

Bridgeway's ARRIVE Together Team Provides Critical Mental Health Support Following Devastating Branchburg Fire

In the early morning hours of March 18, a devastating fire tore through an affordable housing complex in Branchburg, New Jersey, displacing approximately 70 residents and leaving families in crisis.

Within minutes of receiving a call from the Branchburg Police Department, while emergency crews were still actively battling the fire, Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services' ARRIVE Together team in Somerset County mobilized to provide immediate, on-site mental health support.

Arriving on scene during an active emergency, Bridgeway clinicians worked side by side with law enforcement to support residents experiencing shock, fear, and uncertainty. In an environment marked by chaos and emotional distress, the team provided de-escalation, emotional stabilization, and compassionate, trauma-informed care to individuals and families impacted by the fire.

Branchburg Township Police Captain Edward Edgar, emphasized the critical role Bridgeway's team played during the response, noting that "the volatility of the situation had the ability to spiral out of control," and that clinicians "provided a crucial resource as counseling advocates and were an undeniable asset in assisting those in need."

Nicole Crowley, Bridgeway Program Director, shared, "Our team responded without hesitation, stepping into an incredibly intense and emotional situation to support individuals and families in real time. This is exactly what ARRIVE Together is designed to do. We meet people in moments of crisis, help bring a sense of calm, and ensure they are not facing trauma alone. I could not be prouder of how our clinicians showed up for this community."

The ARRIVE Together program pairs trained mental health professionals with law enforcement to respond to behavioral health crises in real time. This model ensures individuals receive timely, appropriate care at the moment it is needed most, while also supporting first responders on the scene.

Captain Edgar further highlighted the impact on residents, many of whom experienced the loss of their homes firsthand, stating, “Residents lost their homes directly in front of their eyes; some families lost everything. The response from residents, knowing counseling services were readily available, was immediately noticeable and undoubtedly helped de-escalate heightened emotions.”

This incident presented a new and complex type of emergency for the team. Despite the intensity and scale of the situation, Bridgeway clinicians adapted seamlessly, demonstrating clinical expertise, professionalism, and deep compassion under pressure.

Bridgeway team members **Lindsay Cherneski, Samantha Avignone, Kathleen Lynch, and Danielle Seastrum Marano** were recognized for their exceptional response and unwavering commitment to the community during this crisis.

Cory Storch, President and CEO of Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services, added, “What we saw in Branchburg is the very best of who we are as an organization. Our ARRIVE Together team brought calm to chaos and ensured that residents received immediate, compassionate support during one of the most difficult moments of their lives. This program reflects the power of partnership between behavioral health and law enforcement, and the critical importance of having trained clinicians embedded in real-time emergency response.”

Captain Edgar also expressed his gratitude, calling the team’s work “an often-overlooked essential service” during a time of crisis, and noting that he “cannot overstate how grateful we are to have you and your team as a community partner.”

This response reflects the very heart of Bridgeway’s mission. Meeting people where they are, especially in their most vulnerable moments, is central to the organization’s work across New Jersey.

Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services continues to expand its crisis response and community-based care initiatives, working in close partnership with law enforcement and municipalities to ensure individuals and families have access to behavioral health support when it matters most.

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