



COMMON GROUND

APRIL 2017 ISSUE

Educating for
over 30 years

JIM DIZIO

**SCSD TRAINING IN
AUSTISM AWARENESS**

**THE EDUCATION DIVISION:
AN INSIDE LOOK**

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

Sheriff's Statement



Here at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, we are dedicated to providing the kinds of programming and educational opportunities to the people in our care and custody that can help them to return back into society with the skills and abilities to achieve successful, positive and productive lives.

To this end, we offer a wide array of educational, vocational and behavioral programs to the men and women incarcerated within our facilities, including academic classes like Literacy I and II, HiSET (formerly known as the GED) study and testing, Special Education and Title I for those who need it, Adult Secondary Education, writing, art and even some college-level courses, to name but a few. We also offer programming that teaches life skills and behavior modification, such as: Parenting Class; Financial Literacy; Freedom From Violence; and Anger Management, among others.

In this issue of the Common Ground newsletter, we focus on our Education Division and profile our Director of Education Jim Dizio. We also "Light It Up Blue" in support of World Autism Awareness Day and National Autism Awareness Month, and chronicle my visit to alma maters Boston College and the University of Massachusetts Boston to speak with students about the importance of education and civic responsibility.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

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Sheriff's Department "Lights It Up Blue," Expands Training



Suffolk County Sheriff's Department officers and civilian staff members recently gathered at the House of Correction and Suffolk County Jail to take part in the Department's annual recognition of the beginning of Autism Awareness Month.

As participants took their places for the photo and video shoot that would later run across the Department's social media platforms for the national "Light It Up Blue" event on April 2nd, which is dedicated to raising awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), they did so armed with a deeper understanding of and compassion for the issue, thanks to a special training provided by the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy.

Following an introduction to the De-

partment by Lieutenant Abiezer Ayuso, who first observed lead trainer and Boston Police Officer Michelle Maffeo in action during a Choice Program presentation, members of ARC of South Norfolk/Autism and Law Enforcement Education Coalition (ALEC) have been visiting the Department for the past two years, providing autism awareness training to captains and lieutenants. This year, all custody and non-custody staff will be given the training.

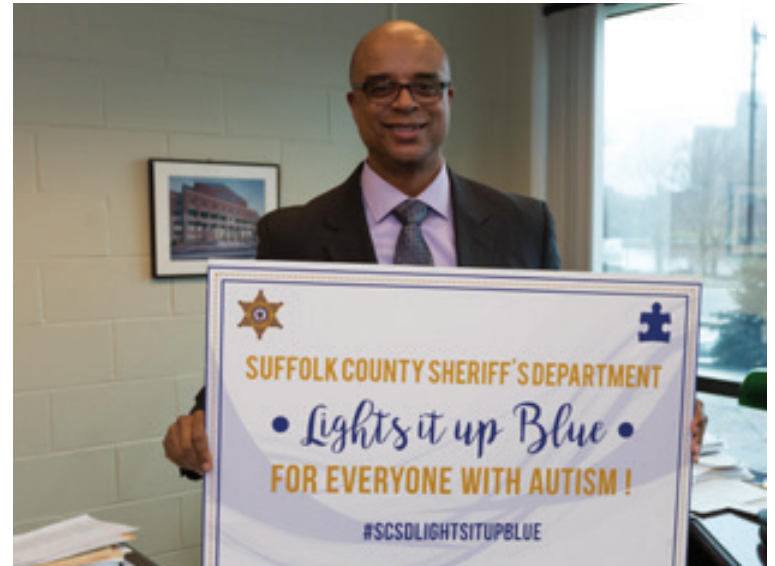
"Any time that we can provide education that allows for a positive interaction with someone with autism or any other disorder, it is well worth the time invested in training," said Assistant Deputy Superintendent and Supervisor of Training Jose Mojica.

Having welcomed the arrival and expansion of the autism awareness curriculum as an important addition to the training academy roster, Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins also noted that it is just one

on a lengthy list of important topics about which SCSD members are trained, and spoke about the role of training as a whole with respect to the success of the Department.

"Trainings like these – whether their focus is autism awareness, gender-specific programming, suicide prevention or a multitude of others that we offer – are such a critical part of what helps to make the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department one of the best in the country," said Sheriff Tompkins. "We are constantly adding new elements and upgrading existing materials to ensure that our staff is well-prepared to deliver the most effective programming and services to those in our care and custody."

To learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorder and the "Light It Up Blue" movement, visit: www.autismspeaks.org/liub.





Jim Dizio

Employee Profile

Jim Dizio, Director of Education at the Suffolk County House of Correction, began his service with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department 25 years ago.

Joining the Department as a High School Equivalency teacher in 1991, Dizio arrived during the beginning of the development of the Department's modern Education Division.

"For the first year or two, I was with the Department as it was transitioning from the Deer Island House of Correction and moving into the current Suffolk County House of Correction, which hadn't been fully completed yet."

Before coming into the Sheriff's Department, Jim Dizio held a number of teaching positions, having spent time teaching at elementary and high schools along with his work at a learning center.

"I've been involved in education for 30 years or so all together, and when I first came, my prior experience in

education worked well for me," said Dizio. "I had been teaching high school and the average education of the inmates and detainees here was at that same level, and this allowed me, once I came in, to see what the gaps in education were so that we could begin filling them in."

With his work at the House of Correction, Dizio rose through the ranks, serving as an Advisor and then Supervisor of Education before assuming his current role as the Education Director.

"I always like to say that I grew into my current position and that this job found me," said Dizio, referring to his obvious affection for teaching. In his role as Director, he is responsible for maintaining the Department's commitment to adult basic education and overseeing nearly 20 educational courses.

Another aspect of the work that Dizio appreciates is being able to collaborate with other Divisions within the House of Correction and beyond, helping to address voca-

tional education programming with supporting educational courses.

"We are collaborating and integrating mathematics so that the math that inmates and detainees are learning in our Education Division is transferable to the math skills that are necessary if, for example, a student is studying carpentry over in our Vocational Education Division," Dizio said. "There is a focus here on preparing individuals to leave us with positive skills, connecting them with more services and educational opportunities outside. I really enjoy my work here, because it takes me into so many different areas within the facility and beyond, helping to foster our mission of development, both for the incarcerated population and the people who work for the Department."



Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Education Division

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recognizes the importance of education in helping to reduce recidivism and assisting offenders in gaining the skills necessary to lead productive and successful lives upon release. The Education Division is a critical component of the Department to this end, delivering a wide variety of programs to a diverse population of both male and female offenders. Members of the Department's staff work with inmates and detainees to deliver academic programming that includes HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) preparation and administration, and others that aid participants in the development of their math and literacy skills which can help incarcerated men and women to become more employable and transition more easily back into society.

A good portion of the Department's educational services are sited at the Suffolk County House of Correction (HOC) for a population with varying educational, social and rehabilitative needs. Upon individuals' entry into the House of Correction the Department uses a risk-need-responsivity model of correctional programming that examines various factors to help determine the best programming to assist people as they serve out their sentences. There is an assessment



process in place to identify all incoming offenders and enroll them in courses based upon their testing.

"Upon entry, everyone gets a reading and math survey test," said Jim Dizio, Director of the Education Division at the Suffolk County House of Correction. "Any individual here for 60 days or more is required to take this test, especially if they want to participate in education programming." After the test is administered, incarcerated individuals are offered an array of traditional and alternative education programs ranging from Basic Literacy to College Preparation.

Each year, nearly 3,000 inmates are released from the House of Correction and are typically serving sentences of 2 ½ years or less. With this in mind, the Education Division – in conjunction with the other services provided by the Department – works to ensure that all of their students will be released back into society better able to care for themselves and their families.

"We need to prepare them as literate critical thinkers and problem solvers, and individuals who can be sustainably employed," said Dizio. "Our hope as a whole is to make them better citizens."



"Our entire Education Division is broken into 2 sections," he continued. "We have traditional academic programs such as Adult Basic Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages and more. We also have nontraditional academic programs like Parenting and Freedom from Violence. There's also a Financial Literacy class that we offer to help individuals develop a financial plan for when they leave, and we have a Civics Class so that our population can better understand government

and how to participate in it.”

The Education Division is expansive and also includes Adult Secondary Education; Literacy I for beginning readers below the fourth grade level; Literacy II for students who test at the 4th-8th grade level; Post-Secondary Education done in partnership with College Bound Dorchester; Life Writing College Prep; Special Education in Institutional Settings; Creative

Writing; Freedom from Violence; Educational and Career Counseling/Advising; Library Services; Tutoring and a Reading Coach, and more.

Reflecting on the past and the future of the Education Division, Director of Education Dizio stated, “I look forward to continuing the route that we’ve traveled working to provide individuals with help in achieving their high school equivalency diplo-

mas, improving their reading and math skills and truly collaborating with all of the different learning facets of each individual. Education is a transformative process where individuals have an opportunity to acquire new information and skills that can change their lives. It is how we as individuals can find new ways to view the world and develop a wider perspective of the world around us.”



Located within the Suffolk County House of Correction is one of the largest libraries sited in any correctional facility throughout the State of Massachusetts. The library is open to male and female inmates with additional satellite libraries within the women's units, general population, and the recovery and workers' units. The library has more than 20,000 volumes of books for recreational reading; over 50 magazine subscriptions and more. Special programs offered through the library include the film class, book club, and poetry class/poetry slam, among others.

Sheriff Tompkins Speaks to Students of the University of Massachusetts-Boston

Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins visited the UMass Boston campus to speak with the students of the MDK Brand Management, LLC class. Speaking about the path that he traveled from childhood to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department – and points in between – Sheriff Tompkins shared his life experiences and talked to students about the importance of education, having a diversity of knowledge, and developing listening as a skill.



Department Participates in Senior Resource Day



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently participated in a "Senior Resource Day" hosted by Nuestra Comunidad, Madison Park Development Corporation and Central Boston Elder Services. Members of the Department brought along issues of the Common Ground newsletter, Safety Tips for Seniors and information about the Department's Senior ID Program, which is offered free of charge to Suffolk County seniors aged 65 and older. The Senior ID provides participants with a concise and comprehensive identification card that serves as an important aid to medical responders, should an emergency arise and the holder is unable to communicate. For more information about Senior Programming please visit our website at: www.scsdma.org/programs/senior-programs/

Sheriff Tompkins Joins Students at Boston College "4Boston" 25th Anniversary Dinner

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins recently returned to his alma mater Boston College to celebrate the 25th anniversary of 4Boston Volunteers, the largest weekly service organization at the university. Sheriff Tompkins shared some of his defining moments as a Boston College student, and the critical role of civic engagement and community service. He also detailed some of the programs within the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department that support and bolster civic engagement including the Choice Program, among others.





SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT 2017 SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



NOW HIRING

This program will invite twenty participants to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department to learn more about careers in law enforcement. Participants will work 21 hours a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 8am-4pm and will be compensated at a rate of \$11 an hour.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2017
APPLY TODAY: WWW.SCSDMA.ORG

SUMMER ENRICHMENT

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Summer Enrichment Program targets incoming 11th and 12th graders with the opportunity to intern at Suffolk County Jail, the House of Correction, Chelsea Training Facility and Civil Process.

REQUIREMENTS

- * Must be entering either the 11th or 12th grade
- * Must be resident of Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop or Revere
- * Interest in Law Enforcement or Criminal Justice
- * Proper form of Identification (Student ID, Passport, Mass ID or Driver's License)
- * Active Checking or Savings Account
- * Updated Physical Form

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