

**DECEMBER 4-5, 2025**

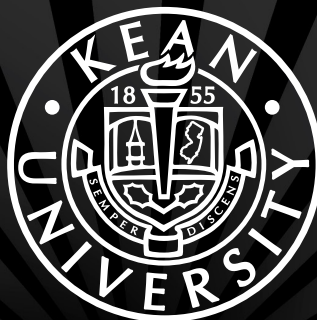
***22<sup>nd</sup> Annual***

**Anthony R. Braig Conference  
on Youth Firesetting**

For Fire Service, Mental Health, Law Enforcement,  
Social Services, and Educational Professionals

**Middlesex County Fire Academy  
Sayreville, New Jersey**

Presented by:



**[www.keanfiresafety.com](http://www.keanfiresafety.com)**

# 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual **Anthony R. Braig Conference on Youth Firesetting**

**THURSDAY  
DECEMBER**

**4**

**8:30 AM – 9:30 AM**

**Conference Registration & Breakfast**

**9:30 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Welcome Address – Amphitheater**

**Richard J. Mikutsky, Director  
New Jersey Division of Fire Safety**

**Keynote Address**

**Stephen M. Coover  
Deputy Chief – Community Risk Reduction  
Monroe Fire Protection District  
Bloomington, Indiana**

**12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**

**Lunch**

**1:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

**Afternoon Classes in Session**

**FRIDAY  
DECEMBER**

**5**

**8:30 AM – 9:30 AM**

**Breakfast**

**9:30 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Plenary Session – Amphitheater**

**Laura Billon  
“Life’s a Journey, Let Them Enjoy the Ride!”**

**12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**

**Lunch**

**1:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

**Afternoon Classes in Session**

# Registration Information

To register for the Conference, please email [Charles.Lavin@dca.nj.gov](mailto:Charles.Lavin@dca.nj.gov) with the following information:

- NAME
- ORGANIZATION
- EMAIL ADDRESS
- PHONE NUMBER
- NJDFS ID NUMBER (*if applicable*)
- CLASS CHOICE FOR THURSDAY PM (12/4)

“iGuardian Program – Online Education, Prevention, Intervention”

-OR-

“The Mirror and The Flame”

- \*CLASS CHOICE FOR FRIDAY PM (12/5)

“Building the Future: Elevating Youth Firesetting Prevention & Intervention Through Innovation”

-OR-

“Reporting and Tracking Juvenile Fire Incidents”

-OR-

“Using Technology in Fire Safety Programs”

Once ALL of the above information is received, you will be provided with a private link and instructions to submit payment. Once payment is received, your seat at the conference will be confirmed.

The cost is \$110 per person. This includes all courses, as well as breakfast and lunch for both days. 1.0 CEUs will be awarded upon completion of all conference sessions.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS NOVEMBER 21, 2025**

**Thursday, December 4 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM**

*PROGRAM TIMES AND DESCRIPTIONS*

**1. "DHS: Homeland Security Investigation – iGuardian Program - Online Education, Prevention, Intervention"**

**Instructors: Karen Zambrano, Nicole Disch, Chris Moriarty**

Under the United States Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) is the premier federal law enforcement agency in combating child exploitation and crimes against children in the digital world. Project iGuardian is designed to inform parents, educators, law enforcement and other trusted adults about the risks that children face in the online environment, to implement preventative strategies and how to report suspected abuse.

This engaging presentation will cover tactics used by online predators, the growing crime of sextortion, the information devices give away, and the newest apps, online games and social networks children are using. There will also be example scenarios based on HSI Newark's local investigations to help you better understand how children are victimized online. To learn more visit <https://www.dhs.gov/know2protect>

**2. "The Mirror and The Flame"**

**Instructor: Elias Ramos**

The Mirror and the Flame is a course that teaches how to use self-reflection and personal journeys to help and heal. My journey from confronting personal traumas and insecurities to using them as sources of healing and teaching has been like battling a fire within. As a first responder and firefighter, I strive to share these insights with anyone willing to listen, transforming my experiences into a beacon of empowerment and understanding.

This course delves into self-awareness and mindset, empowering individuals to become better youth fire setter investigators, mentors, and even parents. By exploring personal histories and how we've dealt with challenges, participants gain insights into their behavioral patterns and emotional responses. This journey of introspection not only fosters personal growth but also enhances the ability to understand and support youth at risk of fire-setting behaviors. Through self-reflection and understanding past experiences, participants discover strategies to effectively guide and connect with troubled youth. Helping the fire forge them into purpose driven Individuals.

**Friday, December 5 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM**

*PROGRAM TIMES AND DESCRIPTIONS*

**PLENARY SESSION IN AMPHITHEATER**

**“Life’s a Journey, Let Them Enjoy the Ride!”**

**Instructor: Laura Billon**

Climb on in and put on your seat-belt for an introspective, scenic, and perhaps a little chaotic drive around the influences affecting our youth today; how risky and dangerous “forks in the road” have become the norm. Are we as a society too late to put the brakes on changing behaviors and teaching healthy and basic fundamentals learned from the early ages of crawling and walking, before e-bikes, scooters, and driving? Explore some of the contributing factors of these negative and detrimental ideas that percolate beneath the hoods, get behind the wheel, and help steer the minds of our youth to better routes of healthier decision-making. Join this e-ticket ride to get an insider’s look at how we can turn this car around and get this next generation back on the roads to success.

**Friday, December 5 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM**

*PROGRAM TIMES AND DESCRIPTIONS*

**3. “Building the Future: Elevating Youth Firesetting Prevention & Intervention Through Innovation”**

**Instructor: Karla Klas**

Youth firesetting intervention and prevention (YFPI) initiatives are at a pivotal moment. This session will explore generating innovative, actionable ideas that go beyond current practices to elevate the field into the future. The discussion will cover professionalizing the work through comprehensive standardization and national certification, as well as establishing a focused research agenda. Learn how to publish community risk reduction efforts in peer-reviewed literature. The session will also explore using public health approaches to increase impact and cut through the noise of modern social media. This forum will provide tips and brainstorm a strategic path forward. Whether you are brand new or a seasoned expert in YFPI, join a powerful conversation that will help shape the future of the field.



**Friday, December 5 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM**

*PROGRAM TIMES AND DESCRIPTIONS*

**4. “Reporting and Tracking Youth Fire Incidents”**

**Instructors: Vincent Campagna & Scott Royle**

This course explores the critical role of data tracking and analysis in understanding, preventing, and effectively intervening in youth firesetting behavior. Participants will learn how comprehensive data collection—ranging from incident reports to psychological assessments—can inform evidence-based strategies for risk assessment, case management, and policy development. Through real-world case studies, students will examine trends in youth fire setting, identify key risk factors, and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention programs.

**5. “Using Technology in Fire Safety Programs”**

**Instructor: Michael McLeieer**

Fire departments are uniquely positioned to know their communities better than most other organizations. However, many departments face a number of challenges getting the job done. Knowing how to develop successful fire safety programs using modern technology helps meet the needs, risks and hazards of the target audiences.

This presentation will introduce participants to innovative approaches to engage youth in fire safety education. By leveraging technology and hands-on training, these programs help to reduce risk and save lives.

## Conference Hotel Information

### **COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT EDISON/WOODBRIDGE**

3105 Woodbridge Avenue

Edison, NJ 08837



Overnight accommodations will be available at the Courtyard by Marriott Edison/Woodbridge at a special rate of \$139/night. Rooms should be reserved no later than November 11, 2025.

All reservations made after this date will be based on availability and at the standard room rate.

For your convenience, a link has been set up specifically to book rooms for the Conference.

That can be found at: <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1754321154507&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

**For assistance, please contact:**

**Lacqua Cammareri, Director of Sales**

**Phone: (732) 646 4961**

**Email: [lacqua.cammareri@marriott.com](mailto:lacqua.cammareri@marriott.com)**

### **LAURA BILLON**

Laura Billon has been in public safety and operations for over two decades. She is a Certified Fire Investigator, possesses a Law Degree in Criminal Justice specializing in Youth Justice and Child Law, a Master's Degree in Forensic Science, and a Bachelor's Degree in Fire Protection. As a Firesetting Profiler, her focus is on the motivations of those individuals of all ages who set fires, developing intervention and diversionary programs for behavioral changes when those activities involve youths. She is an instructor for the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy, is POST certified as an instructor of arson laws and motivations to the San Diego County Sheriffs Department, an adjunct professor in the School of Public Safety at SDCCD, and the Director of Safety Operations for the State of CA (UCLA). Laura trains departments in various fire investigation, safety, CRR, ICS, and law enforcement topics around the world. Hand selected to be part of the curriculum writing team for the Fire and Arson Investigation and Fire Prevention Management curricula at the NFA, she's developed many youth firesetting intervention, CRR, and safety programs for municipalities and counties throughout the country, publishing textbook chapters and numerous articles regarding fire investigation and prevention, profiled hundreds of firesetters, investigates simple and complex fire scenes, and regularly testifies as an expert on said cases. She is a frequent contributor to NPR radio in Los Angeles where she speaks about arsonists, firesetters, and the motivations behind their dangerous and risky behaviors. She resides in Southern California.

### **VINCENT CAMPAGNA**

Vincent Campagna, Program Specialist 2 Regulatory Programs, assigned to the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety's, Office Of Fire Department Preparedness (OFDP), Fire Incident Reporting Unit, is also a Certified Fire Inspector, Fire Official, and Fire Investigator.

### **STEPHEN COOVER**

Stephen Coover has been a Bloomington resident since 1988. He is a Deputy Chief in Charge of Community Risk Reduction for the Monroe Fire Protection District. He retired from the Bloomington Fire Department after 25 years of service. Stephen is a Plans Manager for Indiana Task Force 1 FEMA USAR Team. He is a graduate of Indiana University and of the Executive Fire Officer Program from the National Fire Academy.



Stephen is also an Instructor for the United State Fire Administration–National Fire Academy, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security as a Community Risk Reduction Subject Matter Expert, and an Adjunct Instructor for Ivy Tech Community College. He has been a speaker at the International Fire Department Instructors Conference, the IPDR4 Conference in Tel Aviv Israel, and a special lecturer in Tokyo Japan regarding disaster planning. He received focused specialized training from the Homefront Command National Rescue Unit since May of 2014.

Stephen joined the Board of Mental Health America of Monroe County in 2022 to complement his role as the Deputy Chief of Community Risk Reduction, where all facets of community wellness are addressed. This is not just fire prevention. Community Risk Reduction focuses on resiliency, which is achieved through preparing, educating, and meeting all the physical and mental health needs prior to the occurrence of an emergency event.

### **KARLA KLAS**

Karla Klas, BSN, RN, CCRP is a Community Risk Reduction Outreach Educator for the State of Michigan Bureau of Fire Services – MI Prevention. Prior to that, she managed the University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center's nationally acclaimed community and family-centered injury prevention programs. Her 33-year distinguished career in burn/trauma critical care nursing, research, professional development training, mentoring, program management, public education, curriculum development, CRR, and injury/violence prevention has produced numerous journal publications, textbook chapters and grant awards. She has attained multiple specialty certifications and leadership appointments to committees devoted to injury control. She is a Michigan ACEs Community Champion trainer and Professional Instructor for the National Fire Academy in the Youth Firesetting Prevention and Intervention Courses. A lifetime achievement award-winning educator, speaker, and author, Karla also mentors at-risk youth, volunteers in survivor support programs, and enjoys all kinds of outdoor adventures with her family. Learn more at: <https://traumaburn.org/karla-s-klas-bsn-rn-ccrp>

**LT. MICHAEL MCLEIEER**

Michael McLeieer is an award-winning public fire & life safety educator who has been in the fire service for over 25 years, and has served on fire departments in both Michigan and Massachusetts. He also served as the training and scheduling training coordinator for the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy and was in charge of the statewide youth fire intervention program. He is a National Fire Academy contract instructor and also serves as a past president of the Massachusetts Institute of Fire Department Instructors, the Michigan State Firemen's Association, public information officer for the Michigan Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, founder of the nonprofit fire safety organization E.S.C.A.P.E. Inc (Education Showing Children and Adults Procedures for Evacuations), and launched the statewide risk reduction public education and alarm installation campaign Keep Michigan S.A.F.E.™ (Smoke Alarms For Everyone) with his radio and television media partners in West Michigan.

**CHRIS MORIARTY / NICOLE DISCH**

Chris and Nicole are Special Agents with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Newark field office, where they are both assigned to HSI Newark's Child Exploitation Unit, charged with initiating and leading complex criminal investigations of sexually exploitative crimes against children that have led to successful prosecutions of offenders and justice for minor victims across the globe. Together, Chris and Nicole have over 25+ years of experience in a variety of roles with the Department of Homeland Security.

**ELIAS RAMOS**

Elias Ramos is a mentor, community leader, and nonprofit partner dedicated to empowering people through creativity, faith, and service. He serves as a professional firefighter with the Jersey City Fire Department and unites his commitment to public service with his passion for the arts to inspire students and community members of all ages to grow, heal, and connect through creative expression. Elias facilitates art therapy in schools and community centers across Jersey City, Hoboken, East Newark, Kearny, Philadelphia, and other cities throughout New Jersey, using graphic arts and film to engage learners from early childhood through adulthood.

Guided by faith, Elias brings a spirit of compassion, resilience, and purpose to both his public service and his creative work. As both an artist and first responder, he offers a distinctive perspective on community outreach, particularly in the area of mental health awareness. Through peer support with fellow first responders, and by integrating visual storytelling, creativity, mindfulness, and faith-based principles into his programs, he empowers young people to build self-awareness, resilience, and responsibility.

His work highlights art, faith, and transparency as powerful tools for healing, transformation, and connection—bridging his dual callings of service and creative expression.

### **SCOTT ROYLE**

Scott Royle is a Program Specialist 2, Regulatory Programs with New Jersey Division of Fire Safety. He is a NJDFS certified Firefighter, Fire Instructor and Fire Investigator. Scott has served in the fire service in New Jersey as both career and volunteer since 2002. He is currently assigned to OFDP (Office of Fire Department Preparedness), Fire Incident Reporting Unit.

### **KAREN ZAMBRANO, MSW**

Karen is currently assigned to HSI Newark as a Forensic Interview Specialist where she conducts forensic interviews of victims across New Jersey and beyond in support of federal child exploitation investigations. Prior to HSI Newark, Karen has over a decade of experience in the field, with six and half of those years at the Essex County Prosecutor's Office where she conducted over 900 forensic video interviews of children, and was revered in her role within the Special Victims Unit. Karen's enhanced and skillset has been supported by years of training and education. Karen holds a masters of social work from Rutgers University ; and is an adjunct professor at Montclair State University.

## **MIDDLESEX COUNTY FIRE ACADEMY**

1001 Fire Academy Drive, Sayreville, NJ 08872  
732-727-0008

**Via Route 9 / Route 35 Northbound:** Come up through South Amboy into Sayreville. Do not go over the bridge. Take the exit on to the Route 9/Route 35 circle. The sign for the exit reads North 35. The ramp is just after a large sign marked Colosseum (sic). At the bottom of the ramp merge right into the circle, then move quickly to the left lane to go around the circle. Bear left going around the circle, passing the Amboy Cinemas. After going under Route 9, merge to the right and take the first right turn-off, on to Chevalier Drive, just past the Sayreville Motor Lodge (Note: Chevalier Drive street sign may be missing, look for signs for Garden State Parkway "South"). After 1/4 mile (just past the Parkway entrance) turn left on to Main Street (large church at corner). After 3/4 mile take the exit for Kennedy Drive. At the bottom of the ramp turn right into the Academy.

**Traveling from Perth Amboy on Route 35 Southbound:** Take Route 35 south, crossing the Victory Bridge, and passing the back of Amboy Cinemas. Follow the Route 9/Route 35 circle under Route 9. After going under Route 9, merge to the right and take the first right turn-off, on to Chevalier Drive, just past the Sayreville Motor Lodge (Note: Chevalier Drive street sign may be missing, look for signs for Garden State Parkway "South"). After 1/4 mile (just past the Parkway entrance) turn left on to Main Street (large church at corner). After 3/4 mile take the exit for Kennedy Drive. At the bottom of the ramp turn right into the Academy.

**Via East Brunswick / South River via Route 535:** Route 535 is Cranbury Road in East Brunswick. It becomes Main Street in South River. Travel North on Route 535 through South River and over the Veterans' Memorial Bridge, stay in left lane. At the light after the bridge go straight on to Washington Road. At the next light, (this will be the second traffic light after crossing the bridge) turn left on to Main Street. Proceed to the fourth traffic light (approx. 5 miles) and make a left into the Fire Academy.

**Via the Garden State Parkway Northbound:** Take Exit 125 (just after the Raritan tolls and before the bridge). At the bottom of the ramp turn left on to Chevalier Drive, then make the first left on to Main Street (large church at corner). After 3/4 mile take the exit for Kennedy Drive. At the bottom of the ramp turn right into the Academy.

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**Via the Garden State Parkway Southbound:** Take Exit 124 (just after the Raritan tolls). At the bottom of the ramp turn right on to Main Street and after a few hundred feet make the first right on to Kennedy Drive. Stay on Kennedy Drive for 3/4 of a mile, through the traffic light, and straight into the Fire Academy.

**Via Route 9 Southbound:** Take Route 9 south from Woodbridge over the Raritan River. Take the first exit (marked South Amboy Business Center). At the bottom of the ramp take the first right turn on to Chevalier Drive just past the Sayreville Motor Lodge (Note: Chevalier Drive street sign may be missing, look for signs for Garden State Parkway "South"). After 1/4 mile (just past the Parkway entrance) turn left on to Main Street (large church at corner). After 3/4 mile take the exit for Kennedy Drive. At the bottom of the ramp turn right into the Academy.

**From the New Jersey Turnpike North or South:** Take Turnpike Exit 11 for the Garden State Parkway (GSP). After the tolls, bear left and on to the Garden State Parkway (GSP) traveling south. From the GSP take Exit 124 (just after the Raritan tolls). At the bottom of the ramp turn right on to Main Street and after a few hundred feet make the first right on to Kennedy Drive. Stay on Kennedy Drive for 3/4 of a mile, through the traffic light, and straight into the Fire Academy.



# **MISSION STATEMENT**

**Our mission is to bring together State and County resources in the common goal of addressing the issue of youth firesetting throughout the state. We also aim to provide existing county youth fire prevention programs the support necessary to continue their vital mission and make every effort to aid in the development of programs in the counties where none exist.**



**KEAN**