



COMMON GROUND

SPRING 2024 ISSUE



**SCSD
SUPPORTS
AUTISM
AWARENESS,
ACCEPTANCE**





SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

SPRING 2024

Greetings,

I welcome you to another issue of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Common Ground newsletter.

In this special "Spring Edition," we talk about the vital role that Women's Programming plays in the lives of women who are remanded to our custody by the courts.

While there are a great many universally-shared factors that contribute to an individual's involvement with the criminal legal system and, subsequently, incarceration, there are some distinctly specific dynamics that can drive women into custody. To help

mitigate some of these elements, our Department has developed a host of unique and specially-tailored services and programming designed to provide in-custody women with the tools and resources needed to make successful transitions back into society with the skills and abilities to better care for themselves and their families.

We highlight these programs in the pages that follow, and we train our spotlight on one of the people who are tasked with the operation of these and other programs. We also feature our Nurturing Fathers Program and a special visit that our male population welcomed during Second Chance Month.

As important as our programming and services are for the men and women in our care and custody are, however, equally important is the staff that assists with their delivery. To this end, we also share news about some of the significant changes in leadership that will be occurring within the Department in the coming weeks. Additionally, we talk about our upcoming annual paid internship the Summer Enrichment Program.

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

-Steven W. Tompkins

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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CHANGE COMING TO DEPARTMENT



As one superintendent retires, bringing a thirty-three year career to a close, the Department prepares a group familiar faces to tackle new roles.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE: CHRISTINA BETTS

Supervisor of Women's Program Services Christina Betts talks about the evolution of her role with the Department over her sixteen years of service.

SCSD'S SPECIALIZED APPROACH TO WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING



Read about the Department's specialized, gender-specific programming and services, offered to women who have been remanded into custody by the courts.

NURTURING FATHERS EMBRACE SECOND CHANCES



Bunker Hill Community College Chief of Police Robert Barrows visits the Nurturing Fathers Program during Second Chance Month to tell a special story about transformation after incarceration.

AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

In this issue's trip Around Suffolk County, Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins speaks about the opioid epidemic; Department Officers show the breadth of their community outreach work; and much more.

RETIREMENT, PROMOTIONS SIGNAL CHANGE AT SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL, DEPARTMENT



As with every returning spring, there is a celebration of the new, a welcoming of sorts for the revitalization of the Earth as it enters its next cycle. As this transition begins, there is also often a look back at what has come before with an appreciation for the foundation that was laid, and the growth that has come to help carry things to their present state of being.

Here, within the administration of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, a similar progression is underway with echoes to both themes of renewal and reverence, as plans for a changing of the guard have been announced that will alter the shape of the Department's leadership team.

Superintendent of the Suffolk County Jail Michael Colwell will be retiring from service in late June, closing out a thirty-three year career that began in 1991 and saw him rise through the ranks and serve in a variety of roles with the Sheriff's Department. Starting as a Jail officer, Superintendent Colwell has served as a front-line supervisor in the ranks of Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain and Shift Commander, and has served as the Jail's point of contact for the Massachusetts DOC Standards & Compliance division. Since 2005, Superintendent Colwell has 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.

Tapped to take the helm at the Jail as its next Superintendent, former Assistant Deputy Superintendent Jose Mojica brings nearly three decades of Department experience into the role, with his most recent work as the Director of Training, with oversight of several units within the Department and acting as a point of contact between the SCSD and the federal & local taskforces that several of our Deputies are assigned to, the K9 unit and the tactical response team, in addition to his certification through the Municipal Police Training Committee and the Massachusetts Sheriff's Association as a Train the Trainer, Defensive Tactics and Firearms Instructor.

Promoted to the title of Superintendent of Special Projects, former Assistant Superintendent of Operations Matt DeCastro is tasked with the oversight of a host of upcoming and future endeavors for the Department. With nearly twenty years of experience at the Jail, beginning in July of 2005, he has served in the Transportation Division and as a facility supervisor, in addition to spearheading the upgrade of the Motorola radio system, helping to implement the use of Securus tablets, and shepherding the Cross-Tracking System for State & County Correctional Populations within the Department.

Bringing thirty-three years of experience to her new title as Assistant Superintendent of Operations at the Jail, former Assistant Deputy Superintendent Leteya Flambo began her career in 2001, working in the Women's Unit formerly located at the Jail. Over the course of her career, she has been a Choice Officer, supervisor of the Records Division, a shift commander and a mentor to many members of the custody and non-custody staff.

Assuming the mantle of "Director of Training" and rising to the rank of Assistant Deputy Superintendent, Captain Jessica Cabrera also brings nearly thirty years of experience to her new role, having started at the Jail in 1996. Most recently, she has acted as one of the trainers for custody and non-custody staff, as well as Drill Sergeant for the Academy classes that come through the facility.

Elevating to the position of Assistant Deputy Superintendent at the Jail, former Captain Christopher Buckley brings a career of experience and service spanning thirty-three years that began in March of 1991. He has performed many roles in his work, including his time in the Records Division and, most recently, as a shift commander.

Each of these transitions, one flowing from the other before it, marks the beginning of a new season for the Department and a time that is ripe with possibility and promise for what lies ahead, all the while celebrating the journey of those who helped to plant the seeds.



(photo of Jose Mojica is his role as the former Director of Training)

WOMEN'S CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM IMPARTS VALUABLE SKILLS TO PARTICIPANTS



The collaborative women's culinary arts program between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and Community Work Services recently completed its fifth cycle.

With a graduating class of eight, the program continues with the goal of training incarcerated women with basic culinary training "for entry-level positions in the rapidly growing food services sector. Training involves a mix of classroom curriculum with hands-on experience, and job placement assistance.

Over the eight-week course, which is evenly split between four weeks of instruction and lecture time and four weeks of instructive hands-on training, program participants learn knife skills; food preparation; customer service; meal planning; food safety and sanitation; inventory management, and point-of-sale systems. The program is administered four days per-week and each class runs for a duration of three hours.

Participants who complete the program then receive preparation for the ServeSafe Manager's exam, and can apply for employment with Community Work Services' Culinary Team upon reentry.

"Offering the ability to learn new skills to people in our care and custody, particularly culinary arts skills, can be a game-changer for people looking to become sustainably successful once they return home," said Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins.

"Acquiring skills from this program can help participants to better care for themselves and their families in a couple of important ways," he continued. "Not only will participants become more marketable and, thus, more capable of helping their families financially, but they will also have the ability to literally feed their families with good, fresh, homemade meals."

To learn more about the programs that are offered by the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, visit: www.scsdma.org.

To learn more about Community Works Services, visit: www.cwsnewengland.org.



EMPLOYEE PROFILE

CHRISTINA BETTS

SUPERVISOR OF WOMEN'S PROGRAM SERVICES

For nearly two decades, Christina Betts has been a stalwart presence within the Suffolk County House of Correction (HOC).

Dedicated to reshaping the lives of incarcerated women through her role as the Supervisor of Women's Program Services, Christina's journey with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) commenced in 2008 with a trajectory that reflects remarkable professional growth.

Starting at the HOC as a contractor for the Department of Correction facilitating reentry programs like the Boston Reentry Initiative, among others, Christina later worked as a teacher in the Education Division before being hired by the SCSD as a caseworker in 2010.

Throughout her time with the Department, Christina has demonstrated an unwavering passion for understanding the complexities of rehabilitation. Her ascent to the role of Women's Program Services Supervisor is a testament to her dedication and expertise in navigating the intricate dynamics of the correctional system.

At the heart of her efforts lies a commitment to the people in Department care and custody to educate and to provide, as she says, "A little bit of everything for them to take so that when they are outside, they make better choices."

Christina regularly articulates the Department's mission to offer a diverse array of programming and services aimed at enriching the lives of incarcerated women. The overarching goal is to equip them with the skills and mindset needed to break free from the cycle of recidivism.

Drawing from her extensive experience working with both men and women, Christina spoke about the unique intricacies of guiding incarcerated women, citing among them the multitude of responsibilities that women bear beyond prison walls.

"Women face a myriad of responsibilities outside of the correctional facility, which include caring for family, children, partners, and even pets," Christina said. "This added layer of complexity necessitates a nuanced and personalized approach to rehabilitation."

Another key challenge that she highlighted is the pressing need for increased staffing for both civilians and security, emphasizing that an expanded team is essential to effectively guide women through the process of change, considering the magnitude of the responsibilities they carry, and with the Department's focus on personalized care.

Within this process for delivering such gender-specific, trauma-informed and individualized reintegration programming to women incarcerated at the House of Correction, each person is enrolled in a three-phase program model that helps to address the psychological and educational barriers that have worked to hinder their success in order to better prepare them for reentry.

To do this work effectively, Christina and the other members of the Women's Program Services team work to understand the stories and backgrounds of each participant, uncovering the narratives that have shaped these women as they strive to reshape their mindset and pave the way for a positive, crime-free future.

As she continues in her tireless and unwavering efforts for the women remanded to Department care and custody, Christina stands as a beacon of hope to many, navigating challenges with grace and supervising Women's Program Services towards a future where empowerment triumphs over recidivism. Through her leadership, dedication, and work on transformative initiatives, the team is leaving an indelible mark on the lives of those who need it most – empowering women to break free from the chains of their past and embrace a brighter tomorrow.

SCSD CONTINUES SPECIALIZED APPROACH TO MEET UNIQUE CHALLENGES FACED BY INCARCERATED WOMEN



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department meets and exceeds its sworn mandate for the safe care and custody of the men and women who are remanded to its facilities by the courts by providing a mix of specially-designed programming and services created with the purpose of returning citizens to society better able to care for themselves and their families.

While much of what is offered by the Department allows for wide utility and versatility across the general populations at the House of Correction and Jail, there are instances in which a specialized approach can be the difference between a positive, successful, sustainable return to society or another unfortunate turn in the cycle of recidivism.

With its focus on gender-specific, trauma-informed and individualized reintegration programming for women incarcerated at the Suffolk County House of Correction, the Department's Women's Program Services was created to respond to the unique needs of both detained and sentenced women.

Currently, the Department provides care and custody for women at the House of Correction from three counties – Suffolk, Plymouth and Norfolk. The mission of the Women's Program Services Division is to ensure that those mandated to custody are cared for in a safe, orderly and secure manner that promotes public safety, while acknowledging women's developmental, experiential, cultural, and physical realities. By assessing individuals' strengths, Department staff members seek to create opportunities for personal growth in an environment that promotes education, gender responsive and trauma-informed programs, as well as a greater connection to families and community resources. The Women's Program Services Division strives to empower women by providing them the resources to discover and restore their self-worth and dignity, while promoting accountability.

Though there are myriad universal experiences that are shared among the population, in-custody women are a unique population and have a specific set of needs. To that end, the Department provides gender-specific, trauma-informed

programming designed to address the specific issues more profoundly impacting women, which include, among others, domestic violence and human trafficking. The Department offers wrap-around services that begin the moment a woman enters the House of Correction and continues through the day she is released with the goal of not only reducing recidivism, but giving them their best chance to be successful upon reentry to society.

Women are enrolled in a three-phase program model that helps address the psychological and educational barriers that have hindered their success in order to better prepare them for reentry.

Phase One is a one-day program that provides an overview of the rules and regulations of the Department along with orientation. In Phase Two, women participate in two-weeks of psycho-educational workshops addressing four main topics: recovery; reentry (life skills and job skills); domestic violence and anger management. For each woman, an Individual Service Plan (ISP) is created at the conclusion of Phase Two after which they are placed into longer-term programming that meets their individual needs during Phase Three. During this final phase, the women participate in specific treatment programs determined by the results of comprehensive assessments and the development of the ISP. Programming includes: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Anger Management, Art and Spirituality, Culinary Arts and Food Sanitation, Financial Literacy, HiSET, Impulse Control, Parenting, Relapse Prevention, and more.

One of the key components within this programming is the Department's CREW (Community Re-Entry for Women) Program, a partnership between the Sheriff's Department and Project Place, which provides an avenue of reintegration for incarcerated women through wrap-around services including: job readiness and life skill instruction; intensive case management and reentry supports with goals of employment, housing and reducing recidivism.

Additional comprehensive programming includes SAFER (Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Reentry), and is a unique collaboration between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and RESPOND, Inc., and is a pioneer in the movement to end domestic violence, as New England's first domestic violence prevention agency and the second in the nation. SAFER was created to provide maximum support for survivors by offering an eight-week class with support groups, emotional support for victims, goal and boundary setting, discharge planning, continued support after release, referrals to community services, court accompaniment, and assistance with protection orders and other law enforcement needs.

To learn more about Women's Program Services and about the Department's programming in general, visit: www.scsdma.org.



NURTURING FATHERS EMBRACE SECOND CHANCES DURING VISIT FROM CHIEF BARROWS



April is Second Chance Month, a time for recognizing the importance of helping individuals, communities, and agencies across the country to appreciate their role in supporting the safe and successful reentry of millions of people returning from incarceration each year. Here at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department we recognize the hard work of our correction officers and the importance of family in the successful reintegration of returning citizens.

The Department and its team in the Richard P. Pacitti Re-Entry and Transitional Center understand the importance of family and the need for these citizens to return as healthier, more productive mothers and fathers in order to change the generational impact of incarceration. Research has shown that maintaining strong family bonds can significantly reduce the likelihood of re-offending. When individuals have support from their families, they are more motivated to make positive changes in their lives and stay out of the criminal justice system.

Recently, the Department hosted Robert Barrows as a guest speaker during the "Nurturing Fathers" program. The Nurturing Fathers Program brings together men from all family circumstances (custodial, non-custodial, step-fathers, new fathers) to explore what it takes to be their child's nurturer and teacher. The program also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive and supportive co-parenting relationship with the mother of the child or children, whether the parents are together or separated.

Mr. Barrows is the Chief of Police at Bunker Hill Community College and the son of his formerly incarcerated father. Chief Barrows' life and story is compelling and filled with important messages for fathers participating in the program. Chief Barrows spoke about his father's twenty years behind bars and his life post-incarceration. One of the many lessons that he learned from his father was that "the future is up to you."

"Absolutely nothing you do today can change yesterday, but the decisions you make today can make tomorrow what you want it to be," Chief Barrows said.

Alben Barrows was sentenced to Massachusetts State Prison in Charlestown in 1943. His was a life sentence for armed robbery, kidnapping and rape. At nineteen years old, he refused a plea bargain and maintained his innocence. Alben was a Black man caught with a consenting white, Irish woman in the back seat of a car in predominately Irish Boston, by Irish cops, who concocted a story to protect her from scandal and ensure that he ended up in jail.

The prison's location, where Alben started his time behind bars, is now the site of Bunker Hill Community College. When Robert Barrows was selected to serve as that educational institution's Chief of Police the irony was not lost on him. The lessons that his father learned on these grounds were now lessons Chief Barrows would bring into the classroom and to his department. Alben's lessons to Robert were those of forgiveness and hope; of resilience and determination of pride and dignity; and, of second chances and opportunity. These all would be the tenets with which Chief Robert Barrows would lead his life, his officers and his students.

As the Chief sat in the classroom of the Suffolk County House of Correction, telling the story of Alben, he left out the part of his relationship until the end. When that detail was revealed participants recoiled in their seats, gasped aloud, and stomped their feet at the revelation; they made the connection and were utterly surprised. One, participating father, said, "You got me, I didn't see that coming!"

Alben taught Robert that people are either good or bad; that color, ethnicity, occupation or other factors should shape our view of another person, but, it's who they are within that determines whether they are a good person or bad. Alben helped a young Robert to let go of the painful past and anger. So, from those lessons, Robert said he learned, "Hatefulness in any form is never justified," said Chief Barrows, "it actually deadens our spirits and the spirit of the person it is directed to, as well."

Alben never wanted his son to have his spirit deadened; he wanted him to be a light for himself and for others. Chief Barrows talked about program participants' second chances for when they walk out that door, back to their families. He told them about how his dad decided to leave the baggage of his time in prison at that door and chose to whistle as he passed through it. He whistled a happy tune every day for the rest of his life.

The message was clear, they had the opportunity to return home, become successful and be great parents. The decision about how to proceed was theirs. They could do it with anger in their hearts or with a renewed sense of self-worth and pride about turning their lives around and becoming positive role models for their children.

At the end of the session, one participating father exclaimed, "Bring Chief Barrows back, the men I am here with need to hear this story!"



Former Nurturing Fathers Program participants

SCSD SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM TO MARK TENTH YEAR OF PAID INTERNSHIP FOR SUFFOLK TEENS



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department will be celebrating the ten-year anniversary of its paid summer internship for high school rising juniors and seniors in Suffolk County with this year's class.

Created in 2014 by Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins for Suffolk County students who are interested in careers in law enforcement and the criminal legal system, the Summer Enrichment Program gives participants the opportunity to enter into a paid internship with one of the oldest law enforcement agencies in the country, and one of the largest in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) members will work alongside established career professionals in the world of law enforcement, gaining insight into the world of law enforcement through job shadowing, weekly presentations by members of law enforcement, roundtable discussions, law enforcement and criminal justice-related field trips, and educational tours and special programming.

"This is a great opportunity for young people who are interested in learning more about working in law enforcement, the criminal legal system and even the political arena," said Sheriff Tompkins. "We are so proud of this program and the fact that many of our past participants have gone on to careers in these fields of study over the past ten years."

"When I and the Department first launched the Summer Enrichment Program, I had dual intentions about what I wanted it to accomplish," Sheriff Tompkins continued. "Yes, I envisioned it as a paid internship for young people interested in learning more about careers in law enforcement and criminal justice, but I also saw the need for strengthening and enhancing the relationships between youths and uniformed officers. Now, ten years later, I believe that the need for it is even greater."

As in past years, 2024 SEP members submitted applications and will be selected through a professional interview process. If chosen for this seven-week internship, participants will begin working five days a week, Monday through Friday beginning on Monday, July 8th and completing service on Friday, August 23rd. SEP members will work thirty-two hours per week at a rate of \$18 per hour. And, while the compensation for participation is competitive, it is the experience and networking potential that SEP members may find invaluable.

All participants will complete and receive their CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) certification in addition to a program Certificate of Completion from the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. By the end of their participation, members of the program will have not only gained insight into the world of law enforcement and met a variety of notable law enforcement, criminal legal system, political and education officials, but they also will have gained transferable job skills that they can utilize later on in their careers.

To learn more about the program visit: www.SCSDMA.org/SEP2024



AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY



DEPARTMENT TAKES PART IN SCHOOL CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY FAIRS

Members of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department staffed tables at Boston Latin Academy's 2nd Annual Career & Opportunity Fair in March and at the James W. Hennigan K-8 School's resource and career fair in April, giving out information about the Department's upcoming Summer Enrichment Program and sharing experiences about what it takes to work in the field of corrections and law enforcement.

BLUE HILLS REGIONAL TECH VISITS HOUSE OF CORRECTION

The Department welcomed multiple groups of students from Blue Hills Regional Technical School for tours of the Suffolk County House of Correction, providing insight and information to the groups about the form and function of the Department.



SHERIFF TOMPKINS ATTENDS INAUGURATION OF UMASS CHANCELLOR

UMass Boston Chancellor Marcelo Suárez-Orozco was formally installed as the ninth chancellor of the college in a ceremony at the Clark Athletic Center on April 5th. Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined the procession, along with Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden and several others.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT CONTINUES READING WITH FIRST RESPONDERS

Members of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department returned to the Harbor Area Family Resource Center in Chelsea to once again participate in the ongoing "Reading With First Responders" program.



SHERIFF TOMPKINS OPENS DISCUSSION ABOUT OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins delivered opening remarks at a special panel discussion about the Massachusetts opioid epidemic. Hosted by State House News Service/MASsterList in partnership with the Caregiver Action Network, the event featured a mix of law enforcement, opioid addiction experts and advocates, gathered for an important discussion about the challenges of trying to mitigate the opioid epidemic, along with an exchange about viable and valuable life-saving solutions.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SUPPORTS AUTISM AWARENESS, ACCEPTANCE

The SCSD joined Endicott College Police Department, the Beverly Police Department, and other first responders at Endicott College in support of their Touch-A-Truck event held to support Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month.





SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS
SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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