Five Years of Poetic Medicine: Celebrating Healing, Creativity, and the Power of Words

Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services celebrated five years of poetry, self-expression, and recovery with its second annual Poetic Medicine Reading on October 22 at its Sussex County location in Newton, NJ.

The special event brought together participants, staff, and guests to celebrate the transformative power of poetry and recognize the courage and creativity of individuals who have found their voices through the written word.

A highlight of the celebration was the participation of **John Fox,** renowned poet, author of *Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem-Making*, and founder of the Institute for Poetic Medicine, who traveled from California to attend. Fox's work inspired the creation of Bridgeway's Poetic Medicine group five years ago, making his presence especially meaningful.

The group is co-facilitated by **Delia Cortes-Mead, Bridgeway Wellness Specialist, and Jim Elsaesser** of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Intervention Services (DASI), a Sussex County nonprofit organization. Together, they have created a supportive environment where participants use poetry to explore personal experiences, express emotions, build connections, and find meaning along their recovery journeys.

To commemorate the milestone, participants' original poems were compiled into a special keepsake book, produced with support from DASI and shared with attendees. The collection celebrates the unique perspectives, creativity, and accomplishments of the individuals who have participated in the program.

More than a poetry reading, the celebration reflected Bridgeway's commitment to whole-person wellness and recovery, recognizing that healing can take many forms and that every voice deserves to be heard.

Congratulations to the Poetic Medicine participants and everyone who helped make this five-year milestone possible!