BAMSI Honored with Excellence in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Award

BAMSI, a Brockton based, non-profit human services organization, is being recognized for its outstanding efforts around diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. With over 1,500 employees, BAMSI provides a comprehensive network of support services to adults and children with developmental, intellectual, psychological, and physical disabilities throughout Massachusetts.

BAMSI felt compelled to take a stand in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. A racially diverse committee of employees from every level of the organization came together to draft a declaration acknowledging Black Lives Matter, the impact of institutionalized racism on its workforce and the communities it serves, and BAMSI’s past complicity in an intrinsically unjust system. BAMSI pledged to celebrate diversity and commit to meaningful and sustained change.

Since issuing its declaration, BAMSI has been busy making good on its promise. As Scheduling and Performance Coordinator Gwen Broadway stated, “our words were strong, but our actions needed to be stronger.” The organization has since held agency wide listening sessions where employees were supported in sharing their stories about how race and racism have impacted their lives, 2 panel discussions with senior leadership, and multiple “Table Talks”, advertised as “safe spaces” for people of color within BAMSI to engage on issues impacting their lives.

On a more practical level, policies, practices, and procedures have been reevaluated across the agency. A sub-committee of the Racial and Social Justice Workgroup has been reviewing agency policies through an equity lens. Diversity training has been added to the list of requirements for all BAMSI leaders and many staff members voluntarily engaged in a virtual “Anti-Racism Challenge” which included daily readings, videos, and discussion topics. CEO Peter Evers stated “Our efforts to infuse this message and work into our workforce and community have led to many meaningful conversations, events and projects.”

The Association of Behavioral Health (ABH) will recognize BAMSI’s efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice as part of ABH’s annual Salute to Excellence at a virtual ceremony on Friday, October 15.
ABH is a statewide association representing over eighty community-based mental health and addiction treatment provider organizations. Its membership serves approximately 81,000 Massachusetts residents daily, 1.5 million residents annually, and employs over 46,500 people. As the leading advocacy organization in Massachusetts’ mental health and addiction services arena, ABH fights for high-quality, community-based care for families and individuals with mental illness, addiction and substance-use disorders. It also provides leadership and statewide coordination on important public policy, financing, preferred clinical models and quality assurance issues.

For more information on BAMSIs’s efforts to be a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just organization or its Racial and Social Justice Workgroup please contact VP of Learning and Development, Sonia D’Alarcao at soniadalarcao@bamsi.org

View the BAMSIs acceptance speech: https://vimeo.com/619159028