

JULY 2016 ISSUE



# COMMON GROUND

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

DEPARTMENT HOLDS  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
GRADUATION

SHERIFF STANDS AGAINST  
GUN VIOLENCE

OUR SCSD

# MOTORCYCLE UNIT







# Sheriff's Statement

In this issue of *Common Ground*, we focus on some of the Department's more visible members – the Motorcycle Unit. The members of the SCSD Motorcycle Unit are thoroughly trained in the operation of their vehicles and fulfill a host of responsibilities for the Department, which include acting as escorts for funerals and dignitaries, and representing the Department at public events, memorials and parades.

Additional stories featured in this issue include my participation with United States Congresswoman Katherine Clark in her stand against gun violence; our Department's Vocational Education Graduation; our support for Recovery Thoughts Addiction Awareness, Inc.'s addiction recovery efforts; and more.

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition of *Common Ground*, and we look forward to bringing you more insight into the Department's programs and people in the months ahead.

**-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins**

## Department Joins Recovery Thoughts Addiction Awareness, Inc.

**S**heriff Steven W. Tompkins and members of SCSD took part in the Recovery Thoughts Addiction Awareness, Inc. Walk event last month. During the speaking portion of the event, several participants talked about their recovery from addiction, and the need for more community services for those afflicted with this disease. With more than 70 percent of the people in SCSD care and custody being incarcerated as a result of substance and alcohol addiction, the Department provides a number of addiction recovery and behavioral modification programs to inmates and detainees behind its walls, and SCSD applauds programs like Recovery Thoughts Addiction Awareness, Inc. which strives to break the vicious cycle of addiction for residents outside in neighborhoods of Suffolk County.



# SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HOLDS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION GRADUATION

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently held a graduation ceremony for participants of three Vocational Education programs: the Common Ground Institute, Culinary Arts Program and the Basic Auto 101 Course. The Common Ground Institute (CGI) is a 10-week vocational skill-based program that is divided into two 5-week modules. Each section is designed to enhance and fortify employment skills that will aid participants in making a successful transition back into society post-incarceration.

The Culinary Arts Program trains incarcerated men and women at the House of Correction in food service industry basics such as kitchen safety, proper use of utensils, culinary terminology, teamwork in a kitchen environment; and demonstration of knowledge in basic math and reading that is required to prepare and cook foods properly. The ultimate goal of the Culinary Arts Program is to impart skills that will enable participants to become employable upon returning back to their communities.

The Basic Auto 101 Course is a nine-week program in which inmates learn the fundamentals about changing oil, lubrication, auto shop tools and equipment, electrical systems, cooling and climate control, steering, suspension, tires and roadside emergencies. After finishing this course, incarcerated individuals leave with a better understanding of vehicle construction, care and repair.



The Vocational Education graduation ceremony is meant to celebrate those who have successfully completed the program, thereby gaining skills that will help them to secure employment upon release. Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins was particularly pleased to see another group of returning citizens through these positive steps, which will help them to secure their futures.



“Programs like these are what we are all about at the Sheriff’s Department,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “It isn’t simply enough to take care of inmates while they’re in our facilities; we have to provide them with the tools they need to better themselves when they return to their communities so that they don’t come back. The men and women who just graduated have demonstrated that they want better for themselves and their families, and with these new skills under their belts, they have a chance to achieve just that.”

**For more information about our Vocational Education Programs, please visit: [www.scsdma.org](http://www.scsdma.org)**





## SCSD Pays Tribute to Victims of the Orlando Shooting

Members of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department joined with hundreds of people assembled at Boston City Hall to pay tribute to the victims of the Orlando, Florida shooting. Many within the audience carried flags and signs calling for peace, as songs were sung and speakers addressed the audience.

Deputies Ashley and Powell represented SCSD at the vigil. Following the speaking engagement, participants of the vigil were asked to sign a book of condolence that will be sent to Orlando, Florida.



## House of Correction Superintendent Yolanda Smith Delivers Commencement Speech Awareness, Inc.



Suffolk County House of Correction Superintendent Yolanda Smith recently attended the Eighth Grade Graduation Ceremony for the Oliver Hazard Perry School in South Boston. While addressing the graduates, Superintendent Smith spoke about the importance of education and respecting others.

## Mildred Avenue Community Center Students Win Peace Rally Video Contest

In honor of National Youth Violence Prevention Week in April, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department partnered with the United States Attorney's Office, the Boston Police Department, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office and Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) to sponsor the "Youth Standing Strong Against Violence Peace Rally/Anti-Violence Contest Awards," a citywide peace rally.

Students from around the Greater Boston area submitted videos, art and poetry as a means to highlight their voices in preventing and reducing youth violence. The winners, Loubenz Thomas, Oldenson Dumel and Neyquan Wallas, made an impressive video highlighting the importance of refraining from violence.

The young men's hip hop video, "All I Want is Peace" outlines issues occurring in the Boston area that ranged from gun violence to dropping out of high school. In the video, all three young men urge the community to come together as one to suppress the violence that occurs on a daily basis with the help of peace.

Members of Jam'n 94.5 gave the winners a tour of the facility, in addition to a tour and interview on live radio. As they toured the studio and were interviewed on live radio, DJ Edubble sent a clear message to the winners and listeners on the radio alike: "Experience is great – don't get me wrong, that's going to be the biggest teacher in life – but college is an experience on its own."



# Sheriff Tompkins Joins Congresswoman Clark in Stand Against Gun Violence



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined United States Congresswoman Katherine Clark and a gathering of elected officials from across Massachusetts, members of law enforcement, and activists to demand that members of Congress be allowed to debate and vote on pending legislation designed to reduce gun violence.

Before introducing Congresswoman Clark, amidst a sea of signs and supporters, Sheriff Tompkins delivered an impassioned address calling for federal laws to echo Massachusetts gun safety laws.

“Here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we have some of the strictest gun laws anywhere in the nation,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “But, part of the problem that we face is the import of guns across our borders from states that have significantly fewer restrictions than ours.”

“Sitting between neighboring states with lax gun laws is kind of like sitting on a rock in the middle of the ocean during a rising tide and praying you don’t get wet,” Sheriff Tompkins continued. “It doesn’t matter how high up on the rock you try to sit, eventually, you’re under water. It makes no sense.”

Continuing the efforts to force a debate on gun safety legislation that she began weeks earlier when she and several of her colleagues – including legendary civil rights activist Congressman John Lewis – staged an historic sit-in on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Clark spoke emphatically about the purpose of the event.

“We are America,” said Congresswoman Clark. “We are Massachusetts. We sit in the cradle of innovation. We know that we can balance civil liberties, our rights under the Constitution, with common sense measures that protect our families and our children... We are not going to allow these routine massacres to become some sort of grisly normal.”

Almost prophetically, near the conclusion of the event, Congresswoman Clark revealed that the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives had relented and is set to allow a vote on a piece of legislation that would prevent those on terrorism watch lists from being able to purchase guns. There is no word yet about a possible vote on the provision that calls for expanded background checks.



Others who spoke at the rally included Boston Mayor Marty Walsh; Massachusetts House Speaker Robert DeLeo; MA Senate President Stanley Rosenberg; MA Attorney General Maura Healey; and Congressman Joseph Kennedy, III.

Also in attendance were: Boston Police Commissioner William Evans; Mayor of Cambridge Denise Simmons; State Senators William Brownsberger, Sal DiDomenico, Linda Dorcena Forry, Thomas McGee, Ken Donnelly, Michael Brady, and Joe Boncore; State Representatives Liz Malia, Dan Cullinane, Evandro Carvahlo, Dan Ryan, and Gloria Fox; Boston City Councillor Matt O’Malley; New Bedford City Councillor Dana Rebeiro, Stop Handgun Violence founder John Rosenthal, and many others.



# Sgt. Walter Vasile

## Employee Profile



**S**ergeant Walter Vasile currently serves as an Officer at the Nashua Street Jail as well as a member of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Honor Guard and Motorcycle Unit. An 18 year veteran, Sgt. Vasile proudly serves the Department within the walls of our facilities and throughout the community.

"Beyond my day-to-day job, I really enjoy the outside activities I get to do as a member of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. Being on the Motorcycle Unit has exposed me to a lot of great people and as a result, I've learned tremendously from those interactions." Sgt. Vasile's experience with the Motorcycle Unit began in 2003, when a sergeant at the time encouraged him to take extra courses in order to join the unit. "I had my own personal bike and it seemed like the perfect opportunity."

Reflecting on his time with the Motorcycle Unit, Sgt. Vasile emphasized the individual roles each of the nine members of the team have and the significance of their hard work. Being a member of the Motorcycle Unit goes beyond the boundaries of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and often includes working with members of other Sheriff's Departments, as well as other law enforcement entities throughout Suffolk County and beyond. "In every community event, funeral or law enforcement role, we all collectively have a strong sense of comradery. This is so important because at the end of the day, we represent the department, every officer, every caseworker- everyone."

Giving words of encouragement to new officers, Sgt. Vasile voiced, "When I first started, I remember thinking to myself, is this really what I wanted to do? Over the past 18

years, I've had great opportunities I would have never imagined, such as working with various tactical teams, the Federal Bureau of Investigations and being a member of the FBI Hostage Negotiation Team, in addition to all the things I get to do directly with the Department. As long as you stay true to whom you are and do the right thing you will enjoy yourself"







## *The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Motorcycle Unit*

Since the inception of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Motorcycle Unit, specially trained and selected officers have represented the Department with great pride and motivation. The Motorcycle Unit is especially valuable because of its ability to work its way through heavy traffic that would normally prohibit the movement of our cruisers. The Department currently utilizes four individual motorcycles, which are highly maneuverable and excellent for police escorts for funerals and dignitary escorts, as well as for parades and community events.

Members of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department carefully select highly trained and dedicated officers who express an interest in riding motorcycles and already have their motorcycle licenses. All members of the Unit have successfully completed a 40-hour training course that teaches officers the balance and precision of maneuvering a police motorcycle and includes everything from shifting lanes, avoiding accidents, to acceleration techniques and everything in between. The training course also includes an obstacle course in which officers apply their training. The members of the Motorcycle Unit continue to be a valuable asset to the Department and continue to ride in style.





## COMMON GROUND *NEWSLETTER*

SANDY ZAMOR CALIXTE - CHIEF  
COLLEEN FONSECA - EDITOR

## SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PHONE. 617-704-6688  
FAX. 617-704-6750

VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE  
[WWW.SCSDMA.ORG](http://WWW.SCSDMA.ORG)