

# February 2019 Co-Response Newsletter

CR-TTAC Newsletter

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## Note from the Director

It's hard to believe that it's been over a decade since we launched the Marlborough Jail Diversion Program! The program has been a great success and is in capable hands with Chief Giorgi and Sheena Mahoney LICSW at the helm. Their individual accounts of the program's operations are detailed below. Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Sarah Abbott Ph.D.  
Jail Diversion Program Director

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**Marlborough Police and Advocates celebrate 10 years of collaboration with the Marlborough Jail Diversion Program.**



Chief David Giorgi seen here speaking after being sworn in as Chief of Police on March 31, 2017.

Chief Giorgi has followed in former Chief Leonard's footsteps and embraced the Advocates Co-Response Jail Diversion Program at the Marlborough Police Department.

In 2015, WMCT-TV's Brittany Murphy sat down with program founder, Chief Mark Leonard and clinician Jessica Crawford to discuss the many benefits of the program. Click on link below to view.

**[WMCT-TV's YouTube clip on Marlborough Jail Diversion Program](#)**

The Marlborough Jail Diversion Program (JDP) was launched in 2008 and pairs specially trained crisis clinicians from Advocates, with police officers at the Marlborough Police Department (MPD). We interviewed Chief David Giorgi about his perceptions of the program and the impact it has had thus far.

Since becoming Chief in 2017, Chief Giorgi remarked on how much the JDP has grown and how successful each clinician has been in assimilating themselves into the daily operations of the department." One of the more difficult parts of being a co-responding clinician is building professional relationships with officers and becoming truly embedded within the department. Chief Giorgi credits the, "solid basis

upon which the program was established” for its success.

For 9 years, MPD has received funding through the Department of Mental Health for a full-time clinician. In 2018, Advocates introduced a second clinician, increasing coverage to a combined 80 hours weekly. Chief Giorgi stated, "the addition of a second clinician to the MPD program has had a tremendous impact on our department's ability to effectively address the needs of the individuals who require our assistance."

Chief Giorgi reported that each day appears to be different for the clinician. He noted that some days the clinician is out co-responding alongside the officers for the day, while at other times they are seen making phone calls in their office at the station to, “find the appropriate resources to help someone who needs it.” Chief Giorgi went on to say, “their [the JDP clinician] steady presence and willingness to help or offer their insight in a variety of different situations is greatly valued by the patrol officers."

When the program launched in 2008, Chief Giorgi was a patrol supervisor on the evening shift. We asked him what changes he has noticed in the program over the years. Chief Giorgi remarked that for the first several months, there was, “resistance and skepticism” about having another person riding with them for hours at a time. Most officers dislike the prospect of even having a fellow officer ride with them for any length of time. Chief Giorgi went on to say, “once officers saw for themselves the value of having a clinician available to respond to calls, they welcomed the clinician's presence at calls and on shift... and now they don't want to be without them!"

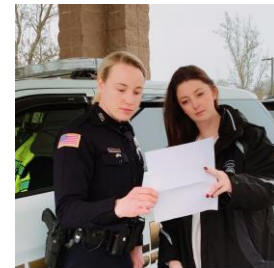
A successful co-response program depends on finding the right clinician for the department. Having done the work themselves, Dr. Sarah Abbott and her team understand how important the “fit” is for each clinician and each department. Appreciating police culture can be a difficult concept to fully understand and embrace. Chief Giorgi conveyed this by saying, “It takes time to develop the understanding and trust which is needed between officers and clinicians, but with time and the right personalities, the bond can be developed and endure."

When asked what qualities he felt were important for the right clinician to possess, the Chief stated, “...an open mind and thick skin.” Additionally, "confidence and assertiveness” as officers may look to the clinicians for

some insight on how to divert individuals with mental health issues away from the criminal justice system. Chief Giorgi thanked Dr. Abbott and Advocates for, “having the foresight to start the program 10 years ago” and looks forward to, “another 10 years of successful partnership!”

**Marlborough's JDP Clinician Sheena Mahoney, LICSW describes her work.**

Pictured here, Sheena Mahoney, LICSW has worked as the Marlborough Jail Diversion Co-Response Clinician for over 2 years and supervises two other regional programs. We were able to speak to Sheena about her role and about how she feels the JDP is able to help the community.



When asked what she felt was the best part of her role, Sheena stated, “being able to experience things that most of the public or even most people in my profession don’t get to.” Sheena went on to say, “we have an opportunity to start helping from the moment a crisis arises. We get to provide comfort, reassurance, and help to individuals as well as families who are sometimes forced to make difficult choices regarding the health and safety of their loved ones.”

While the role of co-responding clinician can be extremely rewarding, it is also challenging work, so we asked Sheena how she felt about that.

*One of the biggest challenges goes hand in hand with the best part of the role. We see things that are difficult every day; people don’t call the police when things are going well. Regularly people are upset, angry or confused when we arrive and they have a lot of questions that don’t always have immediate answers. In this particular role, I’m able to provide some information regarding the process of the assessment and what might happen next. In the best case scenarios, I get to follow up or provide continued support after that initial interaction. Unfortunately there are also times when people are angry and don’t want to use our services again.*

Sheena commented on the impact of the JDP in the community. She

spoke about how well received she has been and how the program has grown over time. Sheena added, "I have regular contact with different organizations including the schools, board of health, the senior center, outpatient clinics and other organizations that serve the people that I come in contact with. I think that the more we are able to work collaboratively, the better we are able to serve those in need and in turn, the more the program will be well received and utilized."

Thanks to Chief Giorgi and Sheena Mahoney for sharing their insights with us this month.

**2017 Press Coverage of the Marlborough JDP Program**

## **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Public Safety Trainings**



We are currently holding the following monthly trainings:

Location: Hopkinton Police Department

- March 13, 2019 from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- April 10, 2019 from 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

To learn more about the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Trainings, please visit: [www.jaildiversion.org](http://www.jaildiversion.org) or email Katelyn Dehey

[Request More Information](#)

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## Jail Diversion Statistics Year to Date Since Program Inception in 2003

# total JDP Interventions

21,457

# ARs Diversion

2,749

~~\$6,995,300~~ Estimated Cost Savings

**\$16,442,820 Estimated Total Cost Savings**



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