



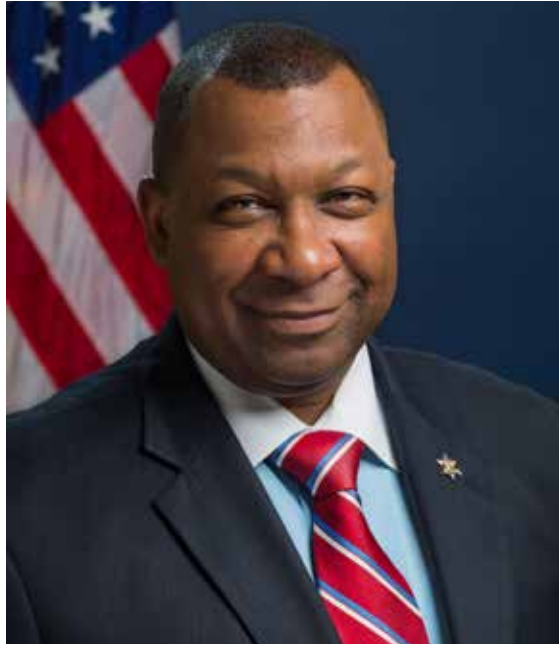
COMMON GROUND

APRIL 2021 ISSUE



**Meet The New Officers
& K9s Keeping SCSD,
Suffolk County
Safe & Secure**

INDEX



SHERIFF'S STATEMENT

APRIL 2021

Greetings,

In this issue of the Common Ground Newsletter, we bring you an update on our K9 Unit with a look at two of our newest K9 officers and their partners in our Employee Profile section, as well as an insightful story about the work undertaken by all of the members of the K9 Division.

In addition to providing perimeter security for both of our Department facilities, the Suffolk County House of Correction and the Suffolk County Jail, and helping to prevent narcotics and other substances from entering these facilities, our canine teams also provide mutual aid to other law enforcement agencies, assisting in searches for drugs, fleeing felons, and lost children.

We also feature a story about one of our many important community collaborators, Roca, in our ongoing "Partner of the Month" series..

I hope that you'll enjoy reading about these and other topics in this edition, and I look forward to bringing you more insight and information about the form and functions of the Department in the issues to come.

-Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins



K9 TEAM BRINGS SECURITY, SAFETY TO SCSD

Read about the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's K9 Division's role in the safety and security of Department facilities.



MEET TWO OF THE SCSD'S NEWEST K9 OFFICERS

Learn about the Department's Deputy Miller and Deputy Tran, the SCSD's most recent additions to the K9 Division.

PARTNER OF THE MONTH: ROCA

This month, we feature a look at partner organization Roca, as told by their Reentry Coordinator Sulai Rosa in our regular feature "Partner of the Month."

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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K9 UNIT HELPS TO PRESERVE SAFETY, SECURITY FOR SCSD, SUFFOLK COUNTY



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's K9 Division has, in recent months, undergone a number of changes with respect to new officers (Deputies Zachary Miller and Richard Tran); new dogs (welcome to the team, "Jak," "Sasha" and "Stuka!"); and new protocols brought on by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has paused much of the K9 demonstration activity within the communities of Suffolk County.

One of the most important things that has remained unchanged, however, is the K9 Division's crucial role for the Department as one of the first lines of defense and protection against the introduction of narcotics and other contraband into the facility.

"The primary responsibility of an SCSD K9 officer is to protect the perimeter of the facility and to detect and prevent, whenever possible, the introduction of contraband into the facility," said Lieutenant Cornell Lewis, leader of the K9 Division and partner of K9 "Jax." "K9 handlers conduct daily irregular patrols of the outer perimeter and facilities' grounds. In addition, they conduct random and targeted cell searches for the presence of narcotics."

Along with Lt. Lewis and Jax, the other K9 teams – which include Sergeant Timothy Frates and Stuka; Sergeant Michael Carbonneau and "Tuco;" Deputy William Jackson and "Kai;" and the unit's newest members Deputy Zachary Miller and Jak and Deputy Richard Tran and Sasha – also provide mutual aid to Boston Police, State Police, and other counties in the state when requested. The Department's K9 Division has assisted with school searches

for the presence of narcotics throughout the state, searches for lost children, and has conducted "urban tracks" for fleeing felons.

Embodying the spirit of the words "unit" and "team," each of the veteran members of the K9 Division have welcomed the new additions with open arms and supportive assistance.

"Sheriff Tompkins selected Deputy Richard Tran from the House of Correction and Deputy Zach Miller from the Suffolk County Jail, and both officers are welcomed additions to the unit," said Lt. Lewis. "I look forward to working alongside both of them."

"Deputies Miller and Tran are both great additions to the unit," Sgt. Frates concurred. "They did very well in their respective schools and we're glad to have them on the team."

With respect to the dogs themselves, all six are trained in the detection of narcotics with Jax, Kai, Sasha and Stuka also trained in patrol.

Discussing the method of matching officers with their K9 partners, Lt. Lewis also spoke about the process for determining the appropriate role for each dog based on their personalities.

"The selection of a police work K9 is done by the trainer," Lt. Lewis said. "For patrol work, the K9 is tested for his or her fight drive, which is, essentially, 'will the dog continue to fight, or turn and run?' For narcotics they are tested for their play drive – 'will they continue to search for their

reward or give up?' Dogs that exhibit the will to complete the task will be selected for school. While in 'school,' or the K9 Academy, both K9 and handler will be met with environmental stressors, and will need to learn to work through challenges to achieve the desired result."

While each Department K9 is accomplished in their respective fields of training and all receive their fair share of adoring fans whenever they appear in public or on social media, perhaps the most famous of the six boasts Sgt. Carbonneau as his partner.

"Tuco probably has the most famous puppy picture of any police K9," said Sgt. Carbonneau. "He was the puppy in the picture wearing the Boston Police Department harness that went viral all over the internet and social media outlets."

Similarly, for each of the members of the K9 Division, it is a combination of both their love of dogs and their desire to serve the Department and the community at-large that first drew them into the unit.

"What made me want to become a K9 Officer was the love that I always had for dogs," said Deputy Jackson. "What I like most about being a K9 Officer is the work, training and interaction with other law enforcement agencies, but most importantly, interacting with the youth and people of the surrounding communities in which we serve. I love being able to do demonstrations to show people what an awesome tool these dogs are and show their abilities."

EMPLOYEE PROFILE:

Introducing The Department's Two Newest K9 Teams

The following are two Employee Profiles featuring our newest members of the Department's K9 Unit – Deputy Zachary Miller and Deputy Richard Tran. As you read about the role and responsibilities of the K9 officer, you'll also learn a little bit about Deputies Tran and Miller and their K9 partners Sasha and Jak, and the meaning behind the saying that, "the work doesn't stop just because your shift does."

Deputy Zachary Miller

1 - How long have you been with the Department?

It will be eleven years this November. I started in November of 2010 and was assigned to the Suffolk County Jail after successfully completing the academy.

2 - What was it that first interested you about becoming a correction officer?

I was interested in law enforcement for a while and a friend of mine who worked here at the time knew I was looking for a job in this line of work. I went through the hiring process during the summer of 2010 and was hired shortly thereafter.

3 - How did you come to be a K9 officer?

I knew there was an opening, but, at first, I wasn't interested. There is only one K9 officer here at the jail and there are so many individuals that work here who I felt were more deserving or have accomplished more in their careers to this point than I have, and I didn't give it much thought. A few of my supervisors encouraged me to submit a letter of intent early in 2020, and, to my surprise, I was selected. By June, I was assigned to the K9 unit. I then completed a six-week narcotic detection course with K9 Jak during the summer.

4 - Can you talk a little bit about what it's like to be a K9 officer? What are some of the responsibilities that you have?

My day-to-day responsibilities at the jail include patrolling the outer perimeter and preventing any contraband from being introduced into the facility from the outside. Obviously, it's also keeping Jak healthy by exercising him and keeping up on his vaccinations. And, I have to stay up-to-date on our training records as well as recording any incidents that may have occurred during the course of my shift.

5- What are your K9 partner Jak's special talents/abilities?

Jak is a single-purpose canine trained in narcotics detection. He's imprinted on approximately ten different narcotic odors and when he has located the source of the odor, he is trained to go into a sit position.

6 - Tell me a little bit about your K9 partner's personality and what they're like to work with.

Jak is non-stop energy, and searching for narcotics is all a game to him, which is a good way to approach it. It could be 20 or 90 degrees outside, searching inside a building, or whatever – he's always ready to work no matter the environment.



7 - What are some of the challenges you face as a K9 officer?

As a new handler, I was receiving so much information. It can be overwhelming at times and you can't process it all in the beginning. A common phrase I heard repeatedly is, "trust your dog," and it's true, but that trust develops over time and through repetitions. Then, you complete the narcotics course and realize both of you are not finished products, and there is so much to learn, but it gives you something to work towards.

8 - What do you like best about being a member of the K9 Unit?

It's a great group of individuals who have a lot of experience and knowledge. Everyone was extremely helpful, answering questions I had and providing all the equipment I would need. They're always available if I have any questions or need to address any issues that come up.

9 - Does your partner have a favorite toy? If so, what is it?

If he thinks it's a toy he'll play with it. I have another dog at home and he's always playing with her toys, but he would play fetch with his ball for hours if I let him.

10- What should the outside world know about K9 officers (and also the work of being a correction officer in general) that they probably don't know?

Whatever area of law enforcement an individual works in, the mental and physical stressors of the job are similar. With a K9, your responsibilities don't end at the end of your shift. Jak is with me 24/7 and I take care of him when I'm not at work. It's a time commitment, but it's part of my everyday routine and I enjoy it.

Deputy Richard Tran

1 - How long you have been with the Department?

I started my career with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department back in July of 2015. It was then that I attended the Correction Officer Training Academy where, upon completion, I was assigned to work here at the House of Correction. This upcoming July marks my 6th year anniversary with the Department.

2 - What was it that first interested you about becoming a Correction officer?

I was curious to see what role law enforcement played in an institutional setting and how the officers were utilized inside of the confines of a jail/house of correction.

3. How did you come to be a K9 officer?

I started expressing my interest in K9 early on in my career. Working the overnight shift at the beginning of my career, I'd had many conversations with Deputy Jackson (11-7 K9 officer at the time) about the unit and how his experience had been working with a police canine. I also had similar conversations with Sergeant Frates who works the day shift. In early 2020, I was informed that a potential opening might be available within the unit, so I quickly submitted a letter of intent and waited patiently for a reply. It was August when I was selected and assigned to the K9 unit. Shortly thereafter, I attended a 14-week basic patrol academy and a 6-week narcotics detection course with K9 Sasha. Upon completion of both academies, I was certified to work as a K9 handler with my partner Sasha.

4 - Can you talk a little about what it's like to be a K9 officer. What are some of the responsibilities that you have?

My primary responsibility is to patrol and protect the outer perimeter of both the House of Correction and the Suffolk County Jail. It's my duty to make sure that no one breaches the secure perimeter of both facilities and/or introduce any sort of contraband/narcotics into the institution. Some other responsibilities that I have are making sure I keep an accurate and updated log of any events/incidents that may have occurred during my tour of duty, and maintaining the health and fitness of my partner Sasha through training and a proper diet.

5. What are your K9 partner Sasha's special talents/abilities?

Sasha is a dual purpose/dual discipline police canine. Sasha is certified in patrol and narcotics detection, meaning she can be deployed to track humans, find articles that have human odor on them, detect odors of specific narcotics, and apprehend individuals that have committed a serious crime.

6 - Tell me a little bit about your K9 partner's personality and what they're like to work with.

Sasha has a very energetic personality. Some people that have seen her in the back of my cruiser have referred to her as "crazy" because she constantly paces back and forth barking and lunging at the cage. After spending the past six-months with Sasha day-in and day-out I can definitely tell you she's not crazy but, rather, she just wants to work.



7 - What are some of the challenges you face as a K9 officer?

Being the newest member of the K-9 unit definitely has its challenges. I'm referred to as a "green" handler, meaning this was my first time training and working with police canines. That in-and-of-itself was one of the biggest challenges that I have ever faced in my life. Since I am the newest member to the unit, I am constantly learning new things and sometimes it can be overwhelming. But, I've learned to take it all in stride, do the best that I can, and trust the process.

8. What do you like best about being a member of the K-9 unit?

I absolutely love working with the other members of the unit. Everyone is highly motivated, like-minded, and extremely knowledgeable. From the moment that I was assigned to the unit everyone was "all hands on deck." They all made sure that I was caught up with what I needed in terms of advice, equipment, and paperwork so that the transition was seamless. I'm grateful to work with this amazing group of individuals.

9 - Does your partner have a favorite toy? If so, what is it?

Sasha doesn't have any one particular favorite toy. However, she does become very animated for a tug or tug-like item like a rolled up towel. The tug or rolled up towel allows me to engage more intimately in play when Sasha is rewarded for completing a task as opposed to a ball which is just thrown and retrieved.

10 - What should the outside world know about K9 officers (and also the work of being a correction officer in general) that they probably don't know?

What I would like the outside world to know is whether you're a patrol officer, correction officer, security officer, etc. we all work in law enforcement. Each particular officer works in a different environment and with different capacities in regard to how they enforce rules and laws. As soon as you attach a K9 to that role, everything changes. You now have a 24/7 responsibility to care for and maintain a living, breathing animal. So, as you can see, it's a huge commitment not only to your job, but to your K9 partner, and the life you live at home. The work never ends so to speak.

PARTNER OF THE MONTH

Sulai Rosa

Re-entry Coordinator for Roca

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 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.

In this issue's installment of our "Partner of the Month" series, we feature Sulai Rosa, Re-entry Coordinator for Roca. Roca was founded in 1988 just outside of Boston, in Chelsea, MA. Roca is a fast-growing, data-driven organization that is committed to serving the hardest-to-reach young people – the 16-24 age group. With 33 years of experience, they help deeply disengaged young men to drop their guns, leave the streets, and go to work; and through a separate, dual-generation intervention, they help isolated, impoverished young mothers to overcome violence, go to work, and care for their children. On the spectrum of risk levels that marginalized young people face, Roca serves the highest-risk young people. They seek out the most vulnerable, those who are often the most challenging to work with, who have been failed by our systems and cannot succeed in traditional programs and schools, and they systematically work to build positive, consistent relationships grounded in trust and respect.

When asked how Roca has impacted the lives of young adults, Sulai responded that, "On the spectrum of risk levels that marginalized young people face, Roca serves the highest-risk young people. We seek out the most vulnerable, those who are often the most challenging to work with, who have been failed by our systems and cannot succeed in traditional programs and schools, and we systematically work to build positive, consistent relationships grounded in trust and respect. Roca reduces criminal justice system involvement and increases employment for high-risk young people. Roca also reduces violent crime; while 85-90% of Roca participants served between 2012 and 2019 committed violent offenses before coming to Roca, only 16% were convicted of a violent crime after joining Roca."

Roca's services are designed to help young people to address their own trauma and to learn the skills they need to successfully live in the community after their release. By providing emerging adults with the enhanced cognitive intervention services and restorative justice training behind the walls, coupled with an intensive long-term community-based intervention, young people will be given the resources to heal, the tools to develop their skills and the capacity to make critical behavior changes. As some of us may know, the COVID-19 Pandemic has created some barriers to building relationships and delivering programs to the young men behind the wall. At times, access is suspended for obvious safety reasons. When this occurs, Roca always wants to collaborate on the next innovation to help connect a young offender and their youth worker. It is important to maintain relationships and the ability to deliver important pieces of their model, like CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy).

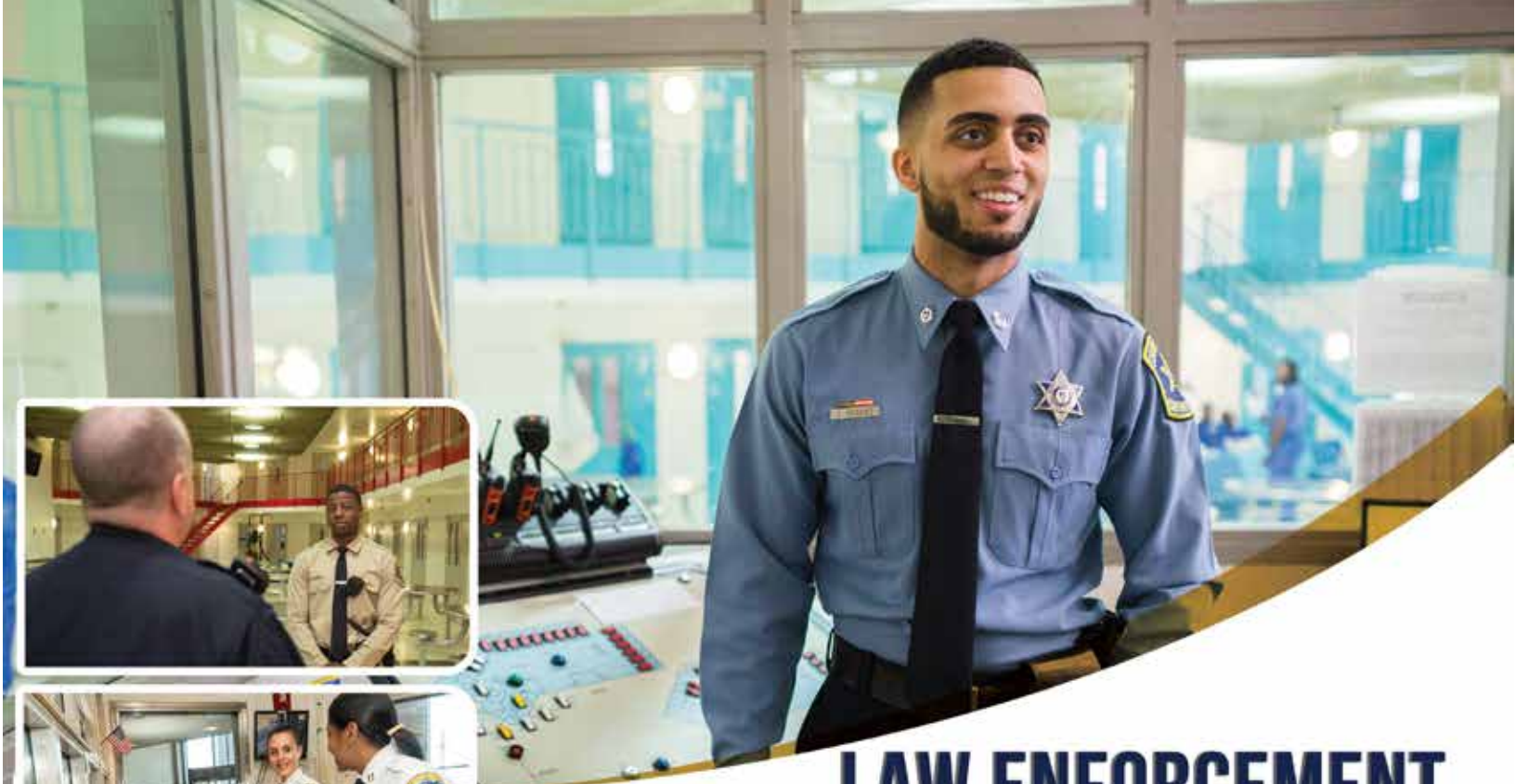


When asked what a challenge is that Roca faces when working with men incarcerated, Sulai stated, "One of the biggest challenges we face while working with incarcerated young men has been gaining access to them while behind the wall. At Roca, we believe in building relationships. To be able to do this in-person, one-on-one or in group settings is invaluable. The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has been a tremendous partner over the years allowing us access to these young men. We know that behavior change takes time and that the transition from incarceration to life in the community is a critical period that requires support. As such, whenever possible, Roca will continue to engage young people in our Intervention Model, after release, for a period of up to four years. Over time, we know this combination of services will support long-term, sustained behavior change."

Roca systematically promotes transformational relationships between the organizations and systems that touch the lives of high-risk young people – perhaps most importantly the criminal justice agencies. Roca has worked with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department for more than a decade, and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department believes that the important work to help young people change behaviors should start on "Day One" of their incarceration. By creating the PEACE Unit (Positive Energy Always Creates Elevation), the Department is investing in and believes in these young men who find themselves trapped at the center of urban violence.

By allowing Roca increased access to these men, the Roca team can establish trusting relationships with them much sooner instead of waiting until they hit the street. The ability to gain trust, teach CBT and understand one's own trauma is so important for young men who are incarcerated. Over the past two years, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has allowed Roca staff to hold restorative justice peacemaking circles behind the wall with both staff and offenders. Holding spaces like circles allows for vulnerability, sharing, learning and listening. All important tools to help in one's change process.

For more information about Roca, please visit: www.rocainc.org, and visit: www.scsdma.org to learn more about the Department's programming.



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Steven W. Tompkins, Sheriff



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SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM 2021



This program welcomes twenty participants to intern at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department to learn more about pursuing a career in law enforcement. Participants work 21 hours per week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 8:00am to 4:00pm. This paid internship will begin on Wednesday, July 7, 2021 and will be compensated at the current minimum wage of \$13.50 per hour.

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- Active checking or savings account
- Updated physical examination form

Interns will participate in either remote, hybrid or in-person activities. More information to be announced.

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