

# NFSA New Jersey Chapter Sprinklers At-Risk Youth Home

**T**he fire sprinkler industry in New Jersey not only promotes the installation of fire sprinklers, but they donate their time to help local non-profits make it happen. For example, the NFSA New Jersey Chapter, through the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NJFSAB), member companies and Sprinkler Fitters Local 696 recently completed donating their time, services and materials to helping protect at-risk youth and young adults in East Orange, New Jersey at an organization named Sierra House.

Sierra House is a non-profit organization that provides shelter, counseling, job skills and basic transitional services to homeless and at-risk young women between the ages of 18 and 21 in order to help them attain a life of self-sufficiency. They recently procured a large house in East Orange, New Jersey with the vision of creating a new residence location, providing beds and services to nearly 40 women in need of transitional services. The property for many months underwent heavy construction in order to transform it from a three-story house into a residential facility that would meet the needs of Sierra House and its residents. For many months, the renovation project was proceeding successfully with grants and labor until it hit a snag: a building code requirement for automatic fire sprinklers and possibly a kitchen hood system. The project was faced with a need to scale down or possible abandonment because

the code-required protection were not planned and, therefore, not included in the budget.

That's when Sierra House's Executive Director - Keely Freeman - reached out to Kent Mezaros of Quick Response Fire Protection, Inc., then Chairperson of the NFSA New Jersey Chapter. Mezaros then engaged the Chapter and the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board, who sprang into immediate action. Vinny Fichera, NJFSAB Executive Director, was dispatched to meet with Ms. Freeman to review the project and to determine what materials and labor would be required. In addition to the fire sprinkler and kitchen hood systems, Fichera also provided some project management consultation on his own.

The project would require a 13R residential fire sprinkler system. Once the material list and labor requirements were determined, the chapter recruited local businesses and contractors for assistance, all of which were more than ready to help. Those that sent material donations and volunteer labor for the project included:

- Ames/Watts
- Atlantic American Fire Equipment Company

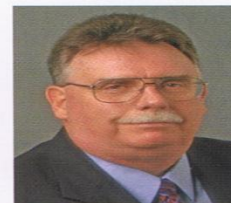


Keely Freeman

- Ferguson Fire & Fabrication
- F&G Mechanical Corporation, Meadowlands Fire Protection
- Reliable Automatic Fire Sprinkler Company
- Quick Response Fire Protection, Inc.
- Simplex/Grinnell LP
- Sprinkler Fitters Local 696

The project was completed in record time, and Sierra House's new location is now open to serve. Ms. Freeman quickly expressed her appreciation on behalf of Sierra House for the automatic fire sprinkler and kitchen hood systems. The NFSA New Jersey Chapter, New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board and all the other participating businesses wish to express their appreciation for the work Sierra House has planned to do to help young women.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 70



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