



# COMMON GROUND

OCTOBER 2022 ISSUE



## COTA 22-03 GRADUATION



## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS



## SCSD MOTORCYCLE UNIT PARTICIPATES IN OFFICER ROBERT MURPHY MEMORIAL RIDE

## SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 2022

Greetings,

In this issue of our Common Ground newsletter, we recognize three of the Month of October's special annual observances – Domestic Violence Awareness, Hispanic Heritage and Breast Cancer Awareness – with some appropriately thematic stories.

Casting the spotlight on our Special Sheriff, Abiezer Ayuso, the Department's first person of Hispanic heritage to hold the title, we also highlight our partnership with domestic violence prevention agency RESPOND by featuring SAFER Program Coordinator Jennifer Wolter, who provides insight into the issue, in addition to important resource information for people experiencing abuse.

Other stories included in the following pages are the Department's efforts to raise awareness about the threat of breast cancer, and the graduation of our newest class of Correction Officer Training Academy recruits.

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



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Read about the graduation of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office's Correction Officer Training Academy Class 22-03.



### MEET SPECIAL SHERIFF ABIEZER AYUSO

Read about Special Sheriff Abiezer "Abe" Ayuso, his rise through the ranks and his mark on the history of the Department.



### SCSD PARTNER GIVES INFORMATION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Learn more about Domestic Violence Prevention and accessing critical resources.

### AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

In this month's trip Around Suffolk County, we highlight the officers who participated in the Boston Area Church League and Officer Robert Murphy's Memorial Ride, and recognize Graduates of the Community Works Service Program.

#### COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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# SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SWEARS-IN 26 NEW CORRECTION OFFICERS

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently swore in twenty-four correction officers and two Sheriff's Investigative Division (SID) members following their successful completion of the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy (COTA).

Members of COTA Class 22-03 gathered for a graduation ceremony held at Casa Lucia in Revere, MA. Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins presided over the ceremony, accompanied by Special Sheriff Abiezer Ayuso, Superintendents Michael Colwell, William Sweeney and John McLaughlin, along with members of the Command Staff and the training academy. Graduates were joined by family and friends. Individuals who could not attend were able to observe the proceedings on the Department's Facebook Live broadcast.

In July, members of COTA Class 22-03 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.

"This is not an easy job," said Sheriff Tompkins, addressing the graduates. "You are coming into an occupation where you will have jurisdiction over other people's lives. You will have guardianship over the individuals who have been remanded to our care. This is a job you must take seriously. The way that adults and individuals are dealt with while they are with us could have a significant impact on how they interact with their families, friends, and communities when they leave us."

"I am proud of each and every one of you," continued Sheriff Tompkins. "The Department welcomes you with open arms, and we look forward to watching each of you be the standup officers and individuals the training academy has prepared you to be."

Assistant Deputy Superintendent (ADS) of Training Jose Mojica addressed the group, saying, "Corrections is an abnormal profession that requires you to be courageous but fair. At times you will serve as a counselor, a guardian, or a medical first responder. Always remember to answer your calls and treat others as you wish to be treated."

"Character cannot be built in a ten-week academy," ADS Mojica continued. "You have to have the internal fortitude to do the right thing, both on and off duty. Have courage in the future to maintain your moral compass and remember the oath you take today to serve the citizens of Suffolk County."

The following graduates from COTA Class 22-03 have been assigned to the Suffolk House of Correction: Christopher A'Hearn; Serge Antoine; Nigilo Antunes; Sara Berhe; Sara Cortland Cartwright; Reginald Cherduville; Nhat-Thanh Dao; Brett Duguay; Don-Didrot Gilson; John Hartery; Karl Hubbard; Stephan Jean-Pierre; Erick Killingham; Emmanuel Odelus; James Paul; Jonathan Ruiz; Keven Semedo; Vanessa Turner; Archie Williams; and Estherline William. The following individuals will be serving the Suffolk County Jail: Jesus Arocho; Raymond Bento; Dannis Fordjour; and Edwin Lopez. Kendrick Raine and Steven Wilson have been assigned to the Sheriff's Investigative Division (SID).

Jonathan Ruiz, President of COTA Class 22-03, addressed the group by first thanking Sheriff Tompkins, his command staff, Assistant Deputy Superintendent Jose Mojica, and the training academy officers.

"Class... we are here... we made it," Officer Ruiz exclaimed. "In just a short time, we are going to take the oath and become officers of one of the most well-respected law enforcement agencies in the country. For the last 10 weeks, we've been challenged physically mentally, and academically. Each of us has persevered, overcame the challenge, and made it to the finish line."

Receiving special recognition for outstanding performance during the academy was Jonathan Ruiz who was recognized for posting a Grade Point Average of 95.6% and received the Unit Citation Award for outstanding leadership, motivational mentoring, and demonstrated professional ethics; Nhat-Thanh Dao was awarded the Defensive Tactics Award for exceptional performance during defensive tactics training; Jesus Arocho, who received the Physical Fitness Award for outstanding performance in physical training; and Kendrick Raine who received the Drill Instructor's Award for his leadership, motivation, esprit de corps and attention to detail.

Congratulations to COTA Class 22-03 and welcome to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.



## EMPLOYEE PROFILE:

# SPECIAL SHERIFF ABE AYUSO



National Hispanic Heritage Month started in 1968 and is observed from September 15th to October 15th. During this month, we celebrate the history, culture, and countless contributions to our society made by more than 60 million Hispanic Americans, Latinos, and Latinx-identifying people.

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department wants to honor and highlight some of the men and women of Hispanic descent who work tirelessly to serve the Department and promote mutual understanding and respect within the facilities. As part of our recognition of this special month, we sat down with someone who is not only one of our highest-ranking custody staff-members, but also the highest-ranking member of Hispanic descent.

Special Sheriff Major Abiezer "Abe" Ayuso joined the Department in July of 1993. With nearly three decades of service to the Department, Special Sheriff Ayuso has climbed through the ranks, rising from Jail Officer and Deputy to Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Assistant Deputy Superintendent.

In June of 2021, Major Ayuso was appointed to serve as the "Special Sheriff," a designation that requires him to assume the roles and responsibilities of the Sheriff when the Sheriff is out of state or if the sheriff is physically unable to carry out the duties of the position. This appointment also made history, as Major Ayuso became the first Puerto Rican & Latinx person

to hold the position of Special Sheriff.

"My day-to-day responsibilities vary," stated Special Sheriff Ayuso. "I could be working directly with the External Affairs Division monitoring outreach programs, dealing with Program Services, or visiting our facilities to ensure officers and non-custody employees have the necessary tools and support to perform their assigned duties."

"This job must come from the heart," Special Sheriff Ayuso continued. "When I first started with the Department, I had been laid-off from the construction industry and needed work. Over time, I realized the impact that I had on individuals within our care and custody. Being Spanish-speaking, I realized the importance of being able to communicate with individuals who don't speak the language of some correction officers. Throughout the years, for many years, I directly assisted with the booking process. My goal was to continue to work with the Spanish-speaking population and ensure that they had someone who could understand their needs and explain the processes."

Special Sheriff Ayuso is also a member of the Latino Law Enforcement Group of Boston (LLEGO Boston).

"I am proud to be a member of this organization," he said. "It helps me to keep in touch with my heritage. I see other officers, older and younger than me, continuing the mission of promoting diversity within law enforcement."

Speaking about the Department and the work that he has done over the course of his career, Special Sheriff Ayuso said, "I couldn't have been with the Department for thirty years if I didn't love what I do for a living."

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recognizes and appreciates the benefits of a diverse workforce within corrections and the contributions our employees have made to promote mutual understanding and respect for cultural differences between custody and non-custody staff, as well as among the population remanded into our care.



# SCSD PARTNER PROVIDES CRITICAL INFORMATION, ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

To connect and unite individuals and organizations working on domestic violence issues, October became Domestic Violence Awareness Month in 1981. Since its inception, the month has provided acknowledgment for domestic violence survivors, a voice for those who have otherwise felt silenced, and resources for those currently affected by domestic violence.

US Department of Justice's Office of Violence Against Women reports that 77% to 90% of incarcerated women have extensive histories of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. As a response to the overwhelming number of domestic violence victims within our facilities, RESPOND and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department started a collaboration called the SAFER Program to help incarcerated or detained individuals work through their experiences with domestic violence and begin planning for a safe release.



The foundation for SAFER was laid in 2014 when RESPOND counselors began bringing psycho-educational domestic violence classes to women detained or incarcerated at the Suffolk County House of Correction. SAFER was formally launched in 2018, at the invitation of Christina Ruccio, Director of Women's Program Services. At any given time, Jennifer Wolter, the SAFER Program Coordinator, works with a quarter of the population at the House of Correction. The goal of the program is to help provide emotional support, classes, court accompaniment, case management, safety planning and discharge planning to those in our facilities.

Previously, individuals could enroll in an eight-week domestic violence course, but due to a low completion rate, the program was condensed into a three-week program consisting of nine sessions. In the first half of the program, individuals learn to define abuse, recognize warning signs, and understand of the abuse cycle. The second half of the program focuses on how to find healthy relationships and set boundaries. General one-on-one counseling and ongoing support groups are available for individuals who are in the care and custody of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department for longer periods of time.

The population enrolled in the SAFER Program can access similar resources once released from the facility; in fact, this year, RESPOND has started a support group specifically for individuals who spent time at the House of Correction.

According to the National Network to End Domestic Violence, more than 1 in 4 women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner within their lifetime; however, domestic violence is a life-threatening crime that has affected millions regardless of gender, race, age, economic status, religion or education level.

Wolter offered examples of potential warning signs that a friend or family member may be the victim of abusive behavior. First, there could be physical evidence, such as unexplained bruises or flinching as a response to trauma. Secondly, a friend or family member may constantly change or cancel plans in attempt to isolate themselves. Next, a person may change their social behavior; the individual may show less interest in the things they used to enjoy or make drastic changes in their wardrobe. Lastly, there may be a monitoring piece within the relationship; in fact, the friend or family member may constantly feel the need to check-in or ask permission from their significant other.

If you believe a friend or family member is experiencing domestic violence, Wolter suggests addressing it.

"Silence gives consent; bring it up. Don't be judgmental, and don't blame them," Wolters says. "Ask big questions, and let them talk. Generally, people will defend their partner or family member. You don't want to attack that person. In fact, I recommend focusing on feelings – instead of what happened. Ask, 'How are things going in the relationship?' 'Are you happy?' – Get them to talk about their feelings of satisfaction and safety."

"Remember it is important that you don't ever tell them what to do," she continued. "Respect the avenues they want to use to reach safety. Do not give an ultimatum. Show your support, show them you are willing to speak, don't push the individual, try to be patient. If your friend does want something that you can't provide, it is good to know a local agency or national hotline number."

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there are 50-plus Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault agencies. Wolter emphasized that these are anonymous, free, and confidential.

"I recommend reaching out for professional help. I think it is important to realize that these services are for everyone, in addition to the actual person being victimized. Anyone can call and talk to a counselor to ask for advice."

## Resources:

24 Hours - National Hotline - (800) 799- SAFE; (7233)  
24 Hours – SafeLink Massachusetts – (877) 785-2020  
9 AM to 5 PM – RESPOND – (617) 623-5900



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

# HONORS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER  
2022



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Each year in the United States, about 264,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer and 42,000 women die from the disease. While men also get breast cancer, it is not as common with men accounting for about 1 in every 100 breast cancers diagnoses in the United States.

In an effort to raise awareness, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department distributed special patches designed with the symbol of Breast Cancer Awareness among custody and non-custody staff members.

Assistant Deputy Superintendent Walter Vasile helped to create the patches distributed throughout the Department this month, "Whether we know it or not, cancer has affected so many individuals. Each year both men and women are diagnosed with breast cancer. This month we distributed patches to help raise awareness. We look forward to creating more patches to recognize the different diseases that affect so many."

To learn more about breast cancer, visit [www.nationalbreastcancer.org/about-breast-cancer/](http://www.nationalbreastcancer.org/about-breast-cancer/)

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# AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY



## DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES WRAP UP BOSTON AREA CHURCH LEAGUE

Members of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department celebrated the accomplishments of the kids they mentored throughout the summer during the Boston Area Church League. Over the summer, Department representatives coached baseball to kids within Suffolk County. Representatives wrapped up the summer program by attending the Frank Jordan Ceremony Luncheon followed by the Boston Red Sox vs. Kansas City Royals game.

The Boston Area Church League gives Boston area communities and Civic organizations the resources and opportunities to provide mentorship to youth.

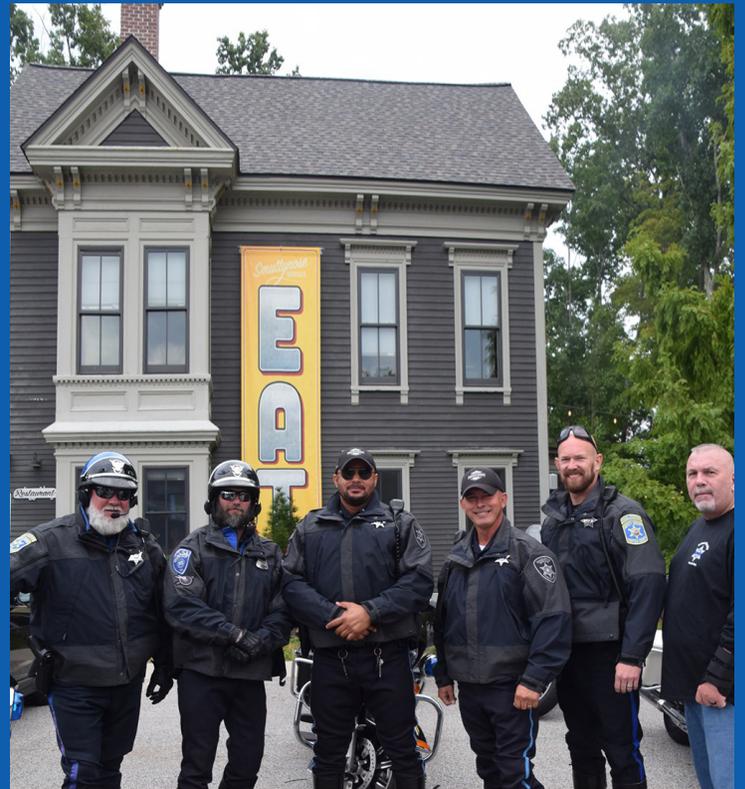
## SCSD MOTORCYCLE UNIT PARTICIPATES IN OFFICER ROBERT MURPHY MEMORIAL RIDE

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) Officer Robert Murphy died on September 24, 2020, after suffering a medical emergency as he arrived to work at the House of Correction.

To honor his legacy, the inaugural Rob Murphy Memorial Ride was held on September 25th with proceeds benefiting the Murphy family. The ride began at Seacoast Harley Davidson in North Hampton, New Hampshire, and ended at Smuttynose Brewing Co. in Hampton, NH.

Representatives from the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Motorcycle Unit participated in the run. Officer Murphy was an active member of the Department, lending his time and talents to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Motorcycle Unit.

The Department would like to thank the Motorcycle Unit for their participation, along with the individuals and fellow law enforcement agencies that contributed and ensured that Officer Murphy's legacy lives on.



## SCSD GRADUATES SECOND COMMUNITY WORKS SERVICES CLASS

The Department recently held a graduation for the second class of its newest collaborative program with Community Works Services (CWS), which teaches Building Maintenance and Commercial Cleaning to participants. Led by Reintegration Supervisor Nick Lahage, CWS Program Coordinator Tim Muise and CWS Business Engagement Manager Gregg Caplitz, the program celebrated the 19 men who completed the training during a graduation attended by some of their friends and family members. In recent years, CWS has been an active community partner with the Department, helping people with barriers to employment – like those with a past history of incarceration or in possession of a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) history – to not only overcome these obstacles, but to excel in sustainable jobs with livable wages. Community Work Services (CWS) was founded more than 140 years ago by Annie Adams Fields in an effort to improve the lives of people living in poverty.





SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS  
SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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