



COMMON GROUND

AUGUST 2022 ISSUE

A large, central portrait of Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins. He is a Black man with short hair, wearing a dark pinstripe suit, a light blue shirt, and a red tie with blue and white diagonal stripes. He is looking slightly to his right with a serious expression. The background of the entire page is a collage of blue-tinted images showing various scenes: law enforcement officers, community meetings, and people in uniform.

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS

SHARES HIS VISION ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT'S MANDATE, MISSION & FUTURE



SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

AUGUST, 2022

Greetings,

In the following issue, I speak about the work that I do as the Sheriff of Suffolk County and discuss some of the programming that we offer, both to members of our population and to our residents and businesses out in the neighborhoods of Suffolk County.

Whether it be vocational or educational programming, substance use recovery services, or life skills classes for our population; or senior health and safety

outreach, summer employment for young people in our neighborhoods, or beautifying parks, highways and public spaces, our goal is to help improve the public safety, health and vibrancy of our county, and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and beyond.

To this end, we also feature our Community Works Program and the special recognition that it received from Revere State Representative Jessica Giannino; we talk about the recent release of our Five Year Report of Progress, detailing some of the aforementioned multitude of services and programming, special initiatives, accomplishments and advancements of the Department; and we showcase one of our best and brightest for her recent achievement – receiving the Medal of Honor at the annual Correctional Employee of the Year Awards.

I hope that you'll enjoy reading about these and other topics in this edition, and I look forward to bringing you more insight and information about the form and functions of the Department in the issues to come.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

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STATE REP. GIANNINO THANKS SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Revere State Representative Jessica Giannino thanked Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins and the Department for the assistance that the Department's Community Works Program (CWP) has given in helping to clean and beautify local areas in her district.



DEPARTMENT RELEASES FIVE-YEAR REPORT

Titled *A Progress Report of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department*, the 88-page document provides an overview of the Department, with in-depth examinations of its many divisions, and a statistical analysis that includes programming, admissions and release data, in addition to many other topics.

SCSD'S ADS SMITH RECOGNIZED FOR HEROIC ACTIONS

Assistant Deputy Superintendent Demaris Smith was bestowed the Medal of Honor at the State of Massachusetts' Annual Correctional Employee of the Year Awards for heroic actions taken in the service of her work at the Suffolk County Jail.

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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SHERIFF TOMPKINS, DEPARTMENT CONTINUE EFFORTS TO CHANGE LIVES AND TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, a member of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department since 2002, was appointed to serve as the Sheriff of Suffolk County on January 22, 2013, by Governor of Massachusetts, Deval Patrick. In November of 2014, Tompkins was elected to the office and has maintained his position since. A New York native, Sheriff Tompkins, who was initially brought to Boston in the pursuit of higher education, has acted in a variety of roles within the Department, including Director of Communications and Chief of External Affairs, giving him extensive knowledge of Department operations and facilities.

In an effort to learn more about him, we spoke with Sheriff Tompkins to discuss his role within the Department, the mandate of the sheriff's office, programs that are intended to assist those remanded into our custody, and the future of the Department.



“One thing I like about being Sheriff is that no two days are the same,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “Depending on the requirements of the day, my schedule can bring me to transition from working with the community at a senior center or school to talking to legislators about what the Department needs to help maintain public safety.” He continued, “Public safety is an intersection between housing, healthcare, jobs, transportation, communications and more. Whatever occurs outside a corrections facility occurs inside a correction facility. We’re almost like a mini city; on any given day we have over 1,100 inmates and 1,100 employees. This is a lot to manage. Fortunately, I have a good executive team; everyone knows their job and executes them excellently.”

Sheriff Tompkins, reiterating his message that the Department’s primary responsibility is for the care and custody of those remanded into our facilities, explained, “Custody has two meanings. The first is imprisonment, and the second is guardianship. I put special emphasis on guardianship, which entails our efforts to try and help people to improve their station of life. We want to get them back up on their feet, get stronger, get out of jail, and get home to be with their families. People need the proper attention to their needs, like healthcare, employment, and housing. We have a great number of programs that address a host of issues, including substance use disorder, mental illness, and parenting essentials”

Since taking office, numerous programs have been initiated and grown under the supervision of Sheriff Tompkins.

“Among the programs that I had my hand in include our Common Ground Institute, where individuals gain vocational education; the Urban Farming Program, where inmates run a greenhouse and planting beds, which produce over 1,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables each year; the PEACE Unit, where the Department caters programming to meet the specific needs of the 18 to 24-year-old population; the OASIS Program, where individuals with serious substance use issues are enrolled in a minimum 90-day stay with recovery services and counseling; PDAT or the ‘attitude adjustment’ program, where we teach anger management and life skills; and Family Matters, where the Department acts as an intermediary between families to keep them engaged with those in our custody.”

Programs are envisioned and created with the creativity and collaboration of Department staff, social service agencies, and other correctional facilities. For example, the Urban Farm Program was brought to Sheriff Tompkins by a former employee who read about similar initiatives online.

“I think part of being a good manager is empowering people to do their jobs and being a resource for them,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “My job is to be a cheerleader for the Department, its staff, and those in our custody.”

Discussing what he might do free of the reality of budgetary constraints, Sheriff Tompkins said, “If given an unlimited budget, I would want to build up our substance use treatment and mental health services. Additionally, I would want to fortify our relationships with shelters in the area and spend more time and money educating our young people and providing the necessary services to prevent them from entering the criminal justice system in the first place.”

Ultimately, when asked about the work that he’s been doing over the past nine years and his motivation to continue, Sheriff Tompkins spoke about the inequalities within our society that drive him to try and make a difference within his community.

“There are still so many people in our county, throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and across this country who are struggling to find opportunity and equality,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “I can see myself continuing to advocate for change, offering programs to help reduce recidivism rates at the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department, and working to engage people civically so that we can create a society that is fair and just for everyone.”

SHERIFF TOMPKINS, DEPARTMENT RECEIVE APPRECIATION FROM REPRESENTATIVE GIANNINO FOR COMMUNITY CLEANUP



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, members of the Department and participants in the Department's Community Works Program joined State Representative Jessica Giannino, who invited the group out to Revere to personally thank them for their work in helping to clean up and beautify sites across the City of Revere.

The Community Works Program (CWP), which is made up of volunteers from the Department's in-custody population who must meet strict classification standards to be selected for the program, helps participants to gain work experience and build upon valuable skills learned through vocational and job training that can help to remove the barriers to employment that they often face upon their return to society. Under the constant supervision of Deputy Sheriffs, who also provide on-site training to participants, CWP members work on assignments that include: cleaning vacant lots, beautifying roadway intersections, painting street lamps, boarding and securing abandoned homes, shoveling walkways for senior citizen housing, and more. Many of the assignments are made through requests to the Department for assistance from municipal governments, non-profits and various divisions within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

"I am so grateful for the partnership that I have with Suffolk County Sheriff Steve Tompkins," said State Representative Giannino. "Every day, I receive requests from the residents of Revere and Chelsea regarding litter and debris on our state roads, particularly Routes 60 and 107. Mass DOT has been very helpful in assisting with cleanup efforts, but I knew to get the results the 16th Suffolk needed, we needed backup. Sheriff Tompkins

stepped up and ensured that crews from his Community Works Program were out helping to keep our state roads clean. Thank you, Sheriff Tompkins for helping keep Suffolk County clean."

Returning praise for Representative Giannino, Sheriff Tompkins spoke about the ability to provide opportunities for people in his care and custody with the help of committed community partners.

"While we really appreciate the recognition of the work that we're doing in the community, it wouldn't be possible without truly committed partners like Representative Giannino," said Sheriff Tompkins. "So, we thank Rep. Giannino for providing them the opportunity to come out and practice their newfound skills. We are in the 'second chance' business with respect to our work in helping the people remanded to our facilities to acquire the skills and training they need to return to society in better stead, with the ability to change their own lives and, thereby, transform entire communities."

The Department's CWP crews have begun ramping up activity over the past several months following more conservative deployment during the COVID-19 pandemic. In pre-pandemic times, the program was running seven contracts throughout Suffolk County and deployed approximately twenty-five individuals, or four crews of CWP participants.

For more information about the Community Works Program or Department programs in general, visit: www.scsdma.org.

SHERIFF TOMPKINS, DEPARTMENT SHARE FIVE-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY, INFORM AND INSPIRE

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, led by Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, has released a comprehensive report spanning the past five years of operation.

Titled *A Progress Report of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department*, the 88-page document provides an overview of the form and function of the Suffolk County House of Correction, the Suffolk County Jail, the Correction Officer Training Academy and Civil Process, with in-depth examinations of the Department's many divisions and a statistical analysis that includes programming, admissions and release data, in addition to many other topics.

The Department provided an advance copy of the report to a select few people, including members of the business and educational communities with a common interest in the men and women who are remanded to Department care and custody by the courts, and who also share a concern for the health, wellbeing and safety of the neighborhoods of Suffolk County and beyond.

"I appreciate the Department's report for, among other things, providing transparency of both plan and practice for constituents, taxpayers and stakeholders," said Dr. Keith Motley, University of Massachusetts Boston Chancellor Emeritus and Professor of the College of Management at UMass Boston. "In addition, the report gives insight into the efficacy of some of the programs and services that the Department makes available to help the men and women in custody to leave with new abilities that may not only keep them from recidivating, but allow them to embark upon a new path towards sustainable, successful futures."

"As a community neighbor and working partner of both Sheriff Tompkins and the Department, I am well acquainted with the important work that is being done for the citizens of Suffolk County," said Sue Sullivan, Executive Director of the Newmarket Improvement Business District. "The care and concern that Sheriff Tompkins and the Department have for the residents, businesses and visitors to the area has been evident, whether it be in addressing the humanitarian crisis on Mass and Cass or advocating for more addiction recovery and mental health services. In addition, the work that they do behind the walls is just as essential in helping to improve public safety and health, and I'm excited about some of these efforts that are detailed in their new five-year report."

Speaking about both the content and cause behind the report, Sheriff Tompkins reiterated his long-stated objectives to provide the general public with insight into the workings of the Department with the intention of increasing both the transparency of his office and engaging members of the community in the work of helping those in his charge to obtain the programming and services required to leave incarceration far behind them as they embark on their new path towards success for themselves and their families.

"I am both elated and eager to be able to distribute this document to the residents and taxpayers of Suffolk County, and to our elected officials, community organizations and businesses because at the core of it all is hope," said Sheriff Tompkins.

"At the Department, our mandate is for the safe care and custody of the men and women who are sent to us to either await their day in court or to serve out the sentence meted out to them by the legal system. But, the mission that I and the members of this organization strive to achieve each and every day is to provide the kinds of programming and services that not only inspire hope that things can and will be better for them once they return to their respective communities, but that we actually impart the practical and emotional skills needed to see the realization of that hope."

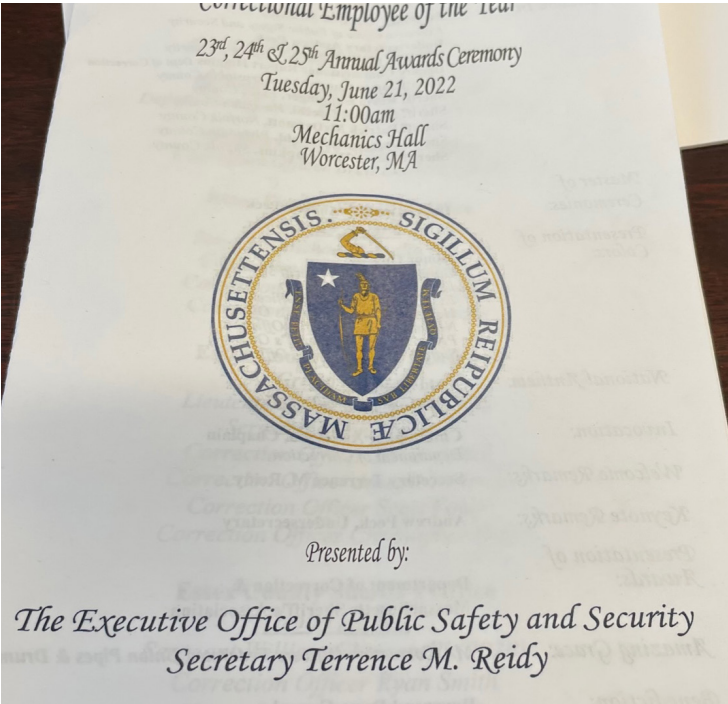
To read *A Progress Report of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department* in full, or to read the executive summary of the report, visit: www.scsdma.org.



ADS DEMARIS SMITH AWARDED MEDAL OF HONOR



It is with great pride, respect and admiration that we announce that our very own Assistant Deputy Superintendent Demaris Smith was awarded the 2020 Medal of Honor at the Annual Correctional Employee of the Year Awards Ceremony earlier this summer at Worcester’s Mechanics Hall. The highest award bestowed in these ceremonies, ADS Smith received the Medal of Honor for her actions in 2019 for risking her own safety to aid a colleague during a violent assault by detainees. On January 10, 2019, Smith – then a Lieutenant – in the performance of her duties, responded to a brutally violent two-person assault on fellow officer Matthew Robidoux. The assault on Officer Robidoux continued even after his attackers had rendered him unconscious and defenseless. Officer Robidoux suffered significant injury as a result of the assault, including facial fractures and head trauma. Smith was first on the scene, and single-handedly engaged the two attackers, thereby interrupting the assault and sparing Officer Robidoux from further injury, and perhaps even death. Smith’s brave actions in defense of her seriously injured colleague, exemplify the commitment and courage that she has displayed throughout her distinguished, thirty-year career.



AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

SCSD PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department participated with the Boston Police Department in this year's National Night Out, which brought together law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and residents. National Night Out began in 1984 and has grown to include thirty-eight million neighbors and sixteen-thousand communities participating annually.

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins participated in a cavalcade that included Mayor Michelle Wu, BPD Command Staff, and other elected officials. Neighborhoods visited included Brighton, Hyde Park, Roxbury, Roslindale, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, Chinatown, South Boston, South End, Dorchester, North End, Chelsea and East Boston. Representatives from the Department staffed tables at these locations passing out our Safety Tips for Kids coloring books, crayons, and Junior Deputy Badges. This event included free kids' activities, food, and entertainment for the community.



HI-SET GRADUATION

On July 19th, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department held a graduation ceremony for members of the Hi-SET Program at the House of Correction. The Adult Secondary Education/High School Equivalency Program prepares students with an 8th grade reading level or higher to earn their high school equivalency diploma or HiSET. The Education Division also helps interested participants to attain their GED (General Education Diploma), and in some cases, a Boston Public School High School Diploma. This year the Department was joined by RISE Academy and Winthrop High School in the distribution of diplomas as two students graduated from these institutions. The program prepares students for the five areas of the HiSET, which include: language arts, reading, science, social sciences and mathematics.

"We are very proud of our graduates," said HiSET instructor Joel Hurwitz. "They have worked very hard and were very diligent during this time as earning their Hi-SET certificate did not come easy." "Earning a high school diploma is a significant achievement. Without it, there are a lot of things that you are not eligible for," he continued. "Now that they've achieved this credential, they can move from here to greater training, understanding, and more positive outcomes for themselves and their families. High school diplomas can open doors for you."

The graduating class consisted of seven men and three women. To watch the graduation ceremony in its entirety visit: <https://fb.watch/eyGIMumMHD/>

SCSD CELEBRATES FIRST GRADUATION OF NEW PARENTING PROGRAM



On July 15th, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department held a graduation ceremony to celebrate six women who successfully completed the six-week Family Matters Breakthrough Parenting Program. The Family Nurturing Center, in conjunction with this program, brings together women from all family circumstances who need help with understanding what it takes to be successful parents and how to be nurturing and supportive while also maintaining their authority and providing consistent guidance and structure to their children. This collaboration began in 2014 with the hopes of giving individuals the necessary tools for becoming more accomplished mothers, including increased access to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to assist in reunifying families upon release.

During the inaugural Family Matters Breakthrough Parenting Program graduation, the women spoke about the healthy skills they learned and practiced to become better parents for tomorrow. They shared poems, letters, speeches and affirmations on how their lives and perspectives have changed since joining the program. Each speaker acknowledged the hard work of the Breakthrough Program Facilitator Rometrious Rogers and Family Matters Case manager Anastasia L'Herrou and thanked them for their work. The crowd and graduates were deeply moved by the passion and heartfelt commitment of all the speakers.

One graduate thanked her teachers and children stating, "I would like to thank Ms. Rodgers for all she has done, but also for the knowledge that she has filled our heads and hearts with. And, to my children who, though I may have given life, they have given me reason every day to live"

The graduates were joined by Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins who stressed the significance of the graduates' accomplishments and expressed his desire for the women to utilize this opportunity as a way to better their lives and their families.



SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS &
THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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