. We achieve our mission by linking flexible, innovative programs to restore personal capability, develop skills, and build a pathway to economic self-sufficiency. Our comprehensive services are drawn from four core programs: Economic Empowerment, Youth Services, Behavioral Health, and Social Enterprises, which enable LifeBridge to annually assist over 17,000 low-income individuals and families. For more information, visit our website: www.LifeBridgeCT.org

###