



COMMON GROUND

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

New Program Helps Inmates
R.I.S.E. To Occasion



CONGRATULATIONS 2016
SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM GRADUATES



Sheriff's Statement

For the third straight year, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department welcomed a diverse group of high school juniors and seniors from the neighborhoods of Boston, Chelsea, Revere and Winthrop to participate in our Summer Enrichment Program (SEP).

During this seven-week program, I had the chance to watch these 19 young men and women as they displayed professionalism at their job posts in the House of Correction, Nashua Street Jail, Chelsea Training Academy and Civil Process Division, and took seriously the opportunities presented to them in the form of field visits and speaking events with representatives from a wide variety of law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. In each instance, the members of the SEP asked thoughtful questions, spoke insightfully about their future plans for college, and about their potential employment within the realm of law enforcement and criminal justice.

I am proud of these young people for their commitment to the program and I am confident that they have gained a greater sense of civic responsibility that they will carry with them into their schools and throughout their lives as adults.

I am also proud of the members of our Department, not only for their professionalism and care with our students, but for their willingness to take these youngsters under wing and mentor them along the way.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Co-Hosts American Correctional Association Conference



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department was honored to be a co-chair of the American Correctional Association's (ACA) 146th Congress of Correction at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. For more than 143 years, the American Correctional Association has championed the cause of corrections and correctional effectiveness. This year's Congress brought over 2,000 participants to Boston for workshops focusing on a variety of topics including: mental illness and addiction, new educational opportunities for prisoners, family reunification, strategic planning, and more.



SHERIFF TOMPKINS, DEPARTMENT CONVENE “A CONVERSATION ABOUT RACE”



Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department held a public discussion about race at Roxbury Community College.

Sheriff Tompkins assembled a distinguished panel of speakers that included Rt. Reverend Jack Ahern of Saint Mary Parish; Andrea Cabral, Former Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety and Security; Evandro Carvalho, State Representative for the 5th Suffolk District; Michael Curry, President of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Boston Chapter; William Gross, Superintendent-In-Chief of the Boston Police Department; Akilah Johnson, Boston Globe Journalist; Steve Koczela, President of the MassINC Polling Group; Dan Mulhern, Director of the City of Boston's Public Safety Initiative; Tonya Platt, Suffolk County Assistant District Attorney; Dan Rivera, Mayor of Lawrence; Alberto Vasallo, Jr., Founder and President of El Mundo; and Teri Williams, Chief Operating Officer and President of OneUnited Bank.

Before an audience of more than 350 people, Sheriff Tompkins opened the discussion with a brief statement about the timing and reasoning behind the topic.

“It is my hope,” said Sheriff Tompkins, “that this is just the beginning of the discussion about race that other organizations, other institutions, other citizens will pick up and continue, because it's crucially important to achieving a greater understanding of each other that will lead to the eventual dissolution of racism. It is time for us to recognize as a nation that our differences are our strengths and more than divide and separate us, they should be enriching and uniting us as one people.”

Diving into the issue, each panelist spoke from their unique experiences about some of the effects of racism in our society and what might be done to begin mitigating it.

Spanning just over two-and-a-half hours, the conversation about race was direct but cordial, and participants spoke about the need for action, even as they called for more similar discussions.

“Ask yourself ‘what do I do to advance what I think is important?’” said Ms. Cabral. “Take responsibility for making change.”

“Tonight was very necessary,” said El Mundo President and Founder Alberto Vasallo, Jr. “We need to have uncomfortable conversations about race together as a group. It's the only way.”



Employee Profile: Sgt. Regina Williams



Sergeant Regina Williams will be celebrating her 18th year working with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD).

Sergeant Williams is primarily responsible for the care, custody, and control of incarcerated men and women at the South Bay House of Correction. She was promoted to her rank of Sergeant in December of 2015.

Delving into Sgt. William's experience within the walls of the Sheriff's Department, she has dedicated her time working with various incarcerated populations, in addition to her involvement with SCSD initiatives such, as Jail Brake and the Choice Officer School Program. Jail Brake is directed towards troubled youth who have had some involvement with the criminal justice system, and the Choice Officer Program is an initiative in which officers go into schools and talk with young people about making positive choices for future success while reinforcing the theme of respect for oneself and for others around them.

Reflecting on her motivation to become a correction officer, Sgt. Williams cites her time working at a juvenile detention center years ago.

Working with youths is at the center of Sgt. Williams' drive and dedication, and at the core of her active participation with the SCSD's Summer Enrichment Program. Working alongside students in the program, Sgt. Williams leads tours at the South Bay House of Correction, and ensures participants are safely transported and accompanied on all of their field trips. She also serves as a role model to the young people.

"It's really exciting for me to see how interested and in tune with everything they are while they learn about the criminal justice system," said Williams.

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Bids Farewell to Summer Enrichment Program Participants

Last month, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department celebrated the accomplishments of 19 Suffolk County Students enrolled in the Department's Summer Enrichment Program (SEP). After having them spend the prior seven weeks as interns here with us at the Department, we are so proud to congratulate them on their well-deserved accomplishments. Witnessing their growth as they were immersed in the field of law enforcement, we are confident their experience with us will only bolster their success well into the future. From everyone at the Department, we want to offer best wishes to all of our graduates for their upcoming school year and continued academic and professional success.

Now in its third year, the Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) was created by Sheriff Tompkins in the summer of 2014 as a means of not only providing summer employment to Suffolk County teens, but also to give those interested in a career in law enforcement the opportunity to learn about the many branches of law enforcement and criminal justice through job shadowing, weekly presentations by members of law enforcement and the criminal justice community, roundtable discussions, law enforcement-related field trips, and educational tours.



Gathering at the Nashua Street Jail, participants and staff reflected on their summer journey through the criminal justice system, including meetings with Boston Mayor Martin Walsh and Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker as well as with representatives from Dorchester District Court, the Boston Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the Boston Fire Department, the Massachusetts State Police, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, the United States Marshals Office, Boston City Hall, and others.

To learn more about the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Summer Enrichment Program, visit: www.scsdma.org or contact Nadia Lovinsky at (617) 704 6656 or nlovinsky@scsdma.org



QUOTES FROM SUMMER ENRICHMENT STUDENTS



Michael Griffin

Boston Latin Academy, Junior

"I envision myself in the future working in the FBI or DEA. I want to make a difference in life, and growing up in Dorchester, I saw some of the awfulness in life, but working with these agencies, I could one day fix these horrendous problems. I would be interested in being a politician where my actions could make an even bigger difference."



Megan Nguyen

Boston Latin Academy, Junior

"It really surprised me to see that the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has a significant amount of reentry, rehabilitative, and education programs available to the detainees and inmates. The complexity and efforts devoted into these programs are astounding."



Yvelisse Rodriguez

Boston Latin Academy, Junior

"I particularly enjoyed the FBI and U.S. Marshall presentations. I have also been able to work the front lobby of the Nashua Street Jail. In the future, I hope to learn more about the training that goes into becoming each member of a particular category of law enforcement."



Kingsley Umemba

Boston Latin Academy, Senior

"I would like to be a lawyer after going through the Summer Enrichment Program. This program has taught me that no matter who you are, no matter what you have done, everyone deserves a second chance (and as many as necessary). Anyone can change for the better, provided the correct environment. No one was born evil or ever decided to commit a crime simply because they felt like it. There is always a story that follows that person and it is up to everyone to try and fix that problem from the past."

Sheriff's Department Program Aims To Help Inmates R.I.S.E. To Success

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department welcomed Boston City Councilor At-Large Ayanna Pressley; President of "The Base," Robert Lewis, Jr.; and community organizer Darren Howell to the Suffolk County House of Correction to speak at the Department's new Re-Entry Initiatives to Successful Employment (R.I.S.E.) Program.

R.I.S.E. is a job readiness program that trains participants to develop the skills that can lead to successful employment upon release through the use of real-time mock interviews with real employers.

Eligibility for the mock interview program includes participation in job readiness training, provided in partnership with Project Place, which includes resume and application tutorials, workplace readiness trainings, and workshops designed to teach participants how to effectively communicate their abilities, skills, qualifications and experience to potential employers.

The thirteen participants of this inaugural program brought their newly-acquired skills into practice over two fifteen-minute mock interview sessions with eight Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I.) "friendly" employers and vendors, who then provided constructive feedback.



House of Correction Superintendent Yolanda Smith opened the event speaking about the importance of the program and thanking the participating businesses.

"I especially want to thank the business partners who have so generously come in to help us," said Superintendent Smith. "We are so very excited to have you here to help us as we prepare our men and women to return to their communities."

Keynote speaker Councilor Ayanna Pressley detailed her experiences as the daughter of an incarcerated parent and spoke about the critical role that families play in successful re-entry.

"Never lose sight of the most important thing, which is family and reconnecting with it," said Councilor Pressley. "I just want for you to keep fighting for your families, fighting for your children. I have every confidence in the world that you all will continue to rise and go on to make the contributions to the community that we need you to make. We really do need you."

Community organizer Darren Howell, spoke of his personal experience as a formerly incarcerated individual at the House of Correction and about overcoming the obstacle of his C.O.R.I.

"In two weeks, I'll be celebrating my 12-year anniversary since the day of my release from this facility," said Howell. "When I was released, I didn't know how to answer the question, 'Have you ever been convicted of a crime?' It's still a difficult question for people to answer for employers but, hopefully, this program will help you to be able to answer it confidently, secure employment and begin living a positive, successful life."



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