



# COMMON GROUND

MAY 2019 ISSUE

## MEET THE DEPARTMENT'S NEW JAIL SUPERINTENDENT & H.O.C. CAPTAINS



PARTNER OF THE MONTH  
THE PHOENIX

SCSD HOSTS  
NEW MARKET MEETING

# Sheriff's Statement



**I**n this issue of the Common Ground Newsletter, we proudly announce the promotions of several members of our custody and non-custody staff. As always, we at the Department are engaged in a constant state of evolution and growth of both our programming and services, and those who help us to carry out our mandate to care for the men and women in our custody and

prepare them to return to our communities in better stead, more able to provide for themselves and their families. These new appointments will help us to continue to not only fulfill our mission, but improve on it.

We also feature our meeting with the Newmarket Business Association, which was held to discuss the creation of new employment opportunities for our returning citizens; and we bring you another installment of our new "Partner of the Month" column, this time featuring one of our neighbors in the Newmarket Square area, "The Phoenix." We invite you to read about these and other topics in the pages ahead.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

## COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

SANDY ZAMOR CALIXTE - CHIEF  
PETER VAN DELFT - EDITOR  
DAVID HILL - PHOTOGRAPHER  
VONEL LAMOUR - DESIGNER

## SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PHONE. 617-704-6688

VISIT US ONLINE

[WWW.SCSDMA.ORG](http://WWW.SCSDMA.ORG)

# Index

## SCSD HOSTS NEWMARKET BUSINESS ASSOCIATION MEETING

Read about the Department's meeting with businesses from the Newmarket Square area about employment opportunities for returning citizens.



## NEW PROMOTIONS ANNOUNCED AT SCSD

Meet Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins' newly appointed custody and non-custody staff members at Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.

## PARTNER OF THE MONTH: THE PHOENIX

Learn about Partner of the Month "The Phoenix," a free sober active community for individuals who have suffered from a substance use disorder and are seeking a sober lifestyle.



# Sheriff's Department Hosts Newmarket Business Association In Hopes of Creating New "Employment Pipeline"



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department hosted a luncheon with the Newmarket Business Association and Newmarket Community Partners in the hopes of building an employment pipeline for incarcerated men and women who will eventually be returning back to the community.

Karla Acevedo, Director of Reentry and Workforce Development and Heather McNeil, Assistant Deputy Superintendent (ADS) of Community Works spearheaded the event under the auspices of Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins as part of his ongoing initiative to expand opportunities for the people in Department care and custody.

Before passing the microphone to one of the day's speakers, Director Acevedo left the audience with a heartfelt statement that set the tone and laid the foundation for the luncheon.

"We want our incarcerated men and women to know that they have not been forgotten, that they matter, there is still hope – and there is a community behind them that wants to show support," said Acevedo.

As part of its efforts to decrease recidivism by providing workforce development training, rehabilitation and recovery services to the incarcerated population, the Department continues to partner with community agencies and organizations that believe in this mission. Sue Sullivan, the Executive Director for Newmarket Business Association, posed several thoughtful questions about programming for returning citizens and asked how the community at large can expect the men and women to abstain from criminality if they are not given the proper chance at success.

Superintendent-In-Chief Mike Harris, who served as the keynote speaker for the event, touched upon the fact that 70% of the population is incarcerated as a result of some form of substance abuse disorder or mental illness. He stated that the Sheriff's Department has designed programming and services to rehabilitate these people and return them back into the community in a mental and physical state that is more conducive to sustained success. While men and women are incarcerated, the Department prepares them with the tools that they will need for gainful employment and real-world success – tools such as the Common Ground Institute (CGI), led by Captain Dave Granese; the Community Works Program, led by ADS McNeil and Sergeant Micah Brinson; and the many others that have been created specifically for the planned success of their participants.

The people enrolled in these CGI programs are given the opportunity to learn how to do carpentry, custodial maintenance, painting, landscaping, and culinary arts, among a multitude of others. They are then able to go out into the community and take on tasks such as recovering vacant lots, beautifying roadway intersections, painting street lamps, boarding and securing abandoned homes and shoveling the walkways of senior citizens' housing and schools around Suffolk County. Participants are also taught many soft skills that are transferrable to post-incarceration employment and other educational opportunities.

As many of the event's speakers alluded to, this is where the employment pipeline comes into place. Together, everyone wins when a person can leave the House of Correction or Suffolk County Jail with more tools on his or her tool belt that can lead them to procure housing, sustained sobriety and employment. Simply put, the Department works to lower recidivism in a very holistic, comprehensive manner.

Addressing the potential future employers assembled in the room, Sergeant Micah Brinson of CWP spoke about the men and women working in the program.

"They are willing to work," said Sgt. Brinson. "They just need a chance...an opportunity for a fresh start. They are worth your time, energy and investment."

Currently, the Newmarket Business Association has 235 different businesses, a number of which took part in the meeting, with the intention of fostering this new working relationship into something positive and productive for everyone concerned.



# SHERIFF TOMPKINS NAMES NEW JAIL SUPERINTENDENT, ANNOUNCES SEVERAL NEW PROMOTIONS



**S**uffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins announced a series of promotions for several members of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.

Heading the list of appointments is former Captain Michael Colwell who has been selected to serve as the new Superintendent of the Suffolk County Jail.

Having begun his career with the Department back in 1991 as a Jail Officer, Superintendent Michael Colwell brings more than twenty-eight years of service to the position and a wealth of institutional knowledge and experience from the variety of positions he's held, graduating through the ranks from Jail Officer, to Sergeant, to Lieutenant and Captain before achieving this new distinction.

Joining Superintendent Colwell as members of the Department's custody staff also receiving promotions were the following eight newly-minted Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Captains: Richard Belinsky, David Hernandez, Dana Johnson, Bryan Kaiser, Lauren Kelly, Sean Ross, Joseph Smoot and Christopher Summer. Captain Ross started his service with the Department back in 1988, with

Captain Belinsky beginning in 1990; Captains Hernandez, Kaiser, Smoot and Summer beginning in 1991; Captain Johnson starting in 1993, and Captain Kelly joining in 2001.

On the non-custody side, former Deputy Director of Labor Relations Michelle Gibbons was promoted to Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Labor Relations and former Workforce Development Manager Val Harris was promoted to Director of the P.E.A.C.E. Unit. ADS Gibbons first joined the Department as a Caseworker back in 1997 and Director Harris entered the Department in 2007 as a contract employee, becoming a full-fledged member seven years later.

"I am proud to announce these appointments," said Sheriff Tompkins. "Each of them is deserving of their promotion and has earned their new rank and position through their commitment to professionalism and dedication to the Department. I look forward to continuing our work together as we endeavor to make positive change in the lives of those in our care and custody and transform our communities as a result."



# Superintendent Michael Colwell

## Employee Profile

With more than twenty-eight years of service to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, newly-appointed Suffolk County Jail Superintendent Michael Colwell has served in a variety of ranks and roles with the Department.

Joining the Department in 1991 as a Jail Officer, Colwell has served throughout his career as a front-line supervisor in the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain and Shift Commander, bringing this wealth of experience to his new position as Superintendent – a role that he is both honored and humbled to fulfill.

“I first think of the incredible responsibility entrusted to me; to ensure the continued safe and efficient operations that the Suffolk County Jail is known for,” said Superintendent Colwell. “Fortunately for me, I join a tremendously dedicated and committed staff that will support me in that endeavor. I also reflect back upon the many mentors who have guided me throughout my career and I feel an obligation to honor them by fostering an environment of support and encouragement for our next generation of leaders.”

With respect to his own well-charted history of leadership, as a Lieutenant in 2005, Colwell received training as an instructor in the principals of Direct Supervision at the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections in Longmont, Colorado and has completed instruction in the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center's Incident Command System as well as the Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association Education & Training Council's (MSAETC) Train the Trainer program. Superintendent Colwell has also assisted the Department's Training Division by creating and delivering a course of instruction for new supervisors that aims to explore the challenges of leadership and peer management. In 2011, Superintendent Colwell was assigned to provide technical support and assistance during the filming of MSNBC's documentary program Lockup: Extended Stay: Boston. And, In 2016, Superintendent Colwell successfully oversaw a comprehensive national accreditation effort by the American Correctional Association as the Accreditation Manager for the Suffolk County Jail. Superintendent Colwell credits the dedicated professionalism of both uniform and civilian staff in achieving a near perfect compliance rating.

Superintendent Colwell also serves as the Suffolk County Jail's point of contact for the Massachusetts Department of Corrections (DOC) Standards & Compliance Division, meeting regularly to discuss changes to laws and regulations relative to their impact on annual DOC compliance audits.

As he expands upon his lengthy service to the Department wearing this new mantle, Superintendent Colwell speaks about great potential for positive change and transformation that awaits not only the Department, but corrections as a whole.

“I believe that our industry is on the cusp of an evolution that will transform the way corrections engages future offender populations,” said Superintendent Colwell. “For too long, the focus of corrections was to simply separate offenders from society. We now understand that mere separation serves neither the offender, nor the society into which they will ultimately return.”

“We can't change many of the systemic societal obstacles that can draw one toward crime,” Superintendent Colwell continues, “but we can certainly provide the tools and support that will help them to better navigate those obstacles. Suffolk County is well positioned to be a driving force in that change and I am energized by the prospect that our most impactful contributions to public safety lie ahead.”

# PARTNER OF THE MONTH

## The Phoenix Helps Those With Addiction Rise, Recover And Live

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's "Partner of the Month" series highlights the outside agencies and organizations that are working with us to help improve the lives and increase opportunities for the men and women remanded to our care and custody by the courts. Each month, we will highlight these collaborations between our organizations and shed light on some of the ways in which we are readying people to reenter their communities better prepared to provide for themselves and their families.

For National Physical Fitness & Sports Month, we are shining a spotlight on our community partner, Michael Underhill, manager of Community Partnerships and Development at "The Phoenix." The Phoenix offers a free sober active community to individuals who have suffered from a substance use disorder and to those who choose a sober life. Using a peer support model, The Phoenix helps members heal and rebuild their lives while also striving to eliminate stigma around recovery.

With more than 26,000 members, The Phoenix provides CrossFit, climbing, hiking, running, cycling, yoga, and much more, all within a supportive community. To participate in The Phoenix, the only thing they require of participants is to have 48 hours of continuous sobriety and sign a team member agreement. When asked why 48 hours of sobriety is important, Michael stated that, "It holds one accountable for their actions, it helps them to commit to the sober lifestyle and helps friends and family be supportive. If they were to come in high, we know that it's a cry for help, so we pull them to the side and



let them know that we are here for support and if they can make it 48 hours sober, then they are on the right path. It's the motivation that they need in order to commit."

In Michaels' role at The Phoenix, he is able to inspire others as a person in recovery himself. He and the rest of The Phoenix team are dedicated to helping individuals and meeting them where they are at. They come behind the wall at Suffolk County Jail and at the Suffolk County House of Correction two to three times a month to serve the individuals in our care and custody.

One thing that makes The Phoenix a unique organization is the support that everyone shows for each other. There is no judgment and everyone that comes in becomes a part of a team that supports and motivates others.

"It's all about physical and spiritual fitness and having powerful ways to rebuild wounded bodies and spirits, and restore hope," Michael said. The Phoenix slogan is RISE, RECOVER and LIVE. When asked what it means to him, Michael stated "to rise above the odds and the problems that one has once faced, to recover from the pain and wounds, and to live the best sober life that you can."

We look forward to our continued our partnership with The Phoenix. For more information, please visit [www.thephoenix.org](http://www.thephoenix.org) or contact them at (857) 239-8422.



# AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

## SHERIFF TOMPKINS JOINS BC IRISH BUSINESS COUNCIL TO DISCUSS THE CHANGING FACE OF BOSTON

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined the Boston College Ireland Business Council and Kennedy Summer School Breakfast as a panelist with Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins and former Boston Police Department Commissioner William Evans. The breakfast, which explored the changing nature of politics and community in Boston as well as a discussion on transatlantic citizenship, also featured a panel with former Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Brian Cowen and Kathleen O'Toole, the first female commissioner of the Boston Police Department & Former Chief Inspector of the Gardia Síochána Inspectorate.



## NEW OFFICER TRAINING CLASS BEGINS

Last month's April rains couldn't stop Correction Officer Training Academy Class 19-01 from taking the field at East Boston Memorial Park Stadium for their first day of training. To become an officer for the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, candidates participate in training that tests them physically and mentally as they complete instruction in subjects that include ethics and professionalism, suicide prevention, the use of force continuum, firearm safety and handling, inmate education and programming, contraband control, courtroom testimony, CORI and inmate rights and responsibilities, fire safety, CPR, sexual harassment, cross-gender supervision and report writing, among others.



## SHERIFF EMPANELED FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM DISCUSSION

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined a panel convened by the BMC HealthNet Plan to discuss "Criminal Justice Reform and Race in Boston" at the Schrafft's City Center in Charlestown. The panel was part of the "This Is Where We Live" series, which focuses on current events that are shaping the community that we live in and brings together a panel of experts in the field to discuss the topic at hand.



## SHERIFF TOMPKINS TAKES PART IN EPIPHANY SCHOOL CAREER DAY

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins recently took part in the Epiphany School's Career Day. Joining Sheriff Tompkins in the presentation to members of the Dorchester-based school were Massachusetts State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg and City Year's Senior Vice President of Team Leadership Stephen Spaloss.





# LAW ENFORCEMENT CAREERS

## BENEFITS:

- **Paid** law enforcement academy **training**
- Average **\$48k starting** salary
- Generous medical, dental and retirement **plans**
- College and post graduate **tuition** incentives

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- All career backgrounds considered
- 21 years of age
- U.S. citizenship
- High school diploma
- Valid driver's license

Steven W. Tompkins, Sheriff



***Suffolk County***  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

20 Bradston Street, Boston, MA 02118

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