



SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

COMMON GROUND

NOVEMBER 2022 ISSUE



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SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER, 2022

Greetings,

In the pages ahead, you'll read about our most recent efforts to recruit new officers for the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department through collaboration with members of the Massachusetts Legislature and Boston City Council.

Speaking of officers, we also feature a story about the impact of veterans of the United States Armed Forces on the workforce within the Department, just in time for Veterans Day.

In addition, we showcase the return of our Family Matters Playshop, an activity that brings incarcerated fathers together with their children and family for play and critical bonding time.

Finally, we have a story about the inaugural "Employer of the Year" award that I recently received from the National Association of Government Employees.

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



NAGE NAMES SHERIFF TOMPKINS "EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR"

Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins was named "Employer of the Year" by the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE).



SHERIFF TOMPKINS ANNOUNCES HIRING OPPORTUNITIES

Read about a special initiative by Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins to assist in recruitment efforts of correction officers at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.



"PLAYSHOP" RETURNS TO THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department welcomed the return of the "Family Matters Playshop," a program designed to give incarcerated fathers an opportunity to bond with their children.

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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NAGE NAMES SHERIFF TOMPKINS “EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR”

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins was named “Employer of the Year” by the National Association of Government Employees (NAGE).

Reacting to the unexpected honor of becoming the first-ever recipient of the award, Sheriff Tompkins expressed his appreciation for both the designation and the work of the bestowing organization.

“I’m somewhat taken aback by this award, but I am deeply honored,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “NAGE is an awesome organization that does great work in the service of working men and women across this country. I proudly stand with labor and support NAGE in all that they do to keep people safe and healthy at work, with fair wages and a just and equitable environment.”

Speaking about the decision to select Sheriff Tompkins as the inaugural winner of the award, NAGE President David Holway explained that it was less about having to make a choice and more about recognizing the person who best embodied the ideals of the award.

“We represent and work with 350 employers,” said President Holway. “Nobody is fairer to our members than Sheriff Tompkins. He’s responsive to their needs and he understands and appreciates what they do every day.”

The National Association of Government Employees (NAGE) is an organization of members united by the belief in the dignity and worth of workers and the services they provide. They are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families and creating a more just and humane society.

Members are public and private workers – federal, state, county, and municipal employees – police officers, firefighters, correctional officers, health care workers – nurses, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians – office workers, and professional workers. NAGE seeks a stronger union to build power for the organization and to protect the people it serves.



NAGE is made up of women and men of every race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, physical ability and sexual orientation, who are the standard-bearers in the struggle for social and economic justice begun nearly half a century ago by shipyard workers who dared to dream beyond their daily hardships and to organize for economic security, dignity and respect.

SHERIFF TOMPKINS ANNOUNCES HIRING OPPORTUNITIES AT THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins recently announced a special initiative to recruit and hire correction officers at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) in Boston.

In a letter to members of the Suffolk County Legislature and the Boston City Council, Sheriff Tompkins cited a severe reduction in the number of correction officers presently available to ensure 24-hour-a-day staffing of the Suffolk County Jail and the Suffolk County House of Correction. The Sheriff cited retirements, transfers to other law enforcement agencies and an unprecedented nationwide shortage of applicants into the field of law enforcement as the factors that have led to an urgent need for new correction officer hiring. As a result, Sheriff Tompkins is taking the unusual step of asking elected partners in state government to help spread the word about employment opportunities at the SCSD.

Sheriff Tompkins said, "I am asking my fellow elected officials to help me inform our mutual constituents in Suffolk County of my Department's urgent need for correction officer recruits. While SCSD cannot guarantee that we will be able to hire every constituent whom my partners in government prospectively refer to our attention, we will ensure every applicant will get a very serious scrutiny of their ability to meet our basic qualifications, and every chance to succeed in meeting the writing and physical requirements of our Correction Officer Training Academy."

A correction officer applicant must be a U.S. citizen, a High School graduate, at least 21 years of age at appointment and in possession of a valid license to operate a motor vehicle. If successful in passing the Suffolk County Correction Officer Training Academy, benefits available to first-year Correction Officers include an average first-year starting salary of \$49,000 to \$69,000 (with applicable bonuses and overtime), enrollment in the MA Group Insurance Commission for generously subsidized health insurance, free dental and vision insurance coverage, availability of a tuition remission program and entry into the MA State Employees Retirement System.

Residents interested in learning more about this special recruitment initiative and Correction Officer Training Academy requirements are invited to visit the Department's website at www.scsdma.org or may call (617) 635-1000, ext. 6343 during normal business hours.



TO ALL ESSENTIAL STAFF WORKING THIS THANKSGIVING,



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

HONORING
ALL WHO SERVED



US VETERANS BRING ESSENTIAL SKILLS TO DEPARTMENT, CORRECTIONS WORKFORCE

Veterans Day is a federal holiday observed on November 11th to honor the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and members of the other armed forces who put their lives on the line to defend the nation and the freedoms of American citizens. The date of Veterans Day is historically significant as it honors the “eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month” of 1918 that signaled the end of World War I, originally known as Armistice Day. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower officially changed the name of the holiday from Armistice Day to Veterans Day. This month, the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department celebrates the 19 million men and women who have served in the U.S. military.

Military personnel experience a variety of trials and tribulations while performing their duties, which help to instill skills such as integrity, stress tolerance, self-control, and adaptability.

Many veterans seek jobs in Law Enforcement after serving in the military. The Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department proudly employs approximately 95 active duty, reserved, and retired veterans, all who are dedicated to their positions and recognize a sense of duty. These employees are natural leaders who understand the importance of working as a team.

Correctional officers are responsible for maintaining the mandate of care, custody, and control of those remanded to our facilities by the courts. These individuals safeguard those in our custody by following established regulations and procedures, and transport individuals between jail, courtrooms, and other points. As public servants, correction officers are expected to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, both on and off duty.

While remaining alert and keeping order are essential functions of the job, correction officers must have the ability to understand and observe individuals in our care and anticipate their needs. Time in the military helps to sharpen an individual’s situational awareness, boding well for the responsibilities of a correctional officer.

In an effort to understand how time in the military can shape one’s career, the Department spoke to Deputy Jeremy Stephens. Deputy Stephens’ 12-year military career consists of more than seven years in the Air Force and four-plus years in the Air Force reserves.

“Prior to my time in the military, I lacked confidence,” said Deputy Stephens. “As I gained experience, my confidence grew and I learned more about the importance of responsibility. I’ve learned how to better care for myself and my family.”

The Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department joins with others across the nation in honoring, cherishing, and supporting the men and women who have served, and continue to serve, in the United States Armed Forces. Thank you to the many fearless veterans and active-duty members who proudly serve both our country and our Department.

“PLAYSHOP” RETURNS TO HOC TO HELP STRENGTHEN FAMILIAL BONDS

The Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department recently welcomed the return of a special event designed to help to strengthen the bond between incarcerated fathers and their children.

Launched in early 2020 at the Suffolk County House of Correction as part of a collaboration with the Nurturing Fathers Program, the Family Matters Playshop brings together the families of men who have been remanded to Department care and custody for in-person playtime between them and their children, and visiting time with other members of their families.

Attendees of the event played with toys, read age-appropriate books and colored together with items provided by the Family Matters Program while sharing pizza dinner as they reestablished the critical bonds of family.

Though the inaugural Family Matters Playshop was an instant hit with its participants, plans for additional dates had to be postponed after the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the lifting of restrictions in recent months, however, the Playshop’s return was welcomed enthusiastically by members of the program.

“This is so special,” said one participant of the Playshop. “It’s really tough not being home to watch my baby grow and help raise her and everything. But, this is amazing to have, even in here, just to stay connected.”

Family Matters is a voluntary program offered through the Department’s Division of Re-Integration Services that is designed to assist incarcerated individuals and their families in working toward positive relationships. Numerous studies have shown the powerful impact that families can have in the support, guidance and inspiration for success by currently incarcerated individuals upon their release.

Maintaining that connection is crucial, say researchers, who have stated that when fathers engage in physical play and interact with their children, they challenge and stimulate their children’s minds, which positively impacts the child’s learning and skill development, and can influence a child’s ability to manage frustration, explore new activities, and solve problems in creative ways.

Speaking about the Family Matters Program and the Playshop event, Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins stressed their importance while offering praise to their participants.

“Maintaining healthy relationships between parents and their children is crucially important to the future success of all parties,” said Sheriff Tompkins. “The support structure that family can offer benefits the children through the guidance and nurturing that those returning home can give them, while providing parents with the positive reinforcement that can help them to flourish in their roles as caregivers and nurturers. I congratulate them for taking these important steps to become better parents so that their children can, in turn, thrive.”





SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS
SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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