



COMMON GROUND

FEBRUARY 2017 ISSUE

SPECIAL SHERIFF & SUPERINTENDENT
OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL
EUGENE SUMPTER



**AN INSIDE LOOK AT
SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL**

**INTRODUCING THE SCSD
COMMUNITY CONSORTIUM**

Sheriff's Statement



In this issue, we profile Suffolk County Jail Superintendent and Special Sheriff Eugene Sumpter as we offer a look inside at the form and functions of the facility.

We also highlight some of the Department's programming, including our new Community Consortium Initiative, which works to bolster resources for families of the incarcerated; and a program that provides inmates and detainees who are departing the institution with coats during the cold winter months.

The Choice Program, which is designed to encourage children to respect themselves and others while preparing themselves for a positive future, is also featured this month. Officers participating in the program speak to young people about the dangers of drug use and gang involvement, and also discuss bullying, and civic engagement, education, and the consequences of criminal activity.

Finally, in this February issue, we also briefly showcase just two of several events that I attended in celebration of the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which serves an appropriate beginning to our celebration of this nation's month-long recognition of Black History.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

Index

Community Consortium

Read about the Department's launch of a new series of meetings for service providers to foster community connected practice with the intention of building resources to serve and strengthen the families of the incarcerated.

Employee Profile

Meet the Department's very own Special Sheriff and Superintendent of the Suffolk County Jail Eugene Sumpter.

Suffolk County Jail: An Inside Look



A brief review of the Suffolk County Jail located in the West End on 200 Nashua Street in Boston.

Winter Coats For Inmates

Read about the SCSD initiative that distributes warm coats to ex-offenders reentering the neighborhoods of Suffolk County during the cold winter months.

MLK Weekend

Join us in celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with Sheriff Tompkins and others.

Choice Program

Learn about how our officers are helping youth throughout Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop and Revere meet the many challenges that they may face on a daily basis.





SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES COMMUNITY CONSORTIUM INITIATIVE

This past month, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Family Matters Program launched the Community Consortium Initiative, a series of meetings for service providers to foster community connected practice with the intention of building resources to serve and strengthen the families of the incarcerated.

The meeting, convened at the Ella J. Baker House in Dorchester, kicked off with welcoming remarks by the Department's Family Matters Program Director Karla Walker.

"We are all here today to discuss our work and look into the intentional partnerships that we can build upon to move the communities we work with forward," said Walker.

The meeting began with introductions of members from 31 service providers, followed by an overview of the Family Matters program.

Family Matters is a voluntary program under the Division of Re-Integration Services at the Suffolk House of Correction developed to assist inmates and their families with working toward positive relationships. The issues facing the currently incarcerated upon release are numerous, often confounding, and have a drastic impact on all of the connected relationships. In an effort to assist those in the care and custody of the Department to re-enter society more successfully, the program targets families because of the powerful role that they can play in supporting, guiding and inspiring currently incarcerated individuals upon their release.

Launched in 2015, the program started with an event in which service providers across Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop and Revere came together to discuss how to better forge relationships with community-based partners. Since its inception, the Family Matters Program has evolved from its earlier role as an entity that primarily focused on providing

referrals to resources for the families of recently released former offenders.

Through the building of intentional community partnerships, the Family Matters Program hopes to continue to create strong relationships with agencies to deliver services to families before individuals are released. In an effort to build positive rapport, incarcerated individuals at the Suffolk County House of Correction are introduced to a number of community support providers to whom they will later be referred upon their release.

Representatives from Family Matters' primary partners also spoke about the way in which intentional partnerships work, as well as the success that they've had and the opportunities that these partnerships present. Attendees of the meeting then broke out into groups to discuss how to best deliver services through community connected practices. Building off of their collective expertise, members of the Community Consortium generated next steps directed at strengthening the families and communities of Suffolk County.

"I am really proud of this program because we engage our population with hopefulness," said Walker. "Our objective for the program and Community Consortium is to build upon and strengthen families while an individual is incarcerated, when they are released and beyond."



Employee Profile: Superintendent of the Suffolk County Jail and Special Sheriff Eugene Sumpter



Eugene Sumpter, Superintendent of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Suffolk County Jail and Special Sheriff, began his service in 1989, in a career that has spanned over 27 years.

As a Jail Officer at the old Charles Street Jail, Superintendent Sumpter participated in the transition to the new facility, now known as the Suffolk County Jail, where he continued to work as a unit officer.

Speaking about the transition, Superintendent Sumpter remarked, "My fondest memory, which will always stick with me, is about how much of a change there was from Charles Street to Nashua Street. The quality of education we now provide to our officers, programs and services offered to the detainees made this a much different place. Looking back and seeing how things operated it's powerful to have been a part of all the changes and knowing that I had a hand in it. You won't find anyone more proud of what we have accomplished from those days."

As the Superintendent of the Suffolk County Jail, Sumpter is responsible for the overall operation of the facility, including managing all uniformed staff as well as the individuals remanded to the care and custody of the Jail, where approximately 6,300 detainee admissions are processed annually.

Over the course of his career, Superintendent Sumpter has steadily risen through the ranks, receiving successive promotions to become a Corporal, Lieutenant and Drill Instructor for the Basic Training Academy, Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Operations, Deputy Superintendent of Operations and finally

Superintendent of the Nashua Street Jail. In March of 2013, Superintendent Sumpter was honored with the mantle and responsibilities of Special Sheriff, a position that entrusts him with the authority to discharge the duties of the sitting sheriff, should they be unable to perform those aforementioned duties.

Reminiscing about his entry into the Department, Superintendent Sumpter described how two of his friends expressed interest in joining the Department and encouraged him to apply.

"After I applied, I thought, 'we'll see what happens.' I ended up getting the job and my two friends didn't. Today it's a funny story that we still laugh about from back then. Twenty-seven-plus years later, I'm glad I made the decision to apply."



Summarizing his time with the Department and the importance of good leadership, Superintendent Sumpter

stated, "All of the staff here, all of us at the top are nothing without the good people who work here. I like to think that the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is really the leader when it comes to corrections, and we have excelled here over the years. I think that's what keeps me going. In order to keep progressing, we need new ideas on how to operate, and I'm proud to say that's what we encourage and implement here."

SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL: AN INSIDE LOOK

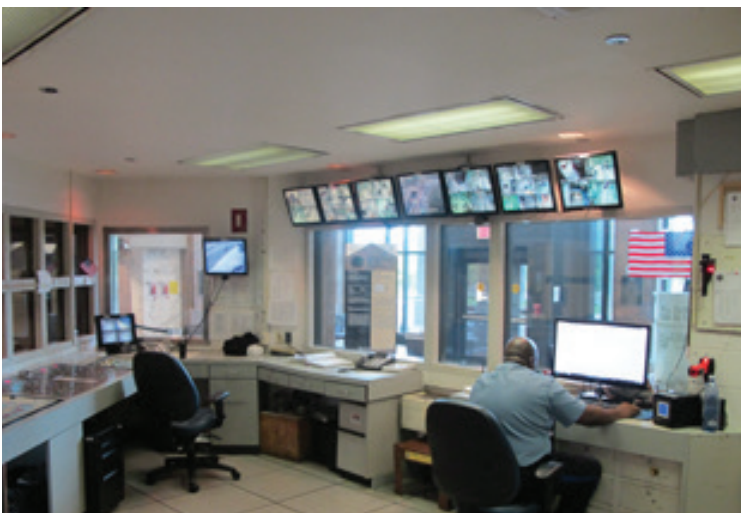
The Suffolk County Jail is located at 200 Nashua Street in Boston and was built as a replacement for the historic Charles Street Jail, which had been in operation since 1851 before a 1973 federal court decision ordered it closed. Built at a cost of \$54 million on 2.1 acres of land and totaling 249,540 sq. ft., the Suffolk County Jail (SCJ) became fully operational in 1990. A maximum-security facility, the SCJ has 13 individual housing units with 453 cells, containing 741 beds, and is audited by the Department Of Correction, National Commission on Correctional Health Care and Department of Public Health.

The SCJ processes approximately 6,300 individual admissions per year, and our Transportation Division, booking and property areas maintain effective operations at the facility with the constant movement of inmates and detainees throughout the county and Commonwealth for court and facility transfers. The Transportation/Dispatch Divisions are responsible for approximately 45,000 transportation/court escorts annually, delivering both pre-trial and sentenced individuals to courts and correctional facilities throughout Massachusetts.

The SCJ continues to use the latest in correctional technology to maintain safe and secure housing units for pretrial detainees. The Jail is fully compliant with all health and safety codes including the Americans with Disabilities Act. The command staff, along with all Jail employees, continues to maintain a modern facility for the care and custody of detainees.

Annually, the kitchen staff serves more than 730,000 meals per day to detainees. The staff also takes time to prepare separate meals for days honoring different ethnic, religious, and cultural holidays. On average, the Jail serves 2,000 meals each day, depending on the size of the population.

For more information on the operations of the Suffolk County Jail or to schedule a tour for a group, please call the External Affairs Division and speak with Lt. Abiezer Ayuso at (617) 704-6652.



SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT COAT PROGRAM COVERS EX-OFFENDERS DURING WINTER MONTHS

As traditional winter in New England begins to take hold in earnest, citizens of Suffolk County are steeling themselves against the inevitable cold and snow likely to highlight portions of the next few months.

While most residents bundle up in layers and warm coats to brave the elements, some ex-offenders on the verge of completing their sentences at the Suffolk County House of Correction are faced with the daunting prospect of trying to begin this new chapter in their lives by stepping out into the air wearing only the clothes they came in with during the warmer months.

Enter Suffolk County Sheriff's Department caseworker Nick Lahage.

"Some inmates come into the institution at the beginning of their sentence in a t-shirt and shorts," said Lahage. "Then, they walk out the front door in mid-winter with no one waiting to greet them. Providing a warm coat is a small service, but when it's freezing outside, it doesn't seem so insignificant."

According to Lahage, the first seeds for the coat drive were planted about 15 years ago while he was working as a discharge planner for the Department. That's when he began gathering coats for inmates, tapping into several of his contacts within the community and rounding up donations of coats to give out to those in need during the winter months. What started then as a small gesture of support for ex-of-



fenders looking to turn their lives around has now become a regular part of discharge planning.

"I use connections to community-based agencies that I've made over the years," said Lahage. "I worked with some of these organizations even before I came to the Department. Many of them have surplus coats in stock – nothing fancy, but warm enough for people leaving us to use to get to their next stop."

Once the call comes in that an agency has coats to give, the donations are collected, run through a security check and then stored in Inmate Property. To receive a coat, all that one has to do is ask for one at discharge from the facility when they claim their property.

"We've probably given out a thousand coats over the last 12 years," Lahage said. "By springtime, they're all gone. Inmates are sometimes surprised that we have them to give when they ask, and they're grateful for the service. It's just another little thing that we can do to try and make their transition back into the world easier and, hopefully, more positive."



SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS, DEPARTMENT CELEBRATE DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined with elected officials, community activists and residents, representatives of local agencies and organizations to participate in the 9th Annual Roxbury YMCA Martin Luther King, Jr. Business & Community Breakfast.



Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins took part in the 47th Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center in South Boston. The breakfast is the longest running event in the country honoring the late civil rights leader.

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT CHOICE OFFICER PROGRAM



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department would like to encourage schools across Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop and Revere to schedule a presentation from our Choice Officer Program.

The Choice Officer Program is a one-hour presentation that was developed as a guide for youths to help them meet the many challenges that they may face on a daily basis, with regard to peer pressure, civics, bullying, civic engagement making the right choices and much more.

Officers who serve in the program have all been recruited because of their passion for helping youths, and they have all successfully completed 40 hours of required training, which includes learning techniques about how to address a number of topics with the children. Classes and programs that have students 12-years of age and older are also invited to follow up with a tour of the Nashua Street Jail or South Bay House of Correction at a later date.

If you are interested in participating in the Choice Officer Program, or would like more information please contact Lieutenant Abiezer Ayuso at (617) 704-6652 or aayuso@scsdma.org





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