



SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

# COMMON GROUND

MAY 2023 ISSUE



# COTA 23-01 GRADUATION



## SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

MAY 2023

### Greetings,

We welcome you to another edition of the Common Ground Newsletter.

In this issue, we celebrate our latest group of Correction Officer Training Academy (COTA) graduates as they begin their careers at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. These officers undertook three months of rigorous academic and physical training to earn their badges and we welcome them to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department family.

Additionally, we feature stories about two important trainings for members of our staff: the Active Attack Integrated Response certification course attended by our Director of Training, Assistant Deputy Superintendent Jose Mojica; and the Mental Health First Aid instructor course that was held at our training academy.

We also highlight our Department's outreach and recruitment efforts at numerous job and career fairs around Suffolk County; our participation in local community events including the Daffodil Dash in Revere and the Shamrock Shootout in West Roxbury; and we share with readers the most recent recipients of our Correction Officers of the Month awards.

I hope that you'll enjoy reading these and other stories in this issue, 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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Read about the Mental Health First Aid instructor course hosted at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Training Academy.



### WELCOME, CORRECTION OFFICER TRAINING ACADEMY CLASS 23-01

Meet the new graduates of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office's Correction Officer Training Academy Class 23-01.

### OFFICER OF THE MONTH

Read about the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Officers of the Month who were nominated by their peers and selected by the Command Staff.

# ADS JOSE MOJICA GAINS CERTIFICATION AS INSTRUCTOR FOR ACTIVE ATTACK INTEGRATED RESPONSE



The state of Massachusetts has taken a significant step towards enhancing emergency preparedness and community resiliency by adopting a statewide standard for active shooter and hostile event response.

In early 2023, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, under Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey and Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll, convened a multi-agency First Responder Training at Merrimack College to train state and local police, fire, EMS (emergency medical services), and 911 emergency assistance on the implementation of the National Fire Protection Association's NFPA 3000 standard.

The NFPA 3000 is the standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program. It establishes a model for cross-discipline collaboration to protect citizens and help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from a crisis event. Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to adopt this standard.

The weeklong "train-the-trainer" program at Merrimack College certified a cohort of qualified instructors to teach the model standard to other first responders and community partners across the state. During the training, Secretary of Public Safety and Security Terrance Reidy addressed program participants and thanked the first responders for their commitment to public safety.

Governor Maura Healey also issued the following statement to the group: "Our investment in training will bolster our first responders' collective ability to prepare for, prevent, and respond to emergencies while strengthening public safety in communities across the Commonwealth."

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Assistant Deputy Superintendent (ADS) Jose Mojica attended the weeklong training program and spoke highly of the course, stating, "Course instructors came from various backgrounds, including law enforcement and military special operation teams. These individuals brought their experiences and life lessons to us, which is huge."

ADS Mojica is one of approximately 100 instructors tasked with training over 23,000 law enforcement officers in the state with this new response technique. He emphasized the importance of the new training, saying, "Unfortunately, there has been an increase in gun violence throughout the country. The course was taught from the perspective of 'it is not a matter of if this could occur but when.' With that mindset, we can always be prepared to respond to this type of situation."

"The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has approximately 35 individuals who are post-trained," ADS Mojica continued. "The goal is to have each of these individuals certified through this program. My goal internally is to train officers to that level of experience."

The statewide standard of NFPA 3000 is a significant step towards improving emergency preparedness and community resiliency in Massachusetts. It provides a model for cross-discipline collaboration and prepares first responders to respond effectively and efficiently to hostile events.



# SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT HOSTS MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID INSTRUCTOR COURSE



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Correction Officer Training Academy recently hosted a Mental Health First Aid instructor course as part of a federally funded initiative through Anna Maria College. This initiative aims to provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to public safety professionals throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The initiative successfully certified 15 MHFA instructors from different public safety departments, including the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, Barnstable County Sheriff's Department, Middlesex County Sheriff's Department, Norfolk County Sheriff's Department, and several Boston-area police departments.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a nationally recognized skills-based training program from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. It teaches participants about mental health and substance use, increasing mental health literacy and decreasing the stigma associated with these challenges.

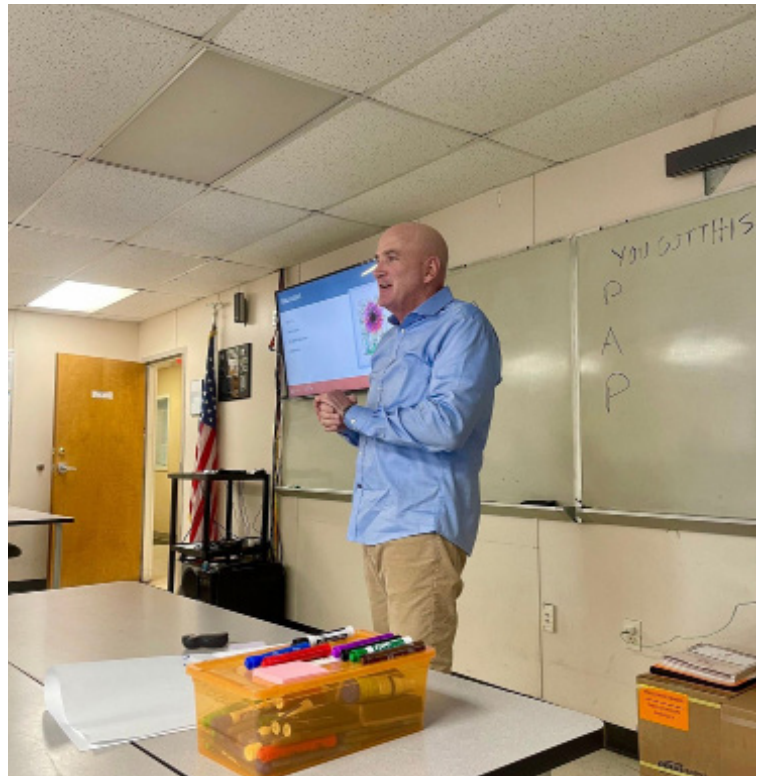
According to the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, mental health is important to public safety as 1 in 4 law enforcement encounters involve an individual experiencing mental health issues and 1.2 million individuals with mental illness are in jail or prison each year.

The course required students to complete an online prerequisite before attending the three-day in-person class. The MHFA course covers a range of topics including an overview of common mental health and substance use disorders; recognizing risk factors and warning signs; crisis diffusion techniques; affirming and reassurance tactics; how to encourage appropriate help; and self-help and support strategies.

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department training officers including Assistant Deputy Superintendent Jose Mojica, along with Sergeant Nick Lopriore, Sergeant Nicole Gaines, and Deputy Michael Disabatino successfully completed the course. As certified MHFA instructors, they are now fully-equipped to impart valuable lessons to Department employees and other public safety professionals.

The MHFA curriculum aims to build new mental health capacities within the public safety sector and helps to foster healthier and stronger communities. The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department remains committed to ensuring that its staff has the knowledge and skills required to address mental health challenges with the goal of training all Department employees on MHFA by 2024.

If you are interested in learning more about the program, please visit [www.annamaria.edu/MHFA](http://www.annamaria.edu/MHFA).



# THE DEPARTMENT WELCOMES 14 NEW CORRECTION OFFICERS



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently swore-in 14 new correction officers following their graduation from the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy (COTA).

Members of COTA Class 23-01 gathered for a graduation ceremony held at Casa Lucia in Revere, MA. Members of the Sheriff's Command Staff along with the training academy presided over the ceremony. Graduates were joined by family and friends.

In February, members of COTA Class 23-01 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.

Superintendent John McLaughlin addressed the graduates stating, "Today you will be joining the ranks of one of the oldest and most prestigious law enforcement agencies in the country. Your last twelve weeks have not been easy, but this is not an easy job. You have come to understand during your training that you will have guardianship over other people's lives. It is imperative that you understand the impact of that on those who have been remanded to our custody. Our job is not that of judge and jury. Our job is to make sure that their time with us is productive so that they may get home to their families and become a contributing member of society."

"In completing this academy, you have gone through one of the most challenging experiences in your life, academically, physically, and emotionally." Superintendent McLaughlin continued. "Because you have met that challenge, you have earned the right to be in these chairs. You've earned the right to wear the badge. You've earned the right to take the Correctional Officer Oath, and you've earned the right to become a member of this Department."

COTA Class 23-01 President John Batakis addressed the group, saying, "Over the last twelve weeks we have spent many hours in the classroom learning many different skills that will help us on the job and in everyday life. The most important lesson we learned was not taught in the classroom, rather it's what we learned about ourselves. Our abilities to adapt and overcome obstacles, our abilities to come together not only as a team but as a family."

Receiving special recognition for outstanding performance during the academy was Tejan Lewis-Rosario who won the Academic Award for posting a Grade Point Average of 93.7% and the Top Gun Award for outstanding firearm efficiency; John Batakis, who received the Unit Citation Award for outstanding leadership, motivational mentoring and demonstrated professional ethics; Freddy Soto, who was awarded the Defensive Tactics Award for exceptional performance during defensive tactic training; and Enyel Santana who received both the Physical Fitness Award for outstanding performance in physical training and the Drill Instructor's Award for his leadership, motivation, esprit de corps and attention to detail.

The graduates from COTA Class 23-01, who have been assigned to the Suffolk County House of Correction, are: John Batakis, James Cazeau, Alonzo Cumberlander, Ibraheem Almarawi, Pierre Perrier, Jack Moitoza, Djoser Dor, Danella Meus, Tejan Lewis-Rosario, Enyel Santana, Freddy Soto, Kenroy Stewart, Marie Vante, and Wallace Youyoute.

Congratulations to COTA Class 23-01 and welcome to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department.



# OFFICER OF THE MONTH:

To recognize the exemplary performance of our custody staff, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has instituted the Officer of the Month award. This award is granted to staff members who consistently demonstrate excellence, professionalism, and integrity while carrying out their duties.



We are pleased to announce that Officer Ryan Jones has been honored as the recipient of the Suffolk County Jail Officer of the Month. Officer Jones was nominated by his peers due to his capacity to surpass his duties and provide assistance to fellow officers whenever possible.

Superintendent of the Suffolk County Jail Michael Colwell stated, "Even though Ryan has been with the Department a relatively short period of time, he has impressed his colleagues and his supervisors with his dedication to service and commitment to professionalism."

We are pleased to announce that Officer James Fitzgerald has been honored as the recipient of the Officer of the Month Award for the Suffolk County House of Correction. Officer Fitzgerald was nominated for his exceptional integrity and willingness to assist fellow officers, on and off duty.

Superintendent of the Suffolk County House of Correction William Sweeney stated, "I was incredibly proud to recognize Corporal James Fitzgerald as the officer of the month. For more than 21 years, he has been a role model who leads by example. Regardless of his assignment, Jimmy sets the standard for others to follow. Each recommendation we received detailed his willingness to step up to help fellow officers in their time of need, as well as his willingness to go the extra mile to help the inmate population. Every person I spoke with mentioned his professionalism, positive attitude, and his attention to detail. Jimmy is a great officer, but he's an even better person, and I'm thrilled to be able to recognize him as the officer of the month."



Officer of the Month was initiated in February 2023 to recognize and appreciate the diligence and commitment of our staff. The Command Staff and peers play a crucial role in the selection process, which involves nominations and evaluations. We encourage all of our employees to actively participate in the program by nominating their deserving colleagues.

# AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY:

## Department Representatives Attend Second Annual Daffodil Dash

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department joined the second annual Daffodil Dash at The Track at Suffolk Downs on April 15, 2023. The Track was filled with 'Marathon Daffodils,' which became a symbol of strength and hope after the Boston Marathon Bombing in 2013.

Employees of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department handed out Safety Tips for Kids coloring books, crayons, and Junior Deputy Badges while kids raced, rocked flower crowns, and enjoyed music, food, and games.



## Department Representatives Continue Recruitment Efforts Throughout The Community

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department representatives attended multiple job fairs throughout the month of April, including the Good Jobs Coalition Job Fair in Chelsea, MA; the City of Boston Career Exploration Event at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building; the Career and Internship Fair at Curry College; and the City of Boston's Youth Job and Resource Fair.

Department employees were able to meet and interact with members of our community while helping connect job seekers with employment opportunities.



## Members of the Department's Honor Guard Give Assist To Annual Shamrock Shootout

Department Honor Guard members were on hand to support the Annual Shamrock Shootout in West Roxbury, MA. The Shamrock Shootout is an annual street hockey tournament that takes place along Temple Street in West Roxbury. Retired Sergeant from the House of Correction Michael O'Brien played a significant role in founding this beloved tradition back in 2008, and continues to help make this popular event a great success each year.

Hundreds of neighborhood children engaged in street hockey tournaments while being cheered on by family and friends. Department representatives handed out Safety Tips for Kids coloring books, crayons, and Junior Deputy Badges while kids competed in the tournament, listened to music, and enjoyed pizza.







SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS  
SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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