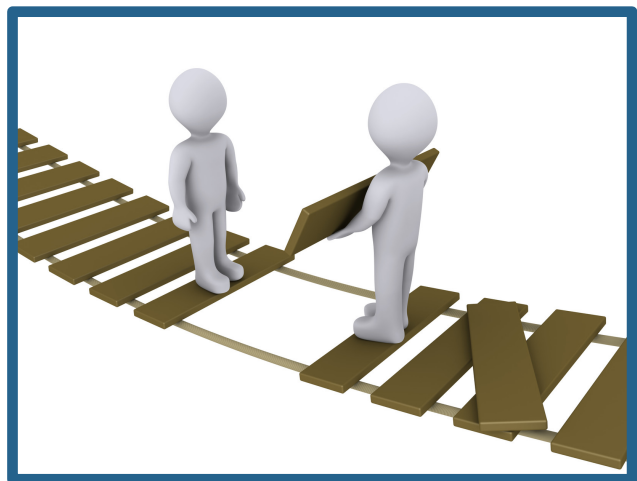


## Building Bridges One Mind at a Time

by Dan Bulgarelli

One of the great joys I have in being a PAC Mentor is working with my learners and hearing what they do every day to improve the lives of others. Anne Small, a soon-to-be certified PAC Trainer has given me several stories, but I think my favorite is actually one centered around her husband, Linwood Small.

Linwood volunteers to drive the activity bus at an assisted living facility near his home. Through Anne he has learned many of Teepa's techniques and philosophies. One day while Linwood was getting ready for an activity he heard from one of the care partners at the facility that there was a new resident. This new resident was a *problem*. He was cranky, didn't want to go on any activities, he was rude to the staff, and other typical *problem behaviors*. Linwood could have easily shrugged his shoulders and gone on with his day but he didn't. Instead, he asked what the man did for a living before coming to live here. It turns out this *problem resident* was an engineer who had designed and inspected bridges. With permission, Linwood took this information and approached the gentleman using the PPA<sup>™</sup> techniques he had learned from Anne. He started talking with the gentleman, typical chit-chat, but mostly just spending time with him. As the conversation was starting to wrap up Linwood casually mentioned, "I drive the activity bus and I would love it if you came sometime to teach me about the bridges." With this, the man's eyes lit up and he got on that activity bus and sat right behind the driver's seat so he could continue talking with his new friend. Linwood may not have taken the most direct route to the destination that day, but he did take one that took them under several bridges. This *problem resident* was now cheerfully describing the different parts and styles of the bridges and Linwood continued to be genuinely interested in what he had to say.



This continued trip after trip and the *problem resident* wasn't so much of a *problem* anymore. Those *behaviors* that had been so trying before were a reaction to an unmet need that, thanks to Linwood, was now being met. He was happy, friendly, and even made a special lady friend. Really the only thing that stayed the same is that he always makes sure to be on Linwood's trips in his favorite seat right behind his friend.

As I listened to Anne tell me this story over the phone I was smiling ear to ear, but she wasn't done at this point. The facility at which Linwood was volunteering recognized the

good he had done and named him the employee of the quarter! Linwood was the first bus driver to earn this honor.

This story tells so much about Linwood, Anne, and all of us that are willing to look beyond the behaviors and see the person. Linwood and his friend are shining examples of what can be done when we put the person and the relationship first.

Thank you Linwood for what you did and continue to do. Thank you Anne for sharing the story with me and introducing the techniques to your husband. Thank you to all of you who take the time to improve the lives of those around you, particularly those living with brain change.