



COMMON GROUND

NOVEMBER 2018 ISSUE

MEET
KARLA ACEVEDO
DIRECTOR OF REENTRY
AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SCSD WELCOMES
32 NEW OFFICERS

DEPARTMENT HOSTS
WOMEN'S MENTORING PANEL



Sheriff's Statement



The mandate of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is for the care and custody of the men and women remanded by the courts to our facilities, the Suffolk County House of Correction and Suffolk County Jail.

Beyond that mandate, however, is my belief that as long as we as an organization have the ability to

positively affect the lives of those in our charge, it is incumbent upon us to do so. To that end, we are in constant flux with respect to the improvement of existing programming and services, and the creation of new ones that we believe will help us along the road toward the achievement of this mission. One among many examples of this philosophy is our Mentoring Panel for incarcerated men and women.

The goal of these panels is to give returning citizens the tools to take better control of their lives upon release by providing them with living examples of people who have previously "walked in their shoes" and who have been able to achieve success, post-incarceration.

In this issue, we spotlight our mentoring panel for women and we profile Director of Reentry and Workforce Development Karla Acevedo, who is also the facilitator of these panels. In addition, we feature our newest group of custody staff members - Correction Officer Training Academy Class 18-02; my participation on a panel for the Columbia Justice Lab, "Approaches to Emerging Adult Justice;" and several other items.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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Sheriff's Department Welcomes 36 New Officers

Read about the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's recently graduated Correction Officer Training Academy Class 18-02.



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Featuring an interview with Karla Acevedo, Director of Re-Entry & Workforce Development

Mentoring Panel for Incarcerated Women

The Mentoring Panel series focuses on empowering currently incarcerated men and women to take control of their lives upon release.






SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT WELCOMES 32 NEW OFFICERS




During a graduation ceremony held on October 19, 2018 at the Aloft Boston Seaport hotel, a group of 32 officer candidates were sworn into service by Suffolk County Superintendent-In-Chief and Special Sheriff Michael Harris. Sheriff's Department officials, alongside friends and families, gathered to celebrate the fruition of Correction Officer Training Academy 18-02.

To arrive at this moment, the former trainees had to complete the thirteen-week academy held at the Chelsea Correction Officer Training Academy and log one week of on-the-job training. The rigorous academy, which totaled more than 500 hours, required trainings in topics that included: first responder, defensive tactics, autism awareness, proper report writing, interpersonal communication, suicide awareness, physical fitness, the use of force continuum, de-escalation techniques, firearms, contraband, and more.



Through this combination of academic and physical training, the members of COTA Class 18-02 worked to develop and hone skills that will be critical to their assignments over the course of their careers with the Department.

Award recipients for COTA Class 18-01 included: Anthony Rosati and Willem Scheele, Academic Award; Tessa Dern, Defensive Tactics Award; Johan Bedoya, Drill Instructors Award; Gary Washington, Top Gun; Quang Pham, Physical Fitness; and Kevin Taylor, Unit Citation Award.



The other members of COTA Class 18-02 are: Javier Agosto, Ruth Barbosa, David Jr. Claudio, Joshua Clement, Nevin Cruz, Mark DuBree, Lauren Fiola, Jason Francis, Laurence Grant, Jared Hall, Ibrahim Kamara, Ashleigh Keith, Rubens Lauture, Eliza Lopes, Jimple Mathew, Wilson Mejia, Nicholas Palmieri, Celina Pena, Jose Figueroa-Ramirez, Markus Reynolds, Garry Tsang, Carlos Arevalo-Vega, Marquel Wilson, Victor Wong, and Kenny Yi.

All 32 officers are now serving at the Suffolk County House of Correction.



Karla Acevedo

DIRECTOR OF RE-ENTRY & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Karla Acevedo, Director of Re-Entry and Workforce Development at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's House of Correction, began her service with the Department six months ago.

Upon first joining the Department, Acevedo was surprised but excited to see the full scope of re-entry services and planning for the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.

"I believe that it is our responsibility to help individuals have the best chance at positioning themselves for success prior to release," said Acevedo. "Through the Re-entry and Workforce Development Division, we are able to play a critical role by preparing individuals to return to their community with support and pipelines to resources they need. Most importantly, we want to help them leave our facility with the belief that they matter, that they are not their mistakes, and that they have the power within themselves to change their lives around."

Before coming into the Sheriff's Department, Karla Acevedo held a position with MissionSAFE, a

nonprofit working with bright and talented young people, but who may have experienced different traumas in their lives.

"While at MissionSAFE, I learned a lot about the role of trauma in a young person's life and how it might impact the way they show up at school, work, and in the community," Acevedo said. "Many of the individuals in our custody have experienced trauma and may need a lot of support because of it. I saw an opportunity here at the Sheriff's Department to make a bigger impact and change for those experiencing different traumas."

As the Director of Re-Entry and Workforce Development for the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, Acevedo is responsible for working closely with currently incarcerated individuals, employees of the Department and partner agencies to ensure that inmates are engaged and supported in services that will prepare them to return to their communities. This includes, but is not limited to, monthly Discharge/Recovery Panels, building relationships with community partners, engaging employers willing to hire returning citizens, warm hand-

offs to community resources, and more.

"Every day is different, which is something that I really enjoy about my role with the Department," said Acevedo. "There is no typical day for me, because re-entry touches so many different aspects of what an individual may need. I can be working on establishing new partnerships with community members, connecting individuals to employment or recovery services, working with colleagues to strengthen current programming, or planning an event. Although my day is always different, my main focus is to be people-centered and make sure we are delivering services with compassion and with the proper systems in place that can help with a smoother transition back to the community."

A critical aspect guiding the work that Acevedo appreciates is being able to collaborate with external partners and agencies to present the resources and options that are available.

"It's important that we do this work in partnership with the communities individuals are returning to. We need everyone involved in this process in order for us to do this work holistically and in a way that will truly make a difference."

Members of the community play a critical role in reintegrating the Department's population successfully into society. If you have skills or opportunities you would like to share with the currently and formerly incarcerated, please reach out to Karla Acevedo to discuss ways in which to work together to help incarcerated individuals succeed.

You can contact her at (617) 704-6601 or kacevedo@scsdma.org.



SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HOSTS MENTORING PANEL FOR INCARCERATED WOMEN

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently welcomed Caitlin Gillespie, a Yoga Instructor in the Greater Boston area, and Gevelyn Baez from the nonprofit Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) to the Suffolk County House of Correction. The two women were invited to the first Women's Mentoring Panel to speak about their personal experiences having been formerly incarcerated, leaving custody and re-entering their lives on a healthy path.

The Mentoring Panel series focuses on empowering currently incarcerated men and women to take control of their lives upon release by providing them with living examples of people who have previously "walked in their shoes" and who have been able to achieve success, post-incarceration.

The first Mentoring Panel was held for incarcerated men in August, and this panel for women represents the second-phase of implementation.

Spearheaded by Director of Reentry and Workforce Development Karla Acevedo, the program was conceived as a means of addressing a particular deficit that a large number of the men and women remanded to the care and custody of the Department arrive with.

"When I first got to the Department, I immediately began to think about what incarcerated men and women need," said Acevedo. "I began to have conversations with them and quickly realized that most of them didn't have positive examples and role models to envision while preparing





for release. If you don't have someone who can show you a different way, how can you aspire to be more? The Mentoring Panels are an opportunity to provide a meaningful example to this population."

"I knew that there was going to be a lot of interest in the panels after I visited the units announcing the program," said Christina Ruccio, Director of Women's Programming for the Sheriff's Department. "Without hesitation, women were giving me their names to attend and were very excited about this event."

The thirty program participants were able to hear from the two formerly-incarcerated women about goal-setting, stress management, budgeting, family reunification, strategies for avoiding past negative behaviors and involvement with negative acquaintances, and taking responsibility. The organizers of the event - Acevedo, Ruccio and Christina Maynard, a Wellness Navigator at the House of Correction - wanted to be intentional about choosing speakers who would be relatable to the women currently serving time.

"We knew that we had to choose purposefully and were able to do that with the recommendations for our guests from Christina Maynard as well as Superintendent of the House of Correction Yolanda Smith," said Acevedo, reflecting on planning for the event. "You see, what makes mentoring so unique is that the purpose from the get-go is empowerment. We had to think about who the people were and about what kinds of stories would help

the women here connect so that they, too, could shift their perspectives and be on the life paths that they wanted to be on. The way that I view it through these mentoring panels is that we are trying to sell hope to people who aren't always hopeful."

Speaking about the panels, Ruccio revealed that the benefits are not only reserved for the audience.

"One of the unintended consequences of this event on our inmates is that it gave our inmates hope, but it also provided our staff here at the Sheriff's Department with a deeper sense of purpose," Ruccio explained. "It served as a dual purpose and the employees are also more invigorated as a result. In my fourteen years as a Director, I can say with confidence that reentry programming extends well beyond the classroom and an example of that is the Mentoring Panel."

"If I had all the resources in the world, the best substance abuse partners, housing, employment partners, the most reliable medically assisted treatment, it would not have been as meaningful and had such a long term positive effect as the stories told at the mentoring panel," Ruccio continued. "It is extraordinarily valuable and that's demonstrated by the fact that this panel went on for about an hour and fifteen minutes and for the entirety of the event you could hear a pin drop. In my history working with the Department as a group facilitator and an observer, I have never seen a room that quiet for that extended duration of time. I think that exemplifies the importance of mentorship and its value in the lives of women preparing for re-entry."

AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

Sheriff Tompkins Joins Columbia Justice Lab Panel at the Massachusetts State House

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins recently served as a panelist for the “Approaches to Emerging Adult Justice” policy briefing with the Columbia Justice Lab at the Massachusetts State House. During the policy briefing, Sheriff Tompkins spoke about his trip to Germany this past March, and shared information gleaned from meetings held with local officials about their approach to emerging adults in their criminal justice systems. Sheriff Tompkins spoke alongside Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan; State Representative Kay Khan; Anthony Benedetti, Chief Counsel for the Committee for Public Counsel Services; Josh Dohan, Director of Youth Advocacy at the Committee for Public Counsel Services; Naoka Carey, Special Projects Director at Citizens for Juvenile Justice; and Yotam Zeira, Director of Strategy and External Affairs at Roca.



SCSD Basketball Team Wins

Congratulations to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department basketball team for winning the New Hampshire Law Enforcement Basketball Tournament. The final score was Suffolk County Sheriff's Department – 83 and the Providence Police Department 79.

Choice Officer Program Visits Fenway High School

Assistant Deputy Superintendent of External Affairs Abiezer Ayuso and Deputy Stephen Fiste visited Fenway High School to talk with students about civic engagement through the Department's Choice Program. The Choice Program sends trained officers from the Department to visit with students in schools across Chelsea, Winthrop, Revere and Boston to teach a curriculum that embraces self-respect and respect for others, coping with issues like peer pressure and bullying, the importance of staying in school and working hard, and making positive choices along the path into adulthood. If you are interested in participating in the Choice Officer Program, or would like more information, please, do not hesitate to contact Deputy Stephen Fiste at (617) 704-6652 or sfiste@scsdma.org.





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Steven W. Tompkins, Sheriff



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