



# COMMON GROUND

MARCH 2022 ISSUE



## SCSD WELCOMES NEW CLASS OF OFFICERS

# INTRODUCING COTA CLASS 22-01

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## SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

MARCH 2022

Greetings,

In this issue of the Common Ground Newsletter, we recognize and celebrate Women's History Month with a feature on a program that teaches employable skills in animal care and welfare to women in our care and custody through a collaboration with the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office and the New England Wildlife Center; our coverage of the graduates of Correction Officer Training Academy (COTA) Class 22-01 with Class President Yira Reyes; and a brief look at some of the programming that we make available through our Women's Program Services.

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

**COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER**  
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## WELCOME, CORRECTION OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY CLASS 22-01

Read about the graduation of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office's Correction Officer Training Academy Class 22-01.

## PROGRAM OFFERS ANIMAL CARE AND WELFARE TRAINING TO WOMEN

Learn about the inaugural run of a program teaching incarcerated women employable skills in the animal care and welfare profession.



## WOMEN'S PROGRAM SERVICES PROFILED

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Office showcases some of the gender-specific, trauma-based programming and services that it makes available to women in custody.

# SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT WELCOMES 27 NEW OFFICERS INTO SERVICE

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently swore twenty-seven new officers into the corrections profession following their graduation from the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy (COTA).

Members of COTA Class 22-01 gathered for a graduation ceremony held at Casa Lucia in Revere, MA. Superintendents William Sweeney, Michael Colwell and John McLaughlin, along with members of the command staff and the training academy, presided over the special ceremony and were joined by family and friends of the graduates. Individuals who could not attend the graduation were able to observe the proceedings in real-time on the Department's Facebook Live broadcast.

In January, members of COTA Class 22-01 began a rigorous academy consisting of an intense core of practical and academic training that included; ethics and professionalism, suicide prevention, the use of force continuum, firearm safety and handling, inmate education and programming, contraband control, courtroom testimony, CORI and inmate rights and responsibilities, fire safety, CPR, harassment and discrimination prevention, cross-gender supervision, report writing, and more.

"A little later today, you are going to take an oath and that oath is going to convey upon you an authority to have control over the freedoms and liberties of your fellow citizens," stated Superintendent Colwell. "With such authority comes great responsibility. When you exercise that authority, do it judiciously. Do it thoughtfully. Do it with empathy."

He continued, "You've just gone through one of the most challenging periods of your life – academically, physically, and emotionally. You've earned the right to be in these chairs. You've earned the right to wear that badge. And you've earned the right to take the oath you're about to take."

Yira Reyes, President of COTA Class 22-01, addressed the group by first thanking Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, his command staff, Assistant Deputy Superintendent Jose Mojica, and the training academy staff.

"I can confidently say I am ready to perform the duties in my career with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department because I am certain I received training from the most devoted and professional instructors," said Reyes, who continued by citing some of the challenges that she has faced in her career.

"Being a woman in a career field that is predominately male, especially law enforcement, comes with a lot of opinions and misconceptions," she said. "From the day I enlisted in the military four years ago, up until today, people have doubted my ability because of my size and because I am a woman."

She continued by reminding her fellow classmates that, "Your seat at today's ceremony was not given to you. You've earned it."



Receiving special recognition for outstanding performance during the academy were Yira Reyes, receiving two awards, including the Drill Instructor's Award for her leadership, motivation, esprit de corps and attention to detail and the Academic Honor Award for posting a Grade Point Average of 93.8%; Kathleen Johnson, who received both the Physical Fitness Award for outstanding performance in physical training and the Defensive Tactics Award for exceptional performance during defensive tactics training; and Jorge Serra, who received the Unit Citation Award for outstanding leadership, motivational mentoring and demonstrated professional ethics.

The graduates from COTA Class 22-01 have been assigned to both Department facilities, with Mario Alves, Tyron Boswell, Roger Chow, Brenndon Copeland, Laurindo Goncalves, Erwin Pizarro-Gutierrez, Ashley Herrera, Kathleen Johnson, Ryan Jones, Richard Kimber, Joshua Lamarre, Carlos Figueroa-Martinez, Rodney Panier, and Kevin Veiga serving the Suffolk County Jail; and Jonalson Amazan, Ronique Daley, Christe Docteny, Sam Eliopoulos, Tchierryson Gaspard, Jaqualah Holliman, Kim Hoy, Jasmine Murphy, Naromie Occeus-Lucien, Yira Reyes, Jamaal Bellard-Ross, Jorge Serra, and Marcelin Ulysse coming to work at the Suffolk County House of Correction.

Congratulations to COTA Class 22-01, and welcome to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.



# PROGRAM BRINGS WOMEN INTO “THE WILD” FROM BEHIND THE WALLS



## **Collaboration Teams New England Wildlife Center, Norfolk County Sheriff’s Office With SCSD**

Three women in the custody and care of the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office recently graduated from the inaugural run of a program built to impart employable skills in the field of animal welfare to participants. The graduates were part of a six-week Animal Science Skill Training and Education program created by the New England Wildlife Center (NEWC) in Weymouth, Massachusetts that is designed to provide up to 10 nonviolent, specially-classified offenders with job training, life skills support, employment opportunities, support in confronting alcoholism/addiction, meaningful connections to other groups and individuals, and a safe place to return upon reentry to the community.

Introduced in 2014, the “first-of-its-kind collaboration teaches inmates job skills for the animal care-based industry through full immersion in the NEWC wildlife teaching hospital, accompanied by seminars and site visits.”

Initially offered to incarcerated men, the program was recently expanded to include women, with two of the three participants having come to the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office as part of an agreement to provide care and custody for sentenced women from Norfolk County.

According to Dr. Greg Mertz, Director of Medical and Educational Programs for the New England Wildlife Center, his three pupils acquitted themselves so well that expectations have been raised significantly for the next class.

“This is our first time running [the program] for women,” said Dr. Mertz. “All three participants Kathy, Vikki and Amanda really focused on the patients, who they were and what they needed. In every lecture that we gave each morning, all three of them methodically and furiously wrote notes. They wanted to know everything about what we were doing and they were absolutely committed to the work. They really raised the bar for future participants in this program.”

As a result of the trio’s stellar efforts, the traditional presentation of a certificate of completion and the promise a day’s work for \$120 upon return to society was expanded to an offer of five days and \$600, in addition to the certificate.

Both of the sheriffs from the participating offices were present and offered praise and encouragement for the graduates.

“When you talk about life – human and animal life – we know that we must peacefully coexist together,” said Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins. “I’m so proud of you for the work you’ve done here. You brought your nurturing skills and your care and loving of these creatures to the work, and we appreciate and applaud the fact that there are people here who really care about them and that they welcomed you and provided you this opportunity.”

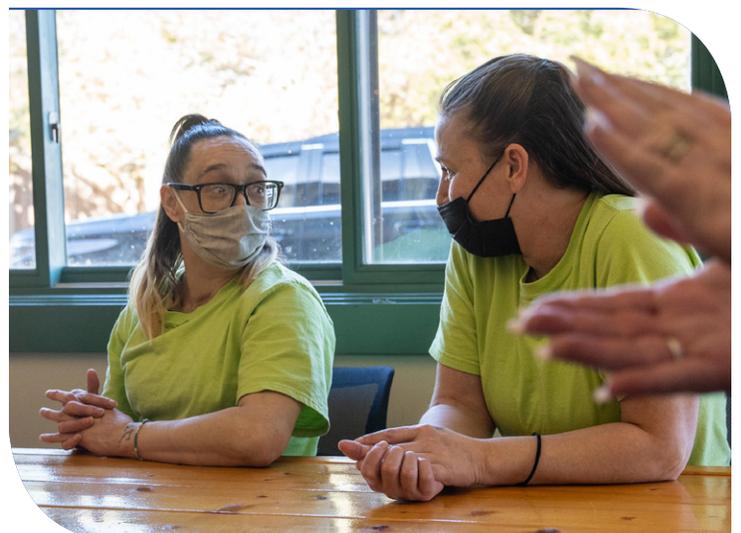
“Our mission statement is about these four pillars: prevention, intervention, education and hope,” said Norfolk County Sheriff Patrick McDermott. “Today, we focus on those pillars and there is no greater partnership that celebrates those values by providing this opportunity for our justice-involved individuals, and we are proud to celebrate you Amanda, Kathy and Vikki. It’s now up to you to take advantage of this opportunity. The curriculum is intense, as you know, but it’s amazing what you can do with the skillset you’ve developed over your six weeks here.”

Attending the ceremony, State Senator Patrick O’Connor and a member of State Representative James Murphy’s staff presented the participants with citations for their efforts at NEWC, and spoke about the powerful impact of both the collaboration and the organization.

“It was just about six years ago, back when I was a city councilor, when I was first introduced to the center,” said Senator O’Connor. “The New England Wildlife Center was holding an event here to raise awareness of the growing opioid crisis, which goes to show how much they are committed to creating a better community.”

“I want to thank Sheriff Tompkins and Sheriff McDermott,” O’Connor continued. “The way in which they view and value human beings and that their main focus is on rehabilitation and making sure our society is better from the people they care for is incredibly important.”

To learn more about the New England Wildlife Center, visit: [www.newwildlife.org](http://www.newwildlife.org).



# GENDER-SPECIFIC FOCUS DELIVERED TO POPULATION THROUGH WOMEN'S PROGRAMMING SERVICES



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is responsible for the custody and care of inmates and detainees who are remanded to our two facilities – the Suffolk County Jail and the Suffolk County House of Correction. To accomplish this mandate, the Department offers a wide array of services and programming designed to help our population acquire the needed skills and coping mechanisms to achieve successful reentry into our communities and better care for themselves and their families.

As part of these efforts, the Women's Program Services Division was established in an effort to respond to the unique needs of both detained and sentenced women at the Suffolk County House of Correction. And, though the overall population at the House of Correction has declined over recent years, data shows that from 2016 to 2020, women accounted for 16% of all admissions into our facilities.

“While there are many universal experiences shared between the men and women who are remanded to our custody, we also recognize that the women are a unique population with a distinct and specific set of needs,” said Christina Betts, Supervisor of Women's Programming. “For this reason, we offer gender specific, trauma-informed programming that addresses the specific issues that more heavily impact our women, such as domestic violence and human trafficking. We provide wrap-around services that start from the day a woman is incarcerated through the day she is released with the goal of not only reducing the chances that they will recidivate, but also giving them the best possible opportunities to be successful upon reentry to society.”

In recognition of Women's History Month, we turn our focus to highlight just some of the gender-specific programming and services that we offer to the women who are remanded to our care and custody by the courts.

Every woman housed at the Suffolk County House of Correction is enrolled in a three-phase program model that helps to address the psychological and educational barriers that have hindered

their success in order to better prepare them for reentry.

Phase One is a one-day program that provides an overview of the rules and regulations of the Department. Upon completing Orientation, they immediately move on to Phase Two.

In Phase Two, women participate in two weeks of psycho educational workshops addressing four main topics: recovery; reentry (life skills and job skills); domestic violence; and anger management. For each woman, an Individual Service Plan (ISP) is created at the conclusion of Phase Two to help meet the individual's needs during Phase Three.

Phase three allows the women to participate in specific treatment programs determined by the results of comprehensive assessments and the development of an ISP. These programs include: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Anger Management, Art & Spirituality, College Bound, Community Reentry for Women, Culinary Arts & Food Sanitation, Domestic Violence, Financial Literacy, HiSET, Impulse Control, Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Parenting, Parents Helping Parents, Pastel Art, Recovery, Retail Training, Relapse Prevention, Writing Workshop, and Yoga.

Based on specific needs of women within the program, individuals may be enrolled in the Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Reentry Program (S.A.F.E.R.). This program is a unique collaboration between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and RESPOND, Inc. S.A.F.E.R. is designed to provide maximum support for survivors, and participants of this program will be enrolled in an 8-week course with access to the following services: support groups, emotional support for victims, goal and boundary setting discharge planning, continued support after release, referrals to community services, court accompaniment, and assistance with protection orders and other law enforcement needs.

Eligible women may be enrolled in the Community Re-entry for Women Program (C.R.E.W.). Women enrolled in this program are provided an avenue of reintegration through wrap-around services including: job readiness & life skill instruction; intensive case management & reentry supports with goals of employment, housing & reducing recidivism. C.R.E.W. is made possible through a partnership between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and Project Place.

“We are extremely proud of the programming and services that we offer to the women in our population,” said Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins. “Our staff members in Women's Program Services have given extraordinary thought and effort to provide the kinds of gender-specific, targeted programming that can help to address the many needs that are unique to this population so that they are better equipped to return home and lead positive and successful lives.”

To learn more, visit: [www.scsdma.org](http://www.scsdma.org).



SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS &  
THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

*Celebrate*

# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

MARCH 2022



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