



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

January 18, 2008

[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA New York City Transit Heroes Save Man From Suicide Attempt

Six MTA New York City Transit workers are being hailed as heroes, credited with saving the life of a distraught Queens man who was threatening to leap from the subway tracks on the Brooklyn side of the Williamsburg Bridge early this afternoon.

The workers, three track employees and the train crew of a Manhattan-bound J train, came across the man as he was walking along the J line subway tracks on the Brooklyn side of the bridge shortly after 12:40 p.m. The track crew, made up of Track Inspector Thomas Bodai, a nine-year veteran, and Flagger Sal Messina, 14 years on the job and Bruce Cierniewski, also with 14 years, were walking from Essex Street, Manhattan to the Marcy Avenue Station in Brooklyn while a Manhattan-bound J train approached from the opposite direction. At the controls of the train were Train Operator Gordon Jackman and Conductor Marc Kinard and student train operator Aikido Sticatto, who was actually operating the train, went to the roadbed to assist the trackworkers.

"From my perspective, we didn't know who this guy was and when we left the train it was because we were concerned for the safety of the customers and the train, said Sticatto. "When he went over the side I realized he intended to try to kill himself."

Bodai explained, "The gentleman was walking towards us and when he was about 20 feet away he went over the side said he had lost his wife and did not want to live anymore. He was crying and we could see that he was extremely distraught," said Bodai. "I started talking with him and asked him why he wanted to do this. I told him that I wouldn't leave him."

The two men spoke for several minutes on a very personal level and Bodai was able to put him at ease. Bodai said that he was talking to the man for 15 minutes when he offered him a bottle of water. The man didn't want Bodai to get too close while he accepted a cigarette from him. Several minutes later, Bodai had gained the man's confidence to the point that he reached up to shake his hand and that's when the three track workers and the train conductor managed to grab him and pull him up.

"I strongly believe that the MTA's 68,000 workers perform heroic deeds every single day of the year making sure 9 million people get to and from work every day," said Elliot G. Sander, MTA Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer. "Today six NYC Transit employees went above and beyond the call of duty. By showing compassion, patience and bravery, they saved the life of a fellow New Yorker."

Steve Feil, Senior Vice President of Subways, said: "We are all extremely proud of the life-saving effort put forth by these workers today, but their actions are typical of NYC Transit employees."

The incident began at approximately 12:40 p.m. and forced the suspension of both J and M service between the Delancey Street-Essex Street Station and the Marcy Avenue Station. Normal service resumed across the span at 1:25 p.m.



Hero Transit Workers (left to right) Track Worker Sal Messina, Track Inspector Thomas Bodai, Train Operator Gordon Jackman, Train Operator Aikido Sticatto, Track Worker Bruce Cierniewski and Conductor Marc Kinard.