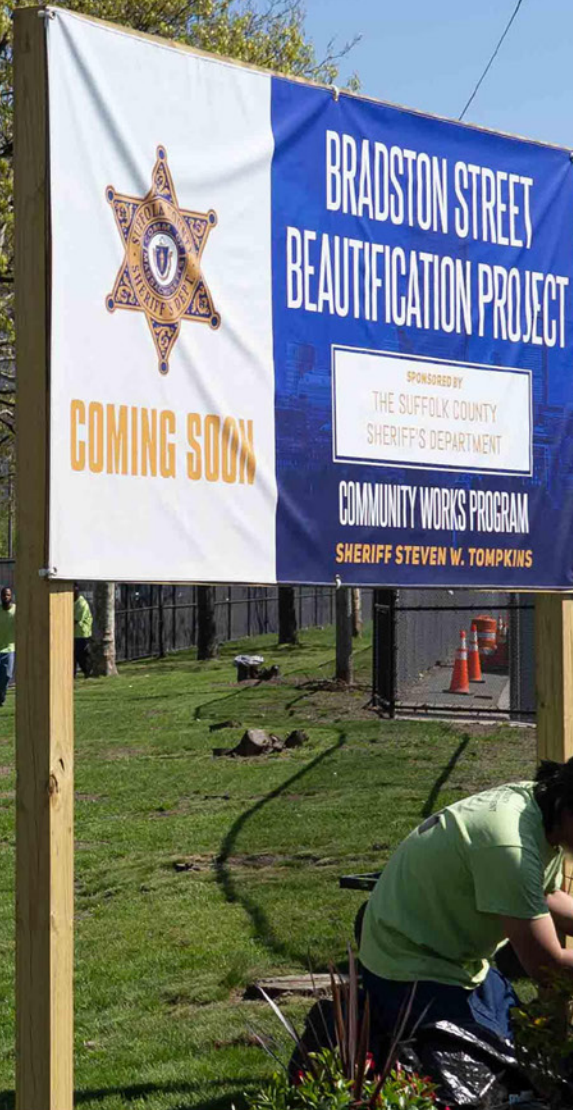




COMMON GROUND

JULY 2019 ISSUE



INSIDE THE SCSD'S
BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT



Sheriff's Statement



In this month's issue, we talk about some of the external efforts that the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is engaged in through the Community Works Program. Our Community Works Program, or CWP, brings specially classified inmates who have completed our Common Ground Institute vocational training module into the neighborhoods of Suffolk County to apply their vo-

cational knowledge as a means of community restitution. Under the constant supervision of Deputy Sheriffs, who also provide on-site training to participants, inmates work on assignments that include: cleaning vacant lots, beautifying roadway intersections, painting street lamps, boarding and securing abandoned homes and shoveling walkways for senior citizen housing. Inmates volunteer for CWP and must meet strict classification standards to be selected for the program.

In addition to the focus on the CWP and our ongoing Beautification Project, we also feature NECAT (New England Culinary Arts Training) in both the "Partner of the Month" column and in a short story about my participation as the keynote speaker for NECAT's graduation. The Department and NECAT have maintained a partnership through which SCSD Culinary Arts graduates are able to continue to hone their skills and develop their passion for cooking as returning citizens with the organization upon release.

You can also read about my support of United States Senator Ed Markey, Congressman Joe Kennedy, III, and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley's MASS Act gun safety legislation, among other stories.

— Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

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SCSD PARTNER OF THE MONTH



This month's partner is Elise Brandwein, Student Services Director for NECAT (New England Culinary Arts Training).

COMMUNITY WORKS PROGRAM (CWP)



Read about our Community Works Program, which gives our men and women opportunities to learn and ply their vocational training across the communities of Suffolk County.

AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

Sheriff Tompkins supports the MASS Act, delivers the keynote address for Boston Central Adult High School, and welcomes the return of McGrath House.

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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PARTNER OF THE MONTH

Elise Brandwein

NECAT (New England Culinary Arts Training)



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's "Partner of the Month" series highlights the outside agencies and organizations that are working with us to help improve the lives and increase opportunities for the men and women remanded to our care and custody by the courts. Each month, we will highlight these collaborations between our organizations and shed light on some of the ways in which we are readying people to reenter their communities better prepared to provide for themselves and their families.

This month's "Partner of the Month" is Elise Brandwein, who is the Student Services Director at NECAT (New England Culinary Arts Training). NECAT is a sixteen-week culinary arts training program that gives participants hands-on experience. NECAT provides chronically unemployed adults with a pathway to stable, long-term employment in the food services industry through comprehensive technical job readiness training, and individualized support and employment services.

When asked what makes NECAT so unique, Elise stated, "NECAT is a unique organization in many ways. The first thing guests notice is our stunning space. We are intentionally designed to provide a beautiful learning environment to deliver on our mission, which states that 'environment drives behavior.' The artwork and photos are meant to inspire and provoke feelings of inclusion. Besides being tuition-free and having a beautiful learning space, we were designed specifically to serve residents of the Boston neighborhoods. To do that, we realized we had to be visible in the community so we could reach folks who were unemployed or underemployed.

We have developed meaningful relationships with folks who serve and represent Dorchester, Mattapan and Roxbury residents, to build trust and stability. Our students represent the fabric of the city they live in and raise their families in. Some of our students have difficult personal narratives in substance abuse recovery, recent incarceration, homelessness or other personal challenges in their lives that have been barriers to full-time employment. We work tirelessly to engage students with external agencies to provide support while in the program and for months after."

NECAT and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department – which has a Culinary Arts Program that utilizes a professional-grade cooking kitchen – have worked in partnership for the past five years. Elise stated, "we really began to solidify our partnership approximately a year-and-a-half ago when I saw the Sheriff at an event and he encouraged me to follow-up with him to make things happen. I reached out to him and shortly after, his team was very responsive and the relationship had been revitalized." Sheriff Tompkins was adamant that he wanted the two organizations to work together to develop an intentional plan for the returning citizens who had interests in cooking and had participated in the Department's Culinary Arts Program. Elise Brandwein also stated that she "loves the way they continue to revise the program based on need and proven success. Sharing the successes of our graduates, whom we first met behind the wall, is as much a win for us as it is for the Department."

For more information please visit www.ne-cat.org or call (617) 442-3600.

INSIDE THE SCSD: THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT'S COMMUNITY WORKS PROGRAM



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Community Works Program trains inmates to help them acquire the necessary skills and experience needed to get a job upon their release. It also gives the men and women in the program opportunities to give back to their communities. Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins stated, "Our mission here at the Department is to ensure that inmates leave us with increased opportunities for obtaining employment, in addition to the other necessities of life, which include housing and healthcare, as they re-enter the community."

The Community Works Program provides participants with multiple opportunities to be a part of projects not only in the Boston area, but Suffolk County and beyond. When participants first begin the program, they attend an orientation and are assessed on their firsthand knowledge and abilities. Then, they receive instruction about the proper use of all equipment and are given job performance evaluations thereafter. The evaluations serve two important purposes; the first being to ensure that they are using the industrial equipment properly and with confidence, and the second which is to instill discipline that will enhance their proficiency. The instructors create a professional atmosphere to ensure that they will be ready for their actual jobs in the community.



Assistant Deputy Superintendent Heather McNeil, who oversees the program for the Department, said that some of the projects that CWP participants had been working on consisted of cleaning vacant lots, beautifying roadway intersections, painting street lamps, boarding and securing abandoned homes and shoveling senior citizen housing walkways during the snow season. In a recent interview, ADS Heather McNeil and Sergeant Micah Brinson, a CWP supervisor, offered an update on all of the great many things that they have been working on during an extremely busy time of year.

Along with the continuation of all of the aforementioned tasks, there are many new projects currently underway with more on the horizon, which can only strengthen the skills of participants, thereby making them more attractive to employers upon release.

Recently, members of the CWP began a new endeavor called The Beautification Project. They built garden beds in the shape of pyramids, which are filled with a variety of beautiful and colorful flowers. Located between Bradston Street and the Route 90 entrance, the project is highly visible to people walking or driving near the intersection. The CWP Unit also participates in a food drive once a month for veterans of all ages in Chelsea, MA. The food is delivered to the House of Correction, and it is the CWP crew's responsibility to go through the large amounts of food items to separate them and bag them up properly.

Beginning in July, CWP will be working with the city of Revere to unload donation trucks, and prepare bags for veterans in need.

“Doing all of these projects teaches the men and women how to work as a team instead of working in silos,” said Sgt. Brinson, speaking about the crews. “Knowing how to work both independently and as a member of a team are great qualities to have when joining the work force.”

ADS McNeil and Sgt. Brinson both spoke about how rewarding their jobs are with respect to working with the CWP. Carrying the sentiments of the entire SCSD team, they said that the mission of working to decrease recidivism by way of teaching our men and women employable skills and confidence in their applications of those skills is a win for everyone.



Sheriff Tompkins Delivers Keynote Address to NECAT Graduates



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins recently served as the guest speaker for NECAT's graduation. NECAT, which stands for New England Culinary Arts Training, is a sixteen-week Culinary Arts Job Training program that provides chronically unemployed and underemployed adults with a pathway to stable, long-term employment in the food services industry through comprehensive technical and job-readiness training and individualized support and employment services. NECAT is also a part of the New Market Business Association who works to be an employment pipeline for incarcerated men and women preparing for reentry into the community.

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department works very closely with NECAT to help the incarcerated men and women who are interested in culinary arts jobs and careers to follow-through upon release and join this program. Sheriff Tompkins stated that, "Though the Department did not have any former Culinary Arts Program participants graduate from this most recent cohort, I am still extremely proud of all of the day's graduates."

Of the sixteen men and women who graduated during the ceremony, more than half of them have already obtained employment. According to the executive director of NECAT, Josephine Cuzzi, this cohort happens to have the largest success rate that NECAT has achieved thus far.

During Sheriff Tompkins's speech, he was very candid with the graduates and shared some of the personal experiences that he faced while growing up. He wanted them to know that he, too, has faced adversity in his life, but that "it is not about how many times you fall, it is instead about how many times you get back up."

"On behalf of everyone at the Department," Sheriff Tompkins continued, "I would like to congratulate NECAT and all of the graduates once again for their achievement and wish you sustained success."



AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

SHERIFF TOMPKINS LENDS SUPPORT TO MASS ACT GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined U.S. Senator Edward Markey to support the MASS (Make America Safe and Secure) Act legislation filed by Senator Markey, Congressman Joe Kennedy, III and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley. Along with Suffolk County District Attorney Rachael Rollins, State Representative Elizabeth Miranda, several anti-violence and victim advocate groups, and survivors of gun violence, Sheriff Tompkins spoke about the need for sensible gun safety laws and the repercussions of gun violence. The MASS Act is a piece of legislation that would incentivize states to adopt gun-licensing standards similar to those proven effective in Massachusetts.



SHERIFF TOMPKINS SPEAKS AT BOSTON CENTRAL ADULT HIGH SCHOOL

Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins delivered the keynote address for the Boston Central Adult High School Class of 2019 graduation exercises. Speaking before a standing-room-only assembly, Sheriff Tompkins talked about perseverance and shared personal stories about persisting in the face of adversity. Boston Central Adult High School offers a 16-unit program (College Preparatory and General), leading to a diploma comparable to the one offered by accredited day high schools in the City of Boston Public Schools. This specialized school for mature and serious-minded people allows students to participate in comprehensive programs of study and to complete diploma requirements during evening hours while maintaining full-time jobs. For more information, visit: <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/4481>.



SHERIFF TOMPKINS WELCOMES RETURN OF MCGRATH HOUSE

Sheriff Tompkins joined an enthusiastic gathering of elected officials and representatives from the world of criminal justice and reentry for the reopening of the McGrath House in Boston's South End. The McGrath House, Massachusetts' only halfway house serving women, is a 35-bed residential reentry center that provides case management and support finding housing, employment counseling and other services to formerly incarcerated women in Massachusetts for over 40 years. It was temporarily closed in April of 2018 due to a loss of funding.





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Steven W. Tompkins, Sheriff



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