



# COMMON GROUND

OCTOBER 2019 ISSUE

**JENNIFER WOLTER**

COORDINATOR OF COMMUNITY  
BASED SERVICES AT RESPOND, INC.

**CHRISTINA RUCCIO**

DIRECTOR OF THE  
WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING DIVISION

**SCSD PROUDLY SUPPORTS  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH**



# Sheriff's Statement



In observance of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we turn our spotlight towards our nationally-recognized Women's Programming Division and showcase the work that they do to help survivors of domestic violence, in addition to the services that we provide for their rehabilitation, recovery and reentry.

Over seventy-five percent of the women in Department care and custody report having directly experienced domestic violence and we know that in many instances, the trauma that they've endured plays a significant role in the behaviors that have led them into the criminal justice system and into our custody. In addition to the extensive gender-specific and individualized reintegration programming that we provide to women, which helps them to address the psychological and educational barriers that have hindered their success in order to better prepare them for reentry, we have also undertaken partnerships with agencies that specialize in addressing the effects of domestic violence, as well as recovery, prevention and empowerment. Some of these partnerships are featured in this issue of the Common Ground.

You can also read about the implementation of our new Medication Assisted Treatment program, my appointment to the Chairmanship of the Board of Directors for Roxbury Community College, and several other topics in the pages ahead.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins

## COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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Learn about the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's partnership with RESPOND, Inc., which delivers needed services to survivors of domestic violence.



## "BAGS OF HOPE" OFFERED TO SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Read about the mentoring panel for survivors of human trafficking held by our Women's Programming Division and take a look into the organization "Bags of Hope Ministries."



## AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

In this edition, we feature the kickoff of the SCSD's Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), and we highlight Sheriff Tompkins' appointment as the Chairman of the Board for Roxbury Community College's Board of Directors.



# Employee Profile: Peggy Rambach

## The Value of Arts In Corrections

In 2008, Peggy Rambach joined the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, and for the past 11 years, she has continued to do great work and have a profound influence on the men and women mandated to Department care and custody. When she first began with the Department, she worked with the men, instructing a writing workshop, and then she transitioned into teaching both the men and women. Peggy now works solely with the women in the Women's Programming Division, instructing her writing workshop class and also teaching an art pastel painting class as well.

Writing is something that is essential to us all under all circumstances; however, one may question what the true correlation is between art and incarcerated individuals. In a statement that Peggy wrote for a past conference she attended, she wrote that, "Inmates who engage in the arts rediscover their imagination and creativity. This, in itself, is valuable. But, art is not simply creative expression; it is creative expression that stirs emotion and communicates universal aspects of human experience. To make art takes skill, discipline, observation, patience and staying power, all qualities that are central to a successful life."

"Often, after some resistance, the majority of my students adopt these qualities," said Peggy. "And, though the experience of writing, and painting with pastels is challenging, it is also meditative and relaxing and enlightening. Often, my students tell me that their poems or paintings are the first things they have ever completed, and that they are amazed at having accomplished something they never dreamed they could do. Finally, they are rewarded tenfold, by the pride they feel in having brought something into the world that is positive, and that enriches the lives of others."

When meeting with Peggy, she expounded upon that statement saying, "the ability to keep inmates in my class for as long as they want to attend enables them to build their confidence in their ability to work in pastel or writing independently of me, and so it gives them a new identity. Determined not to be 'victims' they can rightly assume a new identity as 'artists' - or they simply know that they are more than the difficulties and traumas of their former life experiences. This, along with the opportunity to contribute good to others, is undoubtedly healing."

The last question asked of Peggy was about her personal reason for working at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, to which she answered:

"I was eager to teach at South Bay," said Peggy. "After 17 years as an adjunct instructor of writing in Higher Education (Emerson College and the University of Massachusetts - Lowell) I found that my true calling was teaching writing and eventually art outside of Higher Ed. It was a way to demonstrate our common humanity, and to break down walls and stigma. I wanted those who were shut away and relegated to a place outside of our society to have a voice in our society."

"I felt, no matter whom they were or what they had done, they deserved the basic right of expression," Peggy continued. "Art and the making of art, in my view, is a human right and a society that excludes people's expression and presence in one way or another from society is a weaker society. This is intended for those inside hospitals for most of their lives as well as those in prison."

I also believe life is mainly hard and art is a way to better endure it, and to find courage and understanding, as a means to enduring and overcoming life's challenges. It is freeing and healing, and it allows people who have formally felt invisible to the world to be recognized as part of the world, as bringing to it something that heals not only the artist, but those who their art reaches. Yes, my students may need to be isolated physically from society for a time, but part of their readiness to return to it lies, in-part, in what making art does for their souls."

# SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING DIVISION BRING "BAGS OF HOPE" TO VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Women's Programming Division hosted a mentoring panel at the House of Correction (HOC) that was powerful, impactful and bold. Three women shared their courageous stories about being victims of human trafficking and talked about their long struggles with substance use disorder. In doing so, these women affirmed that human trafficking is an issue that needs a platform and one that is utilized as often as possible to rid women of the stigma and shame that runs deeply parallel with sexual abuse.

According to the Massachusetts General Freedom Clinic, human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud and/or coercion in the exploitation of victims. Coercion includes tactics such as peer pressure, manipulation, harassment, intimidation, blackmail, threats and physical violence. A person who is being trafficked is usually forced to perform sexual acts. Unfortunately, many women in custody know all-too-well the impact of being a victim of such exploitation. Women's Programming Division Director Christina Ruccio and her team are working diligently to educate, protect and provide robust services to the women in Department care and custody, because shame and stigma have kept many of them suffering in silence for too long.

Jasmine Grace, the founder of Bags of Hope Ministry and also a human sex trafficking survivor, walked the women step-by-step through her compelling story. Empathy, sympathy, commonalities, encouragement and hope were all visible emotions showing on the many faces of the women who were listening.

Jasmine Grace, and two of her colleagues who also visited the HOC, shared their personal experiences with drugs and

with being victims of sexual exploitation. All three women struggled through their adversity to become living testimonials for wellness, recovery and most importantly, hope, which is reflected in the naming of Jasmine's organization, Bags of Hope. As part of her program, Jasmine and her colleagues go into the communities and distribute bags that are filled with necessary toiletries to vulnerable women on the streets or to programs that cater to women who have been affected by prostitution, drugs, addiction and homelessness. These "Bags of Hope" also include notes of encouragement along with the supplies. This is, as Jasmine says, to remind these women that they are not at fault and that there is an entire network of support to help them with recovery and with moving their lives forward productively. Bags of Hope Ministry has become an essential outreach program, because many of the women who have been trafficked are riddled with shame, guilt and fear, which can often leave them open to the belief that they are somehow at fault in the crimes that have been committed against them.

During the panel, Jasmine asked everyone sitting in the circle they formed to state their names and state something that makes them come alive. Among the most common answers given were their children, their safety, their sobriety and their family and friends. For many, those things exist in our lives very naturally, but for someone who has been exploited, these are things that have been taken away. The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department will continue to keep the conversation going about human trafficking and substance use disorder by continuing to give these topics a platform both internally and externally. This panel is just one of many programs that have been designed to educate and empower women about their rights, about how to get assistance and to never lose hope for better lives.



# PARTNER OF THE MONTH

**Brian Murphy**  
Director of Outpatient Services  
Arbour Hospital

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 some 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.

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Week, which runs from October 6th to October 12th, this month's "Partner of the Month" is Brian Murphy, who is the Director of Outpatient Services at Arbour Hospital. Arbour Hospital is a fully licensed and accredited center that provides care and treatment for both psychiatric and substance use disorders.

When asked what makes Arbour Hospital so unique, Brian Murphy stated that "We work hard to be an active member in the community, and we realize that our patients can benefit and lead healthier lives when we all work together. To that end, we focus on forming partnerships in the community. We also partner with South Street Youth Center, and elected officials in and around Boston, as well as local law enforcement and the legal system."

Arbour Hospital is also unique because they offer a large variety of treatment options. They have six inpatient psychiatric and dual diagnosis units, three unique partial hospitalization programs, ECT services, and school based treatments just to name a few.



Arbour Hospital has three different locations, two sites in Jamaica Plain, MA and one located in Quincy, MA. One location on Robinwood Avenue in Jamaica Plain offers 118 inpatient beds, while the other location on Green Street provides outpatient counseling as well as partial hospitalization programs.

When asked, "what is one thing that you would want people to know that they can't find on the website," Brian said, "We have clinicians that have been here for many years, many people also don't realize that we provide internships for counseling, social work, and nursing students."

Arbour Hospital has been partnering with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department for over a year now. "This partnership has given me the opportunity to provide education, support, and resources to people who are looking to improve their lives and make positive changes," said Brian. "We work to help that person address some of the difficulties that may have brought them into contact with the criminal justice system and look for ways to help that person lead a healthier life."

**For more information please visit**  
**[www.arboursouth.com](http://www.arboursouth.com)**  
**or call (617) 553-1431.**

# SCSD PARTNERS WITH RESPOND, INC. TO MAKE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS "S.A.F.E.R."

The month of October is known as National Domestic Awareness Violence Month (DVAM), and has been since 1981. The purpose of DVAM has always been to connect advocates across the country who are working to end violence against women, men and children. Seventy-five percent of the women who are in the Department's care and custody have reported that they have experienced some form of domestic violence, which is why we make it a priority to have advocates and programs that cater specifically to the healing of our women.

In 2006, the Women's Programming Division was developed with the purpose of delivering gender-specific, individualized reintegration programming. The program is designed and tailored to the specific needs of incarcerated women and the circumstances surrounding their criminal decision-making. After careful assessment, each woman gets their own Individual Service Plan and is then placed into longer-term programming that is specific to their individual needs.

Programs range from recovery and relapse-prevention, parenting, anger management, impulse control, HiSET, job readiness, art classes, culinary arts, and S.A.F.E.R. for domestic violence. S.A.F.E.R. (Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Reentry) is collaboration between the Department and RESPOND, Inc., a domestic violence prevention agency that has been helping victims/survivors for over 40 years. At the House of Correction, S.A.F.E.R. provides support for victims of DV both during their incarceration, and once they are released. They are provided with emotional support, classes, court accompaniment, case management, and safety and discharge planning.

S.A.F.E.R. was founded by Jennifer Wolter, the Coordinator of Community Based Services at Respond. At the House of Correction, Wolter runs two different support groups for women and transgender women, as well as individual counseling, and is hoping to expand to also serve the male population, as forty-five percent of the men have stated that they have also experienced domestic violence. Prior to her work with S.A.F.E.R., Wolter spent time as an educator in both New England and abroad in South Africa and the Western part of the United States. When asked what led



Wolter to transition into a correctional facility, her response was: "I'm really just motivated and passionate about making life better for people," Wolter said. "When I was overseas doing student life, I was working with all cultures and economic statuses and backgrounds. I had a wide variety of experiences and that's when I started to shift to working with broader wellness."

Jennifer has also been featured in The Common Ground before, and, in her interview, she talked about how the launch of S.A.F.E.R. has provided a sense of hope to those who have felt defeated. She said that educating and providing resources around domestic violence can break the stigma and give a victim the reassurance that they are not alone. Many of the victims at the House of Correction have had a long history of being abused or of others making decisions for them, and she wants to help them to set their own goals and have the tools to achieve them.

One woman who currently participates in S.A.F.E.R. spoke about how the program has impacted her life.

"I was broken, damaged, and filled with self-hate," she said. "I thought there was no way I was ever going to be able to overcome all the pain I had inside. With the help of intensive DV counseling and the ongoing PTSC (post-trauma self-care) group I began pulling back the layers of trauma and started identifying feelings, actions, behaviors that were all connected to my history with domestic violence. After a year of soul-searching and hard work with RESPOND, I am no longer a victim that says 'ok' to being yelled at, to being struck, or being forced into a sexual act and being told I am worthless. Instead, I am a survivor and a fighter. I am a dignified, strong woman who deserves to be respected and loved. I still have a long road ahead of healing and hard work, but today I can say 'I love myself,' something I couldn't say for many years."

Christina Ruccio, the s said, "The S.A.F.E.R. Program is filling a much needed gap in Women's Program Services. I am proud to call RESPOND, Inc. our partner as we address the impact of Domestic Violence on the Survivors we serve."

# AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

## SHERIFF TOMPKINS NAMED CHAIRMAN OF THE ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins was appointed to serve as Chairman of the Roxbury Community College Board of Trustees by Governor Charlie Baker this past September. A member of the Roxbury Community College (RCC) Board since 2013, Sheriff Tompkins served most recently as Vice Chair of the board before this new appointment.

In a subsequent ceremony held at RCC, Sheriff Tompkins participated in the “passing of the gavel” from outgoing Board Chairman Gerald Chertavian, President and CEO of Year Up Greater Boston, and saw members of RCC Student Government sworn into service.

RCC is a “co-educational public institution of higher education offering Associate Degrees and certificate programs with a primary objective of providing residents of the Commonwealth, specifically those individuals living in the greater Boston area, ‘optimum opportunity for access to a college education consistent with their interests and aptitudes and to reduce to a minimum economic, social, psychological and academic barriers to educational opportunity.’ The college’s goals are the result of ideas generated by and from the college community and reflect a response to the needs of the larger Roxbury community.”



## SHERIFF TOMPKINS JOINS MASSACHUSETTS SHERIFFS AT STATE HOUSE TO ANNOUNCE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT (MAT)

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined his fellow sheriffs, elected officials and public health professionals at the Massachusetts State House for a press conference about the medication assisted treatment (MAT) pilot program that officially began on September 1st. Along with Massachusetts Sheriff’s Association President and Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian; State Senator Cindy Friedman; fellow Sheriff Christopher Donelan, Franklin County; Sheriff Kevin Coppinger, Essex County; Sheriff

Nicholas Cocchi, Hampden County; Sheriff Patrick Cahillane, Hampshire County; Sheriff Jerome McDermott, Norfolk County; Tisha Wiley, Ph.D, the National Institute on Drug Abuse - NIDA Associate Director for Justice Systems; and Michael Botticelli, Executive Director of the Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center and former White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Director, Sheriff Tompkins spoke about the program and stressed the need to have increased addiction recovery and mental health services to greet former inmates and detainees upon return to their communities.







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Steven W. Tompkins, Sheriff




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