



COMMON GROUND

MAY 2022 ISSUE

THANK YOU...

...TO THE MEN AND WOMEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN REMANDED TO THE SUFFOLK COUNTY HOUSE OF CORRECTION AND SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL BY THE COURTS. THE WORK OF CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS IS WIDELY UNSUNG AND OFTEN AS THANKLESS AS IT IS CHALLENGING, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. YOU PERFORM HEROIC ACTS WITH BRAVERY AND SELFLESSNESS AS A ROUTINE PART OF YOUR WORK WITH LITTLE FANFARE AND SCANT REWARD. IT IS YOUR PROFESSIONALISM AND DEDICATION TO THE JOB AND THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT THAT KEEPS US AMONG THE BEST IN THIS COUNTRY, AND WE ARE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SERVICE.

Steve Jompkins

#WEARESCSD



SHERIFF'S STATEMENT

MAY 2022

Greetings,

As has been stated countless times in past addresses, conversations and publications, and now on the cover of this issue: the work of a corrections professional is frequently dangerous, often stressful, and almost always undertaken with little-to-no recognition or positive attention. To the contrary, in most cases, when correction officers are portrayed in media circles, it is on the rare occasion of either tragic circumstances or misconduct, without the context of understanding or acknowledging their infrequency, particularly as compared to the great many instances of steady, commendable and even heroic service.

We've created this newsletter with the intention of providing insight into the world of the corrections professional, while expressing our heartfelt appreciation for the men and women who come in every day for their shift – or even shifts – in all manner of weather, during pandemics, holidays and weekends to do this work.

We admire you, we appreciate you and we salute you.

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

ABIEZER AYUSO - SPECIAL SHERIFF
PETER VANDELFT - EDITOR
CLAIRE LEBLANC - EDITOR
DAVID HILL - PHOTOGRAPHER
VONEL LAMOUR - DESIGNER

SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
PHONE .617-704-6688
VISIT US ONLINE
WWW.SCSDMA.ORG

CONNECT WITH US
f t i y
#WEARESCSD

INDEX

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

How did the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department come to be what it is today? Read about the SCSD's beginnings and its subsequent locational and structural changes in this brief summary.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CORRECTION OFFICER

For National Correctional Officer and Employee Appreciation Week, we give you a quick glimpse into the life of an SCSD correction officer.

DIVISION PROFILE: THE SCSD TRAINING DIVISION

How do new recruits become some of the best, most professional members of law enforcement around the country in service of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department? Read this feature profiling the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy and Training Division to find out.

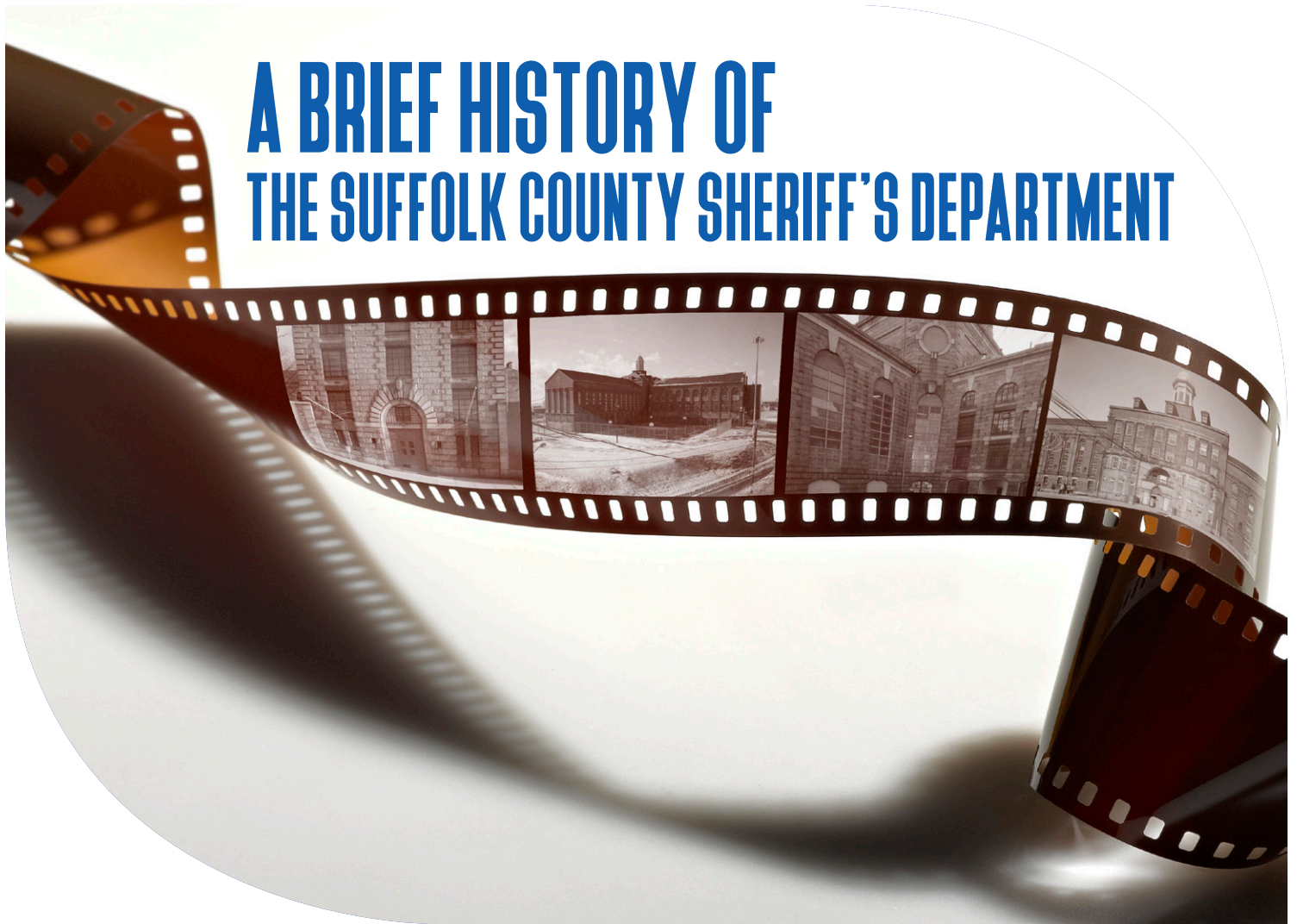
SCSD OFFICERS RECOGNIZED FOR HEROIC SERVICE

Letters of Commendation were recently presented to Department officers for their actions taken above and beyond the call of duty. Read about them in this special story.

AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

In this month's trip Around Suffolk County, we feature Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins' testimony in support of the Work and Family Mobility Act; we showcase the Department's Nurturing Fathers Program's award-winning moment; and we announce the Department's ICAN Academy's inaugural and triumphant debate debut.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



As its primary mission, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) is mandated to provide the safe care and custody of the men and women who are remanded to its facilities by the courts, and also to enforce the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to serve and protect the citizens of Suffolk County.

To achieve these directives, the Department, under the leadership of Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, offers a vast array of programming and services that include everything from addiction recovery, mental and physical health care, employment skills training, parenting and family reunification, high school and college courses, vocational education, and many others. The goal, which is to prepare returning citizens to more ably and sustainably care for themselves and their families, has transitioned the Department further away from its beginnings in a punitive system built upon punishment to one that embraces rehabilitation.

But, how did the current configuration of the SCSD come to be and what were its historical beginnings in the Commonwealth?

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department was established in its current form just a little over a decade ago back on August 6 of 2009, when, according to Massachusetts State records:

"The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) was established as an independent state agency on August 6, 2009, when the Suffolk County government was abolished. The Sheriff became an employee of the Commonwealth but remained an elected official and retained administrative and operational control over SCSD. In 2017, SCSD had 1,129 employees, 836 of whom were full-time correction officers, who supervised and cared for the inmates in SCSD's custody."



But, its roots as an institution in the state run far deeper, with an origin dating back several decades to the creation of the Penal Institutions Department and the enactment of Chapters 395 and 451 of the legislation known as the “Acts of 1897,” which initiated a division of powers within the city’s institutions. It would be a configuration that would stand for just over twenty years. According to City of Boston archival records:

“The Penal Institutions Commissioner had charge and control of Deer Island, the House of Correction at South Boston and the House of Correction at Deer Island. Chapter 7 of Ordinances of 1920 abolished the Penal Institutions Department and again consolidated the public institutions into one department called the Institutions Department under the charge of one commissioner. Chapter 9 of the Ordinances of 1924 re-established the Penal Institutions Department separate from the Institutions Department. Chapter 138 of the Acts of 1991 abolished the Penal Institutions Department and the post of Penal Institutions Commissioner. The House of Correction at Deer Island was decommissioned upon the opening of the new facility at South Bay. The House of Correction is now under the charge of the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office.”

The facilities of the modern-day Sheriff’s Office in Suffolk County include the Suffolk County House of Correction, casually referred to by many as “South Bay,” which was built to replace its antiquated predecessor on Deer Island and opened on December 26, 1991; and the Suffolk County Jail on Nashua Street, which opened in 1990 as the replacement facility for the historic Charles Street Jail, which operated from 1851 until its close in 1990. The Jail holds men who are awaiting trial and the House of Correction holds sentenced men and pretrial and sentenced women. From the years 2003 to 2019, the Department leased space to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on the campus of the House of Correction in Building 8 for immigration detainees. In 2019, Sheriff Tompkins ended the contract with ICE in order to reallocate resources towards helping local women from Plymouth, Essex and Norfolk counties to address long-standing issues that have contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system, following their transfer to the House of Correction from Framingham State Prison.



Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office operates the 9,500 square foot Correction Officer Training Academy or “COTA” facility in Chelsea, MA where its Training Division administers a training program that is recognized as a model throughout the world of corrections; and the off-site Civil Process Division, which serves documents at every stage of litigation, from the initial Summons and Complaint, to deposition and trial subpoenas, and post-judgment writs, in addition to several other functions.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CORRECTIONAL OFFICER



It's another morning of sitting in traffic and listening to music as Officer Shawn Riggins mentally prepares for his shift at the Suffolk County Jail.

Officer Riggins, a graduate from the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy in 2021, has held a variety of jobs in law enforcement, corrections, and even substance abuse and mental health. While his previous employment prepared him for his duties as a correction officer, Riggins learned important lessons from his father and uncle who held careers in corrections and influenced him to join the Department.

As a part of our Correctional Officer and Employee Appreciation Issue, we spoke with Officer Riggins to discuss his role within the Department. Although he has yet to have a shift exactly like the last, Riggins believes that there are similar day-to-day responsibilities, such as maintaining a count of detainees, controlling doors, etc. While the surface of the job may appear simple, Riggins believes there are duties of a correctional officer that require thought and understanding with respect to a variety of circumstances.

Riggins describes himself as a "people person" as he cares for the lives and futures of detainees and supporting fellow officers. One of the biggest challenges that he faces is overcoming the "us vs. them" mentality when interacting with others on the unit.

"All I can do is be myself and do my part to break through this barrier," said Officer Riggins. "If I don't understand something, specifically about another culture, language, or thought process, I try to learn about it to see another point of view. I've learned by speaking with people within the unit that I can break these barriers."

"The reality of the job is that a lot of people are going through some of the hardest moments of their lives and are facing a variety of new challenges," Riggins continued. "I try to just do my best to listen to people and carry myself in a way that is respectful and lets others know they can count on me. The stories I've heard and experiences I've had in my short time in corrections are things that help to make me the person I am."

Officer Riggins uses each day as an opportunity to speak with detainees and help in changing their life's course.

"It's hard to see news of previous detainees falling victim to gun violence after their release," Riggins said. "To overcome these challenges, I try to take any opportunity that comes my way to try to guide individuals in a different direction. Not every day in corrections is complete chaos. There are some bad days, of course. But, there are moments in corrections that only people in the profession may understand."

When asked to advise a new officer, Riggins stresses the importance of treating others with respect and doing good things, on and off the job.

"I have a good friend who finished a long career in corrections who was out to eat with his family when a previous inmate approached him," Riggins shared. "My friend always treated people with respect, regardless of their circumstances. The man that served his time was living his life with his family again and took the time to shake my friend's hand to say 'thank you' for being the way he was as an officer. How you treat people will always come back to you."

SCSD DIVISION SPOTLIGHT: THE CORRECTION OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY



Located in Chelsea, Massachusetts, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Training Division conducts a training academy for each incoming class of officer candidates vying to serve in the Department. The Training Division, which operates inside of the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy (COTA) building, instructs in a variety of custody-specific topics, including the use of force continuum, firearm safety and handling, suicide prevention, courtroom testimony, ethics and professionalism, inmate education, CORI and inmate rights and responsibilities, fire safety, evacuation plans, and general professional subjects which include report writing, sexual harassment, CPR, interpersonal communications, and more.

Officer Candidates also receive physical training and are schooled in multiple defense tactics. The Division provides in-service training to non-custody staff and offers specialized training to officers in the Choice Program, the Department's Honor Guard, the Tactical Response Team, Crisis Negotiation Unit, and the K-9 Unit.

The training facility welcomed its newest trainer, Deputy Jason Ortiz, in October of 2021. As a previous substitute teacher, Deputy Ortiz has always had a passion for education and was given the opportunity to combine his love of corrections and teaching in his role with the Department. As one of ten training officers in the Division, Ortiz is responsible for preparing Officer Candidates for the challenges that lie ahead while keeping current employees up to date on training requirements.

"I like teaching, building people up, and letting them know they are capable," said Ortiz. "I like to find recruits who may be experiencing anxiety and emphasize the importance of not overthinking. A lot of times, people are anxious about a situation and they will make silly mistakes and decisions [based on that anxiety]. I relay my personal experience and

coping mechanisms to help beginners grasp tactics and prevent hesitation."

"By far the most rewarding part of my job is training the new officer candidates in the academy," stated Lieutenant Sean Clark, who has been with the training division for ten of his twenty-eight years with the Department. "Through the years I've watched hundreds of recruits come through the Training Academy. Many of the recruits were often nervous, unsure, undisciplined, or trying to find their knack in life and place in the world. These insecurities often change throughout the academy's challenges and rigorous programs. After the academy's graduation, I periodically get to work with the new officers on-line. Through the years, I've seen many of them mature into fine and productive officers. I take great pride in knowing that I and my fellow training officers have played an integral part in their growth and development. Some of the officers who have come through training in my 10 years as a training instructor are now Sergeants and Lieutenants in the Department. Is every recruit going to be top-notch, exemplary, or stellar right out of the Academy? I would readily say 'no.' But, I can honestly say I have always given my all in trying to produce the best product for our Department's now and future."

"The purpose of the Sheriff's Department is to help detained individuals learn a new way of life," said Deputy Ortiz. "A lot of the people who go through our facilities never had the resources to change their life trajectory. People believe corrections is a lot more rugged than it is. People fail to realize we are all human, and everyone makes mistakes. Just because someone has been in jail doesn't make them a bad person. The training division aims to prepare employees for their careers and give employees the tools necessary to help change a detainee's life course."



THE SCSD RECOGNIZES OFFICERS FOR HEROIC ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE JOB

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department consists of nearly 1,000 employees who each serve a vital role in the care and custody of the men and women remanded to our facilities by the courts. As the heart of the Department, these men and women work tirelessly to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the inmate and detainee population, their fellow coworkers and the communities of Suffolk County.

Every day, our employees go above and beyond to carry out the mission of the Sheriff's Department by enforcing the laws of the Commonwealth while serving and protecting the citizens of Suffolk County. As a leader in county corrections, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is committed – through a variety of programs, services and partners – to providing rehabilitative support, recovery programming and skills-based training to its population so that they can each return to their respective neighborhoods better able to care for themselves and their families.

For this issue of the Common Ground, we have chosen to highlight the following individuals as their recent actions are a true testament of their training and dedication to public service.



SUFFOLK COUNTY JAIL:

Lieutenant Tom DeRosa and Officer Germesa Dasilva quickly and fearlessly responded to an incident involving an armed detainee in an inmate housing unit. The detainee attempted to use a handmade sharp-edged weapon to attack two detainees who were performing unit work. The two officers calmly and professionally engaged with the armed individual to prevent their attack on the potential victims, and their swift and courageous actions helped to deescalate the volatile situation, resulting in the attacker's peaceful surrender.

SUFFOLK COUNTY HOUSE OF CORRECTION:

Officers Nekeya Mayhew and James Campbell (not pictured) intervened in and disrupted a detainee's attempt to commit suicide inside their unit cell. The attempt, which was made utilizing a makeshift ligature fashioned from a bed sheet, was quickly identified by Officers Campbell and Mayhew, who quickly entered the cell and lifted the detainee, relieving pressure from his neck while awaiting help to cut him down. The officers' rapid and courageous response helped to save that detainee's life.



While rounds are a basic function of a correction officer's daily duties, situations like those listed above reinforce the importance of quick action and thorough training. The actions of the aforementioned officers have distinguished them from their peers in these instances, and we recognize them for their commitment to the Department and for maintaining the wellbeing of fellow employees and those remanded to our care and custody.

PROMOTIONS



The hard work and dedication of our officers and support staff does not go unnoticed. Since the start of 2022, the Human Resource Department has recognized the efforts of 34 employees through job promotions.

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department is pleased to announce the following promotions.

Charles Donovan has been promoted to Chief of Financial Services.

Stephen Johnson has been promoted to Chief Civil Deputy of the Civil Process Division.

Karen McDevitt has been promoted to Contracts Administrator of Financial Services at the House of Corrections.

Christina Betts has been promoted to Casework Supervisor of the Women's Unit at the House of Corrections.

Kenneth Jackson has been promoted to Casework Supervisor of the PEACE Unit at the House of Corrections.

Nicholas Lahage has been promoted to Casework Supervisor of the Reintegration Division at the House of Corrections.

Jessica Menjivar has been promoted to Casework Supervisor at the House of Corrections.

Julie Pomaes has been promoted to Caseworker at the House of Corrections.

Vanessa Gomez has been promoted to Caseworker at the Suffolk County Jail.

Jose Centeno has been promoted to Custodian Supervisor at the House of Corrections.

PROMOTIONS

The following lieutenants have been promoted to the rank of Captain:

Captain Christopher Buckley
Captain Jessica Cabrera
Captain Tracey Daras
Captain Michael Davin
Captain Leteya Flambo
Captain Matthew Melchin
Captain Stephen Miller
Captain Stanley Thermora
Captain Thomas Robinson

The following Sergeants at the Suffolk County Jail have been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant:

Brittney Carroll-Girvids
Alfred Cervera
Andrew Coyne
Thomas Derosa
Brian Etro
Bryan McAfee
Michaelangelo Russo
Richard Stangle

The following Sergeants at the House of Correction have been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant:

John Amate
Julie Bickford
Christopher Gillespie
Patrick Lavey
Jeannette McDaniel
Kylie Willhoite
John Winnett

Please join the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department in congratulating the employees mentioned above on their outstanding contributions. We know each of you will perform admirably in your new role.

AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HOLDS, WINS FIRST DEBATE AGAINST BOSTON DEBATE LEAGUE

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department partnered with the Boston Debate League to give members of the Department's I-CAN Academy an opportunity to gain debate experience. I-CAN Academy was created for the population at the Suffolk County Jail to assist in continuing their education and vocational opportunities. The purpose of I-CAN Academy is to build on skills for success and help reduce recidivism. Following a five-week engagement, members of the Boston Debate League (BDL) were welcomed inside the Suffolk County Jail to participate in a discussion of Senate Bill S7527, a proposed bill in New York State Senate that, if passed, would prevent prosecutors from using rap lyrics, or other artistic expression, against a defendant in a criminal court proceeding. The I-CAN Academy debate team argued in support of the bill stating that rap lyrics are not always literal and constitutional rights may be violated if the lyrics were made to be permissible in court. Following a passionate and well-reasoned defense of the bill, the six Department detainees were named the victors in the first-ever debate with the BDL.



SHERIFF TOMPKINS TESTIFIES IN SUPPORT OF WORK AND FAMILY MOBILITY ACT

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins gave testimony in support of the Work and Family Mobility Act, legislation which would, by allowing undocumented immigrants to apply for motor vehicle licenses, create safer roadways; lower insurance deductibles; and bring the State of Massachusetts untapped revenue while helping to increase employment opportunities, access to schools, healthcare and groceries for the undocumented. "We have people who are here either lawfully awaiting citizenship or are undocumented who are operating motor vehicles, regardless," said Sheriff Tompkins. "Doesn't it make sense to ensure that they are doing so responsibly and with the proper skills and training so that they can operate a motor vehicle safely? This bill ensures that all motor vehicle operators be trained, insured and accountable. It also adds an additional layer of protection for our members of law enforcement out on the streets and highways...and, it collects needed revenues from motor vehicle operators through fees for licenses and auto registrations, and it will help to lower insurance rates for drivers across the board."

DEPARTMENT'S NURTURING FATHERS PROGRAM RECEIVES AWARD

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins joined members and supporters of the Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts for the "Families, Friends Future Gala" at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Dorchester. The event, which was held as both a fundraiser and an opportunity to recognize people who have been special to the Center, included a special award to the Department for its collaborative work with the Family Nurturing Center's Nurturing Fathers Program that operates inside the Suffolk County House of Correction. Accepting the award on behalf of Sheriff Tompkins and the Department and delivering heartfelt remarks about the Center was David Mayo, the Department's Director of Reintegration. Family Nurturing Center offers free programs for families in low income neighborhoods to help parents and caregivers improve their parenting skills and enhance the cognitive and social development of their children. These programs help to strengthen the family, build community, and provide children with the nurturing and engaging environments necessary to ensure school readiness, resilience, and long-term success.





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

WISH EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY

*Mother's
Day*
2022

**Celebrating mothers across the
Department for your dedication,
sacrifice and commitment to this work.
Thank you for your service.**

#WEARESCSD | WWW.SCSDMA.ORG



THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM 2022

JULY 6, 2022 - AUGUST 19, 2022
8AM - 4PM

APPLY NOW

This program will invite twenty participants to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department to learn more about careers in law enforcement. Participants will work 21 hours a week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 8AM-4PM beginning July 6, 2022 and will be compensated at a rate of \$14.25 an hour.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Summer Enrichment Program targets incoming 11th and 12th graders with the opportunity to intern at Suffolk County Jail, the House of Correction, Chelsea Training Facility and Civil Process.

APPLICATION DEADLINE FRIDAY, MAY 13TH, 2022

Interns will participate in either Remote, Hybrid or In-Person activities. TBA

REQUIREMENTS

- Must be entering either the 11th or 12th grade
- Must be resident of Boston, Chelsea, Winthrop or Revere
- Interest in Law Enforcement or Criminal Justice
- Proper form of Identification (Student ID, Passport, Mass ID or Driver's License)
- Active Checking or Saving Account
- Updated Physical Form

Contact
NADIA LOVINSKY
617-704-6656 | NLovinsky@scsdma.org
200 Nashua Street • Boston, MA
www.scsdma.org/SEP2022

**SCAN FOR
APPLICATION**

