



# COMMON GROUND

MARCH 2026



## SCSD'S WOMEN'S PROGRAM SERVICES





## SCSD'S MESSAGE

MARCH 2026

Greetings and Happy Women's History Month.

Welcome to the March edition of our Common Ground Newsletter. In this issue, we highlight the work of our Women's Program Services (WPS) Division and the important role it plays in supporting the

women in our care. From mental health and rehabilitation to job training and skill-building, these programs are designed to help prepare individuals for a successful return to their communities. We also feature recent sessions and new initiatives that continue to expand opportunities for our female population.

In honor of Women's History Month, we are proud to spotlight an inspiring female leader from our Department whose dedication and leadership make a lasting impact. This edition also includes highlights from our Around Suffolk County community outreach efforts, showcasing the partnerships that strengthen our connection with the community, along with recognition of our Officers of the Month for February.

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

~The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department

### COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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# IN PURSUIT OF POWER: ASPEN INSTITUTE'S SOCRATIC SEMINAR VISIT



## “What Is Power?”

Posed at the top of the hour, this was the question that settled over the participants of the Aspen Institute Socratic Seminar, who were invited to a thought-provoking discussion on power; its source, its substance, and its fickleness. For men who could not be in more vulnerable positions, having had their freedoms and autonomy constrained by current circumstances, this question was made all the more personal.

Through a first-of-its-kind partnership between the esteemed Aspen Institute and the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department, a group of fifteen male residents gathered in Classroom 1 of the Suffolk County House of Correction (HOC) Education Center, to pore over some of history’s most poignant literature, artwork, prose, and reflections relating to power. Founded in 1949, the Aspen Institute is known to host leading minds and budding scholars alike in a collaborative approach to life’s pressing challenges. A core belief of the organization’s Socrates Program is that no man or woman’s contribution to thought is inconsequential; hence, expert Moderator and Executive Director of the Socrates Program, Danny Harris, visited our facility to unpack the complexities of power.

Organized by the Education Director of the Suffolk County HOC, MaryEllen McGorry, participants were given substantial reading material packets to study ahead of the day-long forum. Once prepared, the men took off, curious and eager to engage.

## Session I: What Is Power?

The opening session examined the works of Pablo Neruda and Rembrandt, challenging the common assumption that power is synonymous with force and instead presenting it as a matter of

perspective. In Neruda’s poem “Keeping Still” (trans. Dan Bellm, Oxford University Press, 2006), stillness becomes a quiet rebellion against chaos. One resident reflected on the dichotomy between the control he has gained over his mind and the lack thereof over his body, given that he is presently incarcerated. After months of therapeutic counseling and trauma-informed programming, his power to perform hyper-masculinity has been reimagined into a power to pause — a power that reflects on actions and disengages from conflicts that could impede his opportunities.

That idea echoed in the group’s discussion of Rembrandt van Rijn’s 1633 painting *Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee*. The violent sea threatens to overtake the small boat, yet the focal point remains fixed on the calm figure at its center. Against a backdrop of crashing waves and thunderous storm clouds that collide around you, only you hold the power to remain steady and steer your ship forward.

## Session II: How Do We Use Power?

The afternoon’s readings shifted from definition to application. Saul D. Alinsky’s chapter “A Word About Words” from *Rules for Radicals* (1971) examines language as a strategic tool. Robert Greene’s *The 48 Laws of Power* (1998) dissects influence with unapologetic realism. Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1532) dares readers to confront the tension between morality and pragmatism in leadership.

The men grappled with uncomfortable truths: power can be manipulative, it can be coercive, and it can corrupt. Yet they also acknowledged that power, ethically directed, can organize communities, protect families, and shape futures.

Participants Saquon, Christopher, Indrick, and Nyjulius applied the notion that “absolute power corrupts absolutely” to existing political systems, exploring how certain structures may contribute to sustained high incarceration rates. Drawing from the manipulation tactics stipulated in the assigned texts, the men unveiled regimes that have exercised misuse of influence at the expense of minority communities.

Shifting the discussion to the reclamation of stripped power, the men were

asked not to evaluate external authority, but internal governance. Men like Devanty reflected that the most difficult power to wield is the power over oneself. Being incarcerated is an affront to impulse. You can choose to continue asserting power over others, or you can choose to confront your anger, your guilt, your past, and your plan for the future.

## Session III: What Are the Limits of Power?

The final session turned to the boundaries of power and the moral costs of its pursuit. The Harvard Business School case study on Reverend Jeffrey Brown, “Cops, Kids and Ministers” (McGinn & Gendron, 2000/2002), presented a real-world example of coalition-building and shared authority. Brown’s leadership model, grounded in relationships between law enforcement and community, offered a vision of power distributed rather than hoarded.

Ursula K. Le Guin’s short story “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” posed a haunting ethical dilemma: a utopian city whose prosperity depends on the suffering of one child. Percy Bysshe Shelley’s 1818 poem “Ozymandias” reminds readers that even the mightiest rulers are reduced to ruins. Rudyard Kipling’s “If—” (1943) extols steady character over fleeting triumph.

“Ozymandias thought his power would last forever,” one participant noted. “But everything falls. So what are you building that actually matters?” For men navigating accountability and consequences, they know firsthand that power is never absolute. “You can’t undo what you did, but you can decide who you’re going to be.” For the residents of Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department, their journey past fallen power begins by embracing vulnerability, accepting responsibility, and eventually forgiving oneself to allow room for growth.

We are honored to have welcomed Danny Harris and the Aspen Institute into our Education Center, and we are deeply grateful to Director MaryEllen McGorry and the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department Education Center staff for bringing this opportunity to fruition. The Department looks forward to continuing this partnership and expanding spaces of intellectual rigor.





## SCSD'S WOMEN'S PROGRAM SERVICES (WPS)

In recognition of Women's History Month, we're highlighting the work of our Women's Program Services (WPS) Division, an effort driven by the dedication and leadership of the staff members who serve our female population every day. Through their work, these professionals support our female residents at the House of Correction by providing guidance, resources, and opportunities designed to help them rebuild their lives and prepare for a successful return to the community.

For many women entering the HOC, the path to change begins almost immediately. The Women's Program Services Division focuses on providing gender-responsive programming tailored to the unique experiences and challenges many women face. By recognizing those realities, including trauma, family responsibilities, and barriers to education or employment, the division works to create an environment where women can focus on growth, accountability, and long-term stability. Within the first day, each individual is assigned a caseworker and introduced to the Department's structured three-phase program model. The first phase provides an orientation to the facility and its expectations. From there, participants move into Phase Two, which includes two weeks of workshops focused on critical topics such as recovery, reentry planning, job and life skills, domestic violence awareness, and anger management. These sessions are designed to help participants begin identifying personal challenges while also building practical skills they can carry forward.

Leading this work is Director of Women's Program Services, Jennifer

Wolter, who works along with a team that includes WPS Supervisor Christina Betts and WPS caseworkers Kahd-jah McFadden, Eloisa Sanchez, Nicole Biondo, and Jord'n Jospitre. Together, the team works closely with women from Suffolk, Plymouth, and Norfolk counties who are housed at the facility. Their goal is to ensure that individuals in custody are not only cared for in a safe and secure setting but are also given meaningful opportunities to build skills and access resources that can support their success after release. All caseworkers help housed residents develop plans that connect them with services such as housing support, education, workforce development programs, healthcare, substance use treatment, and other community resources that can help make the transition back into society smoother and more stable. "Our goal is to not only recognize barriers and experiences, but also help residents recover their self-worth and help them find the support needed to continue life feeling stronger and walking a better path. We work very hard to provide them an empathetic ear and every possible resource or introduction they'll need to connect to the right people when they release," shared Wolter.

During their third phase, participants take part in longer-term programming that includes educational services such as HiSET preparation, financial literacy classes, culinary arts training, parenting programs, women's health education, restorative justice initiatives, and recovery support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Programs addressing relapse prevention, conflict management, and personal wellness, including

yoga and art-based workshops.

The WPS Division's work is strengthened through partnerships and collaborations with community organizations that provide specialized workshops and services, helping connect and assist individuals after release. These partners include the Boston Public Health Commission, Rosie's Place, Project Place, RESPOND Inc., Boston Healthcare for the Homeless, North Suffolk Mental Health Association, Mothers for Justice and Equality, MassHire, Jasmine Grace Outreach, and others.

As we continue to reflect on the achievements and resilience of women during this month, Wolter emphasizes that the women in custody should be seen beyond the labels often associated with the justice system. "While we use the terms 'inmate' and 'detainee' often here, no one, woman or man, should be identified as that solely," Wolter noted. "They are people with histories, emotions, families, hopes, mistakes, potential, and worth. We've seen so many leave our custody to give back in ways we wouldn't have imagined. They are working in social services fields, going back to running businesses, and providing care for families and their communities."

Through the continued efforts of the Women's Program Services team and the many community partners who support this work, our Division remains focused on providing women with the tools, encouragement, and opportunities they need to rebuild their lives and move forward with confidence and vision.

# THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS:



## **MY STORY:**

On February 2nd, the My Story initiative held its second session, featuring

guest speaker Deena, a formerly incarcerated woman who was housed at the HOC. Deena shared her personal journey through incarceration and reentry, and spoke candidly about the challenges she faced while incarcerated and the steps she took after her release to rebuild her life. She highlighted the support systems and programs that helped her with rehabilitation for substance use and find stability, ultimately allowing her to build a fulfilling life with her mother and daughter.

Created by Director of Women's Program Services Jennifer Wolter, My Story is an ongoing initiative designed to have

formerly incarcerated individuals visit the House of Correction to share their experiences with other individuals, offering encouragement and real-life examples of successful reentry. Sessions are held every two months and aim to provide residents with hope, motivation, and insight into the possibilities that await them after release.

To further reinforce these messages, posters featuring the speakers and summaries of their stories are displayed throughout Building 3, allowing residents to engage with these inspiring journeys even outside of the sessions.

## **HOUSING NAVIGATION SERVICES:**

Women incarcerated at the House of Correction participated in a one-on-one housing navigation session with Stephanie Mercado, Domestic Violence Program Manager at Justice 4 Housing. The organization works to combat housing discrimination and homelessness among individuals impacted by incarceration, as well as those criminalized for surviving domestic violence.

Mercado and Justice 4 Housing CEO and founder Leslie Credle launched the initiative "Behind the Wall," a program designed to support incarcerated individuals facing urgent housing challenges.

Through individualized consultations, Mercado meets directly with residents to review their situations case-by-case, helping identify housing emergencies, address risks of eviction, and assist those fleeing domestic violence or experiencing homelessness.

The program was created in response to a critical gap many incarcerated individuals face. When someone is detained, they are often unable to attend housing court or complete necessary paperwork to maintain their housing, which can result in the loss of their home. By working directly with residents while they are still in custody, the Behind the Wall program

aims to help protect housing stability and provide guidance during a vulnerable time.

To learn more about Justice 4 Housing and its work supporting housing stability for justice-impacted individuals, visit their website: [justice4housing.org](http://justice4housing.org).



## **SPECTRUM:**



At the beginning of the month, SPECTRUM hosted its second session, called "To Finding Love: Building Relationships and Recovery," led by Facilitator Kenia Edouard. The session began with a clip from the film "Fences," which served as a powerful starting point for a thoughtful group discussion about family dynamics, boundaries, communication, and the importance of self-love and self-respect.

Throughout the conversation, partic-

ipants explored sensitive topics such as insecurity and the meaning of unconditional love. They were also encouraged to focus on rebuilding their self-esteem through small but meaningful acts of self-care, like washing their hair, getting proper rest, practicing forgiveness, and taking time to care for themselves, reminding them that healing and healthy relationships often begin with self-love.

## **NEW INITIATIVES, WHAT'S COMING?:**

**Opening Doors to Self-Esteem:** A peer-led initiative created and facilitated by women in custody that provides a safe space for discussions on self-worth, covering topics such as confidence, personal values, radical acceptance, and gratitude.

**ReNewHER Program:** Developed by North Suffolk Community Services (NSCS), this program connects women with formerly justice-involved peer mentors who provide one-on-one support during incarceration and after release.

**The Dee Kennedy Project:** In partnership with NSCS, this program supports women with histories of sexual exploitation through one-on-one peer counseling, court advocacy, and connections to essential medical and recovery services.



## SCSD: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

### STACY BROWN, DIRECTOR OF VIRTUAL COURT COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY:



Strong leadership often means building systems. Throughout history, women have demonstrated such strength through innovation, resilience, and service to their communities. At the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, Stacy Brown, Director of Virtual Court Communications and Technology, is one of them.

Brown, who has served the Department for over eleven years, oversees the Virtual Court Division and manages between nineteen and one hundred and fifty virtual court sessions each week. Her work requires constant coordination with courts, attorneys, probation departments, interpreters, and multiple internal units to ensure that our residents are prepared for court and that each session runs smoothly. Through this work, the Department maintains seamless collaboration with the Massachusetts Trial Court system, which helps in reducing transportation costs, improving the safety for staff and residents alike, and minimizing delays through video conferencing.

When Brown joined the Department back in 2015, she was tasked with expanding the virtual court program, which at the time connected the Suffolk County with only eight of the mass trial courts in Suffolk County. Working closely with court representatives, magistrates and judges, she helped grow the program to reach courts across Massachusetts and broaden its use beyond criminal courts to include civil hearings, juvenile matters, mental health evaluations, and status reviews, among others. Earlier this year,

Brown also helped demonstrate our Video Court Division's impact during a visit from the Special Commission on Correctional Consolidation and Collaboration. "They asked a lot of important questions," Brown recalls. "If they're going to examine our facilities, they need to understand why programs like ours matter."

Before stepping into her current role, Brown served as Assistant Director of Social Services within our Department, where she helped develop and create Family Matters, a reentry program designed to connect our returning citizens with community resources such as housing assistance, mental health services, employment opportunities, health insurance, and others before release. Drawing on her prior experience working with community organizations and the Boston Public Schools, Brown built the program from the ground up after surveying residents nearing release to better understand their concerns and needs. Reflecting on the current growth of the program she helped build, Brown notes the importance of allowing ideas to evolve: "An architect doesn't build one building and stay in that building. I'm proud of everything I started that evolved, and still exists today."

Brown's dedication to service has guided her since she was young. "Ever since I was a teenager, I've always worked within my community," she shared. Today, through her leadership in technology, programming, and community connection, Brown continues to demonstrate how strong women leaders shape the institutions around them and create lasting impact for the people they serve.

# AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY



## WALKING WITH SENIORS: SUPER BOWL AND VALENTINE'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

Most Fridays, members of External Affairs and Communications and SCSD officers join the Boston Police Department B-2 Station for senior engagement at the Melnea A. Cass Recreation Center in Roxbury, MA. During these “Walking with Seniors” events, our officers are put to the test as they try to keep up around the track with these speedy seniors. This month, SCSD joined in the themed festivities

surrounding Super Bowl LX Sunday and Valentine’s Day weekend by donning Patriots gear and pink on their respective days. Keeping these traditions alive helps us strengthen community connections, especially given the isolation winter weather brings.

## SCSD JOINS B-2 FEBRUARY BREAK ALL-STAR CAMP:

From February 16th to 20th, members of the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department partnered with the Boston Police Department B-2 Community Service Office for its First Annual February Break All-Star Camp. Hosted at the Dewitt Center in Roxbury, MA, the weeklong program welcomed public school students from across Suffolk County, ages 8 to 14, for a dynamic mix of sports, enrichment, and hands-on learning opportunities during school vacation week. Designed to keep youth active and working families supported, the camp featured engaging activities ranging from life-saving CPR training to arts and crafts to interactive wildlife exhibits. SCSD was proud to join B-2 officers in fostering a safe environment for young people in our community, and we look forward to this continued partnership in its next iteration.



## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY WITH THE CHELSEA COMMUNITY:

Closing out Black History Month, the SCSD attended the annual Black History Month Celebration at Browne Middle School. In attendance were City Manager Fidel Maltez, District 2 City Councilor Deron Hines, and Reverend Art J. Gordon, among other prominent leaders in Chelsea, MA. At the event, officer staff strengthened relationships with our Chelsea Police Department peers and local families,

passing out Department shirts, coloring books, toy fidgets, badges, and other swag. SCSD is proud to advocate for cultural empowerment, and we recognize the exceptional work done by Black and Brown leaders in Chelsea and beyond.

## SCSD CELEBRATES FEBRUARY OFFICERS OF THE MONTH

The Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department is proud to recognize two outstanding staff members who earned the February Officer of the Month Award recognition for their actions that reflect their professionalism, care, and dedication that guide our work every day. At the House of Correction (HOC), Officer E. Rosario was recognized for her calm and effective response during a sensitive situation involving one of our residents and his family. While coordinating emergency communication between the resident and one of his relatives during an emotional moment, Officer Rosario skillfully managed multiple responsibilities at once, including other scheduled visits, ensuring the call was handled smoothly, among others. Dr. Waya, our HOC Chaplain who witnessed the moment, praised her ability to “masterfully coordinate the conversation, both technically and logically, while managing other attorney visits and assigning rooms efficiently,” noting that she remained professionally calm under pressure.

At the Suffolk County Jail, Sergeant P. Casey was honored for his quick actions during a medical emergency that helped save a colleague’s life. When a staff member began choking and was in distress, Sergeant Casey immediately performed the Heimlich maneuver. Jail Superintendent José Mojica commended Sergeant Casey’s actions, stating, “His immediate action to this medical emergency and his reliance on his training played a major factor in a successful outcome.”

Congratulations to Officer Rosario and Sergeant Casey on this well-deserved recognition. Their professionalism and dedication help keep our Department running safely and effectively every day.

# PAID SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM 2026



MASSACHUSETTS  
*Suffolk County*  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

## APPLY NOW!

This program invites fifteen participants to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department to learn about careers in Law Enforcement. Participants work 25 hours per-week, Monday through Friday, beginning July 13, 2026, and ending on August 14, 2026. The wage for SEP members is \$18 per-hour.

## SUMMER ENRICHMENT:

The Summer Enrichment Program is open to 11th and 12th graders and provides participants with the opportunity to learn about careers in Law Enforcement and the Criminal Legal System. The program includes an academic component, designed to enhance participants' skills in preparation for the 2026-2027 academic school year.

## APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS:

- ✦ Must be entering either the 11th or 12th grade
- ✦ Must be a resident of or student in Boston, Chelsea, Revere, or Winthrop
- ✦ Interest in Law Enforcement or the Criminal Legal System strongly encouraged
- ✦ Must have proper form of identification (Student ID, Passport, Mass ID, or Driver's License)
- ✦ Active Checking or Savings Account

## Contact Information:

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JULY 13, 2026  
-TO-  
AUGUST 14, 2026

DEADLINE FOR  
APPLYING  
FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2026

