



COMMON GROUND

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



THE WOMEN OF SCSD

NOW YOU SEE: PHOTO EXHIBIT • RECOVERY PROGRAM LAUNCH

Sheriff's Statement



As many of our readers already know, our mandate at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is for the care, custody and control of inmates and detainees who are remanded to our two facilities – the Suffolk County Jail and the Suffolk County House of Correction. Within that mandate is our mission to provide the kinds of programming

and services that will offer incarcerated men and women the means with which to return to their communities with greater skills and connections to agencies that can help them to better provide for themselves and their families.

Among the many ways in which we deliver on this mission is through the creation of specific plans based on the understanding that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to rehabilitation. One powerful example of this tailored focus includes the programming that we provide for female offenders. Acknowledging that women’s developmental, experiential, cultural and physical realities differ from that of their male counterparts, the Department employs gender-specific services, along with individualized reintegration programming to both detained and sentenced females at the Suffolk County House of Correction.

In addition to our feature on the Women’s Program Services Division, you can also read about our Recovery Partnership with the City of Boston, my support of the White Ribbon Day Campaign, our collaboration with the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office for the “Now You See” photo exhibit, and more in this edition of the Common Ground Newsletter.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

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Sheriff Tompkins Joins With DA Conley For: “Now You See” Photo Exhibit



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently teamed up with the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office for an unveiling and certificate ceremony in recognition of the “Now You See” photo exhibit. “Now You See: A Celebration of Courageous Kids” is a photo exhibit that reveals the bravery of abused, neglected, and exploited children who disclose their trauma to law enforcement. The exhibit recently traveled to the Suffolk County House of Correction, where currently incarcerated women were interviewed about the trauma that they themselves have experienced.

In an event held at the Suffolk County House of Correction, attendees gathered to recognize and hear the voices of abused and neglected people as the women participating in the gallery unveiled their exhibit. Six incarcerated women participated in the series, having their photos taken by Suffolk County District Attorney's Office Director of Youth Safety and Outreach Jacquelyn Lamont.

The event also included presentations by Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, District Attorney Dan Conley, Superintendent of the House of Correction Yolanda Smith, Director of Youth Safety and Outreach Jacquelyn Lamont, and Director of Women's Programming at the House of Correction Christina Ruccio.

With each gallery submission, a photograph of the eyes of the participants was featured, along with a brief statement that described some of the trauma they have personally experienced. As survivors of trauma and violence, they share messages with others who have experienced similar circumstances in an effort to promote healing and bring attention to the great need that exists to address the issues of trauma and violence.

“It is important to know that there are people around to help in the most desperate of times. Never lose hope. Strength is key,” read one message. “You are somebody and if you ever feel that no one loves you, find the love you have for yourself,” read another. “Although it seems dark at times, I'm here to tell you that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Breathe. And hold on to hope. You have survived!”

Women of SCSD



Assistant Deputy Superintendent Major Marie Bowden-Lockhart 30 Years

“Corrections is a unique and challenging people business. Although I am a correction professional charged with the care, custody and control of incarcerated individuals, I also find myself wearing many different hats - enforcer, mentor, mediator and sometimes the mother and big sister, helping our population to manage and rebuild their the lives. I am the first women in the history of the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department to be promoted to the rank of Captain and Shift Commander. If you are looking for a challenging rewarding professional job, with financial stability, and opportunities for personal and professional growth: this is the place for you.”



K-9 Division Deputy Julie Wilder 12 years

“I am the first woman to ever join the K-9 team at the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department. One of the reasons why I wanted to work with the K-9 Unit is because while I was overseas with the military I witnessed K-9’s working and protecting the lives of service men and women. I gained a new level of respect for K-9’s and their handlers from that experience. Being a K-9 Officer has always been a goal of mine, but it takes hard work and dedication. To women interested in law enforcement, set goals for yourself and fulfill those goals before moving to the next one. When you put in the work, the sky is the limit. ”



Training Division Lieutenant Jessica Cabrera 20 years

“When I started off as an Officer at the Nashua Street Jail in 1997, I think there was only one woman captain and one woman lieutenant. There weren’t many women of rank when I started, and it’s incredible to see that we are all just moving on up. To women who are new to the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department or interested in law enforcement, learn to do different tasks, give different things a try, give yourself a chance, and stay up to all of the challenges that lie ahead.”



House of Correction Lieutenant Alicia Crosby 15 years

“As a woman, I can’t say that I ever felt different from the men working beside me. I began my career observing the many hard working men and women employed with the Department. When the opportunity arose to advance, I was prepared. I, along with the many talented women employed in the field, should serve as testament that gender should never be a limitation when pursuing your dreams!”



Director of Women’s Program Services Christina Ruccio 12 years

“In my current position, I have the unique ability to collaborate with a wide array of both public and private agencies to better address the public health and safety needs of Suffolk County. For women in this field and interested in law enforcement, the power of mutual respect and support for one another can never be overstated.”



Women's Program Services



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Women's Programming Division was established in direct response to the unique needs of the growing number of women entering into the criminal justice system. The Division is centered on delivering gender-specific, individualized reintegration programming to both detained and sentenced females at the Suffolk County House of Correction.

Since joining the Department in May of 2004, Director of Women's Programming, Christina Ruccio has led an all-female team to manage the caseloads of the women remanded to the care and custody of the Suffolk County House of Correction.

"These women have been through a lot but we believe in the power of second chances," Ruccio said.

The program, which was launched in 2006, is gender-specific and tailors its curricula and design to the specific needs of incarcerated women and the circumstances surrounding their criminal decision-making.

"I think in recent years there is more of an understanding about incarcerated women and the fact that they have different needs than the men with respect to programming and mental and physical health," said Ruccio.

Compared to incarcerated men, incarcerated women come in with a different set of issues than their male counterparts. Nationally, one out of every four women will experience domestic violence in their lifetime and 85 percent of domestic violence victims are women. Nearly seventy-five percent of the women currently incarcerated at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department self-identify as having experienced some form of domestic violence at some point in their life.

Sarrah Essaibi, a caseworker for the Women's Programming Division stated, "The women incarcerated here have experienced a lot of trauma and post traumatic stress from assault, abuse and rape." Furthermore, many of the currently incarcerated women are mothers and have to grapple with complex family issues and custody agreements."



“Our women are not needy, they just have different needs,” said Linda Wheeler, a member of the Women’s Program Services team who works as the Casework Supervisor. “In many instances, the women are the primary caretakers for their parents and their children,”

To bolster the greater goal of successful individualized reintegration, all women are paired up with a specific caseworker and work with that person for the entire duration of their incarceration. In cases where a former inmate re-offends, they are assigned the same caseworker that they had during their previous incarceration to maintain continuity. While each staff member handles a number of different caseloads at a time, they all strive to meet the unique needs of each of the women in the program in order to help them to succeed.

Speaking about the daily tasks undertaken by an employee assigned to the Women’s Program Services Division, Christine Kelly, a caseworker, said, “On any given day we are running assessments, identifying whether our women have court dates, open cases, and/or warrants. We are coordinating with their attorneys, probation, parole, and are responsible for creating their discharge plans.”

All detained and sentenced females are enrolled in a three-phased program model that begins with Phase 1. Phase 1 serves as a two-day orientation that provides women with an overview of the rules and regulations of the Department. Upon completing the one-day orientation, the women immediately move to Phase 2, where they participate in two-weeks of daily psycho-educational workshops addressing four main topics: recovery; reentry; domestic violence and anger management. After receiving a Phase 2 certificate of completion, inmates and detainees participate in targeted programs based on the results of their Individual Service Plan. Each woman receives a service plan at the conclusion of Phase 2 and recommendations for their tailored needs are provided, such as recovery and relapse prevention, parenting, freedom from violence and a host of others.



Based on different experiences that arise among the women in the program, staff members may readjust workshop opportunities to meet the needs of the women. This includes offering classes that range in everything from domestic violence prevention, parenting workshops, and impulse control, to creative writing and oil pastels.

“We work really hard to empower the women in the program and remind them they can rise up from here,” said Kristen Lacey, a Caseworker for the Women’s Programming Division. “There is nowhere to go but up, and we want to support that process.”

The progress of women’s programming could not have happened without the dedication and teamwork of the approximately 50 officers, caseworkers, contractors, volunteers and interns who work within the female units. Officers frequently communicate with caseworkers and assist women in the program with their daily needs.

“There is a mutual trust and respect between our team and the uniformed staff,” said Ruccio. “Working together makes both of our jobs a lot easier and more effective.”

In addition, with a constant flux of women entering and leaving incarceration, the programming staff relies on their relationships with community organizations to help point women in the direction of treatment and resources once they leave Department custody. Caseworkers from organizations like Project Place often come into the House of Correction to work with women and to assist in their road to release.

“We try to stay entrenched in the community so that women have more resources when they leave,” Ruccio said. “All of the people working in Women’s Programming understand why people are here and we take our work seriously. Through strategic collaboration, we are all working to achieve public health and safety in different ways.”



Sheriff Tompkins, Mayor Walsh Launch New Recovery Partnership Program



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins and Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh announced the start of a new collaborative program designed to improve the delivery of addiction recovery services to inmates and detainees that will extend beyond the walls of incarceration.

The Recovery Partnership is the result of a combined effort between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and the Mayor's Office of Recovery Services that is designed to support each individual entering the Suffolk County Jail or House of Correction in need of recovery services from substance abuse. The new program includes a series of regular recovery panels at the Suffolk County House of Correction and the Suffolk County Jail through which participants in the program will be connected to community-based service providers prior to their release, and will be guided through the early recovery process, building a successful network of support in the neighborhoods where they live. These recovery panels will be held every other week for pre-trial detainees at the Suffolk County Jail and monthly at the House of Correction for sentenced men. There will be a separate

monthly panel at the House of Correction for both women who are sentenced and pre-trial.

Joining a group of addiction recovery and health care providers for the kick-off, held at the Suffolk County House of Correction, Mayor Walsh and Sheriff Tompkins introduced the Recovery Partnership and spoke about the intended purpose of the new initiative.

"This Recovery Partnership will mean faster, stronger, and better connections for incarcerated individuals leaving our institutions and reentering their neighborhoods," said Sheriff Tompkins. "In corrections we know that what we do 'behind the wall' is impactful, but we can only do so much. We know that in order for those individuals in our care to be successful in reentering society they must develop strong, meaningful connections with people in their neighborhoods and communities."

"This program will make our communities and homes safer," said Mayor Walsh. "This initiative is about

giving people second chances, and a fighting chance at recovery. It's important that we build strong pathways to and from the recovery community, and these pathways must extend to our prisons. I'd like to thank the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department for their important work, and for partnering with us in this recovery effort. We look forward to continuing to grow this partnership."

Drawing a tangible connection between the need for such programming and the people most affected by it, a video featuring a group of currently incarcerated men and women was shown, detailing the destructive impact of addiction and the difficulty of maneuvering through life without access to effective recovery services.

Considering the swelling numbers of addicted individuals remanded to the care and custody of the Department, the need for these enhanced recovery services and stronger community connections is clear. Between the months

of June and December of 2016 alone, the Department admitted 2,223 individuals who were in need of medical care for substance use at intake. Breaking this number down further, the per-month average during this period reveals that 318 people were admitted in need of treatment, and even more telling, the per-day average of people needing medical care for substance use was 11.

In light of these grave statistics, Sheriff Tompkins spoke about the necessity of joining together against the rising tide of addiction.

"I am so proud to announce this Recovery Partnership with Mayor Walsh and the City of Boston today because it shows our collective desire to work together, our collective agreement to build bridges from inside our institutions out into the community, and our collective rejection of the notion that Boston and Suffolk County can be considered successful without the success of all of our citizens."



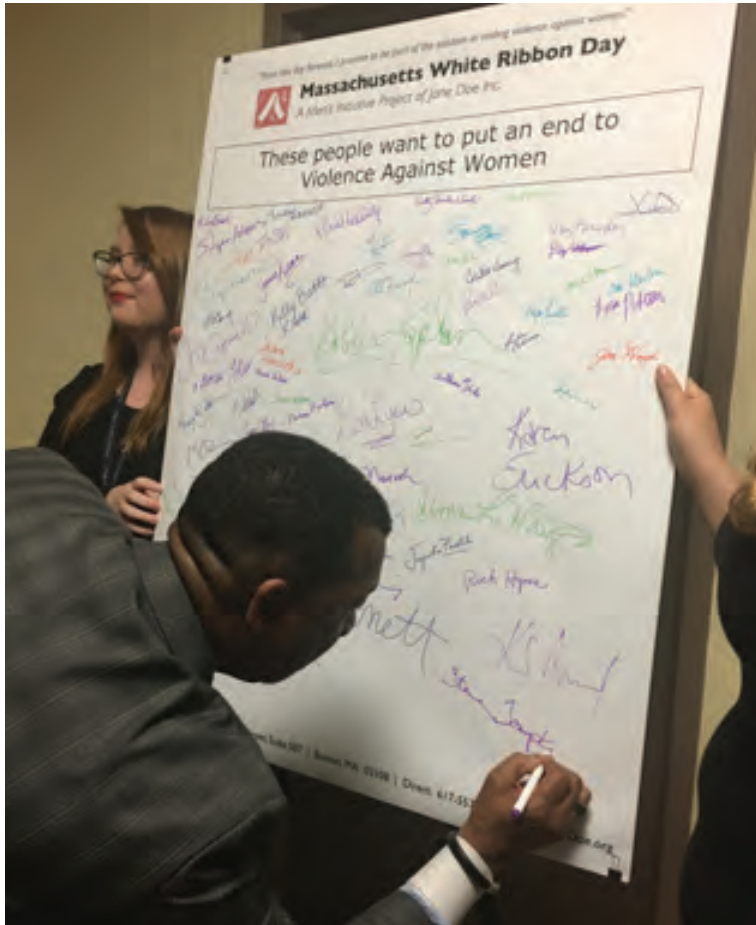
Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Begins Pastel Painting Class

This fall, Women's Program Services offered its first session in Pastel Painting under the direction of instructor-artist, Peggy Rambach. Using soft pastel sticks and pencils, inmates learned how to underpaint, blend, shadow, and observe to produce landscape and still life paintings. Participants also discovered that making fine art requires discipline and completed paintings of quality, skill, and beauty by demonstrating their ability to be patient, persevere, and strive for excellence. A collection of the artists' work was featured in a gallery presentation during the Women's Program Services graduation. The second session recently kicked off and this featured artwork is from students participating in this session.



Sheriff Tompkins Celebrates White Ribbon Day

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins celebrated the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' White Ribbon Day and joined with colleagues, constituents and friends in taking a stand against violence toward women and gender-based violence. The White Ribbon Day Campaign, hosted by the Men's Initiative Project of Jane Doe Incorporated, invites men and boys to be part of the solution in ending violence against women.



Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins Speaks with the Massachusetts Auditor's Office Bureau of Special Investigations



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined 40 members of the Massachusetts Auditor's Office Bureau of Special Investigations to talk about the great variety of programming offered to inmates and detainees in Department care and custody. Attendees engaged Sheriff Tompkins in a question and answer session at the conclusion of the presentation.



“Thank you to Jane Doe Incorporated for working diligently to remind residents of Massachusetts that safety in all relationships is everyone’s collective duty.”
- Sheriff Tompkins



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Steven W. Tompkins, Sheriff



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SANDY ZAMOR CALIXTE - CHIEF
 COLLEEN FONSECA - EDITOR
 DAVID HILL - PHOTOGRAPHER
 VONEL LAMOUR - DESIGNER

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