



SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

# COMMON GROUND

JUNE/JULY 2023 ISSUE



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## SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

JUNE 2023

### Greetings,

Welcome to another edition of the Common Ground Newsletter.

Our cover story details the recent visit to our House of Correction by Grammy Award winner-turned-professor, Lupe Fiasco. You can read about his visit to the P.E.A.C.E. Unit, where he - along with his colleagues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and their students - discussed music theory, provided instruction about musical production, and shared life experiences.

We also feature our own House of Correction Assistant Deputy Superintendent (ADS) of Security and Operations David Granese in our Employee Profile. ADS Granese, who has served with the Department for nearly forty years, spoke about his early days working at the Deer Island House of Correction in Winthrop, and reflected upon the historic ground broken early in his career by his status as the Department's first openly gay correction officer.

In addition to these stories, we highlight the Department's sensitivity training, with a focus on transgender awareness; we spotlight our "Officers of the Month"; we celebrate Correctional Officer and Employee Appreciation Week; and more.

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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### SHERIFF TOMPKINS TAKES STAGE FOR HARVARD, RCC COMMENCEMENTS

Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins helped to lead graduations for Harvard University and for Roxbury Community College.

### AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

Read about the Department's public activities as we take a trip Around Suffolk County.



# GRAMMY AWARD-WINNER AND MIT PROFESSOR LUPE FIASCO VISITS SCSD'S P.E.A.C.E. UNIT



Grammy award-winning rapper and record producer, Lupe Fiasco, recently made a memorable visit to the P.E.A.C.E. (Positive Energy Always Creates Elevation) Unit at the Suffolk County House of Correction. Lupe, whose real name is Wasalu Muhammad Jaco, rose to fame in 2006 with his debut album, *Lupe Fiasco's Food & Liquor*. Known for his thought-provoking lyrics and powerful messaging, Lupe has used his platform to inspire change and encourage personal growth.

Lupe Fiasco has recently become a distinguished member of the Educational Justice Institute at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he aims to foster collaboration between the worlds of rap, computing, and activism. As part of his year-long fellowship at MIT, he is offering an exclusive rap course for MIT students. Through an ongoing partnership between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and MIT, Lupe, and his students, visited individuals in the P.E.A.C.E. unit at the House of Correction to create opportunities for growth and empowerment.

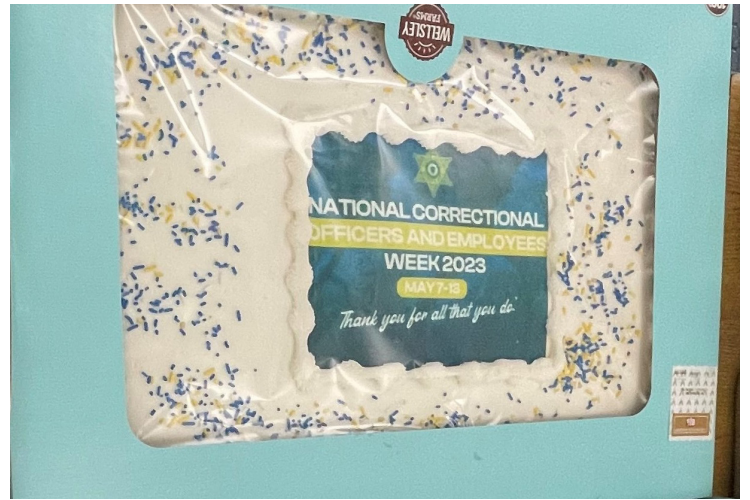
The P.E.A.C.E. Unit, initiated in 2018 by Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins, is a specialized treatment housing program that focuses on helping young men between the ages of 18 and 25 develop the skills and tools necessary to effect positive change in their lives. Studies have shown that individuals in this age group often exhibit lower levels of maturity in judgment and emotional regulation compared to older adults. The aim of the P.E.A.C.E. Unit is to provide a therapeutic space where these young men can learn how to make better decisions and break the cycle of incarceration.

With an innovative and holistic approach, the P.E.A.C.E. Unit offers a variety of programmatic components that encourage positive growth and instill coping skills. These include education, job training, skill development, individual and group counseling, attitudinal changes, and conflict resolution. The goal is to empower the individuals in the unit to take accountability for their actions and decisions while introducing practical life skills that will prepare them for successful reintegration into society. During his visit, Lupe Fiasco delivered an inspiring message to the young men in the P.E.A.C.E. Unit encouraging them to embrace their own individuality and challenging them to step out of their comfort zones lyrically. Lupe emphasized the importance of personal growth and self-expression, urging individuals to explore new horizons and try different things.

The Suffolk County House of Correction and the P.E.A.C.E. Unit are grateful to both Lupe Fiasco and MIT for this visit as it showcased the power of music and personal connection in promoting positive change. It also revealed that embracing individuality and stepping outside of comfort zones can lead to remarkable personal growth in both creativity and behavior.



# SCSD CELEBRATES CORRECTION OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION WEEK 2023



Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department celebrated Correction Officer and Employee Appreciation Week with a number of special events dedicated to its hardworking and committed men and women who make the Department among the best in the profession.

Kicking off the week of recognition, Sheriff Tompkins, members of the command staff and union representatives held wreath-laying ceremonies at both the Suffolk County House of Correction and Suffolk County Jail to honor the memories and service of our fallen officers. Both gatherings were marked by tributes to members of the Department who have passed, as well as expressions of gratitude to current custody and non-custody staff for their dedication and service to the organization.

The Department also hosted catered lunches where employees savored Italian dishes, threw a Barbecue with service by grill-masters from the command staff, and held raffles with great prizes, all in the spirit of appreciation for the tireless commitment and sacrifice made by SCSD employees.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the celebrations special, and a very special thank you, once again, to everyone in the SCSD Family.





# 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 honor is granted to staff members who consistently demonstrate excellence, professionalism, and integrity while carrying out their duties.



**SERGEANT  
DANNY PIZZARO**



**OFFICER  
WILLIAM HICKEY**



**OFFICER  
DANIEL KELLY**

This month, two officers from the same facility received the honor of this award for their heroic actions that helped to save the life of a detainee in acute distress. House of Correction Superintendent William Sweeney explained the easy decision for everyone involved in choosing this month's HOC representatives: "On May 12th, Officers William Hickey and Daniel Kelly were working SERT 3 (the Sheriff's Escort and Response Team) and covering the 6th floor lunch period when they observed a detainee in distress," said Superintendent Sweeney. "They immediately took action to confirm that the detainee was choking and both alternated performing the Heimlich Maneuver. Because of their quick action, they were able to partially clear the detainee's airway, which allowed her to begin breathing again. Beyond their life-saving efforts, the officers displayed incredible compassion towards the detainee to keep her calm during the emergency, alleviated her fears, and reassured her that she was going to be okay. Bill and Danny epitomized the professionalism and response we hope for from our officers, and I couldn't be more proud of both of them. They are true heroes."

For exhibiting exceptional integrity, professionalism and his ability to quietly lead by example, we are pleased to announce that Sergeant Danny Pizarro has been honored as the recipient of the Officer of the Month Award for the Suffolk County Jail. Discussing this month's award-winner, Superintendent of the Suffolk County Jail Michael Colwell said, "Sergeant Pizarro brings a focused approach to his work. He is a calm and steady presence, even in the most chaotic of circumstances. He is a quiet and steady leader."

The Officer of the Month Award was initiated in February of 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.



## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: **DAVID GRANESE** ASSISTANT DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SECURITY AND OPERATIONS

As a thirty-eight year veteran of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, Assistant Deputy Superintendent David Granese has witnessed his fair share of change within the organization.

Beginning his service back in February of 1985, ADS Granese went to work at the Deer Island Prison in Winthrop under the auspices of what was then known as the Boston Penal Institutions Department. To say that things were different in comparison to his current worksite at the Suffolk County House of Correction would be something of an understatement.

"Back when I started, we had only two working toilets," ADS Granese recalled. "We had no locker room, there were rats everywhere and we were lucky if we had electricity. Half of the cell doors were broken and most of them did not lock. The inmates had to help us to let them out of their cells. It was a very antiquated facility, built back in the late 1800's. The population had a lot of freedom and we didn't have a lot of control over there. Once in a while, an inmate would jump into the water and swim away to Winthrop."

Eventually, in 1991, the House of Correction at South Bay was opened, and, much like the organization itself, ADS Granese worked for and achieved positive progress, moving from assignments in the housing units, "New Man" unit and segregation, to working in the garage and managing maintenance of the Department's fleet of vehicles, running the Maintenance Division, various cellblocks, and the Vocational Education Division, among others, all while graduating through the ranks as a Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain and, ultimately, Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Security and Operations.

While he has helped to implement a variety of new programming and policies throughout his years of service, ADS Granese has also been a facilitator of change within the culture of the Department in another important way. Early on in his career, he made a decision that was both historic and, at the time, bold by any measure, particularly within the realm of law enforcement and corrections.

"I was the Department's first openly gay officer," said ADS Granese. "When I started, I was very secretive about my life and kept things to myself. Back then, it wasn't really accepted in this profession, or in general. But, as time went on, I was going out to clubs and running into people that I knew. I'd mentioned to some people that I had a boyfriend and we went together to some of my coworkers' houses and some private events. Eventually, I told the Penal Commissioner and the superintendent. They didn't care."

In fact, the general reception from most of his coworkers was of the supportive variety. The word "most," however, implies that there were, indeed, some who chose to act with hatred and ignorance.



“People would say ‘so and so is talking about you’ and some of them were spreading bad rumors about me,” ADS Granese recalls. “But, nobody ever said anything to my face, and it never really bothered me because I had so many friends in law enforcement and other places who I could call and talk it out with. I had one hundred percent support from my bosses, which was huge.”

And, any doubts about his work as an officer back in the early days – which were often based on the ignorant stereotypes or prejudices held by a small minority of his colleagues – were quickly dispelled by the fact that he was frequently the first one to the scene of an emergency, and the first one in to deal with it.

Over the years, ADS Granese has worked to support members of the LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex) community as a member of GOAL (Gay Officers Action League) New England and through a number different endeavors, both within the Department and in the community.

“Former Suffolk Sheriff Andrea Cabral asked me to be a liaison for the Department,” said ADS Granese. “I would provide outreach to people in the Department who were struggling with issues around being LGBTQI+ and help send them in the right direction to find the proper resources.”

He has also acted as a liaison for the Department in past Boston Pride Parade entries, and created the first Suffolk County Sheriff’s Department Pride patch to celebrate LGBTQI+ staff and provide awareness for the need to maintain a supportive, inclusive environment for all.

“It’s easier these days and it’s more accepted,” said ADS Granese. “I think it’s not a big issue for most people. But, I still hope that anyone who starts this job and gets harassed or feels uncomfortable would reach out to me for help. Like our EAP (Employee Assistance Program), conversations are confidential, nothing gets repeated and you maintain your privacy for anyone who doesn’t want people to know.”

As he continues working into his thirty-eighth year and beyond, ADS Granese remains committed to his role as guardian of the safety and security of his fellow Department staff members and the people in our care and custody, and his efforts to ensure that every person be treated with respect and equality.

“Everyone should be treated fairly and equally,” ADS Granese said. “No matter who you are, what race you are, what gender you are or how you identify. It’s all about education. I believe that once people get to experience other people who they view as different from themselves, once they learn about them, they’ll realize that all anyone wants is to be treated the way they would want to be treated.”



# SCSD'S TRANSGENDER AWARENESS TRAINING STRESSES RESPECT, PROFESSIONALISM



As the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) delivers on its mission for the safe care and custody of the men and women remanded by the courts into its facilities, the Department remains committed to providing comprehensive and effective training for custody and non-custody staff members that reflects the best and most current practices in corrections.

In addition to instruction on a variety of technical and tactical trainings, the Department has also stressed the importance of sociocultural awareness and understanding in its training as a means of fostering an environment of mutual respect and cooperation, not only between members of staff and the men and women in Department custody, but across the Department as a whole. As one of several such curricula, the Department introduced its Transgender Awareness Training back in 2019, which was later expanded upon by Sergeant Nicole Gaines when she joined the Department's Correction Officer Training Academy in Chelsea as one of its instructors in 2021.

"A lot of people don't understand some of the terminology used when addressing the LGBTQI+ community, or what transgender is and why people transition," said Sgt. Gaines. "I think a lot of people aren't trying to be mean, they're just ignorant and they really don't know. I wanted to add in a little bit more about transgender awareness to our curriculum so that people could become better informed."

As defined by the training, a transgender person is someone whose gender identity, gender expression or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Most transgender people are seeking to bring their body into alignment with their gender identity, a process known as "transition." As part of the transition process, many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies, with some undergoing surgeries as well. But, as the training cautions, not all people can or will take these steps, and it is important to understand that being transgender, or "trans," is not dependent upon surgical procedures.

"We deal with people who are trans in our custody," said Sgt. Gaines. That person might be a biological male transitioning to female and they may still look like man on outside, or vice versa, but that doesn't negate who they are on the inside. If they tell you that they are transgender, they are. Believe them and accept that they are transgender."

Sgt. Gaines also pointed out that, while a transgender person may want to transition, they may not have the insurance or money to do a full transition, reinforcing the importance of respecting everyone and their right to be addressed as they identify rather than by appearance. When training her Department colleagues about this and other topics, Sgt. Gaines fortifies her message with an example about her own experience.

"When I teach for in-service training, before I go into any of the LGBTQI+ material, I tell people that I am a lesbian," Sgt. Gaines said. "I am not embarrassed or ashamed to talk about it. I tell everyone I work with that me being lesbian has nothing to do with what we do here, nothing to do with me working as their partner, and nothing to do with how I'm going to back them up or help them when they need it. What's important is that I can do the job and that I treat people with respect. I've never gotten any negative feedback about it. People know that I'm a good person and that I do the job and I support them."

In turn, Sgt. Gaines ensures that the members of her Department training classes use that same barometer in working with members of the population.

"If someone tells you how they want to be identified, respect that and use the proper pronouns," said Sgt. Gaines. "You may have different beliefs or thoughts on the subject, but here on the job, it's about care, custody and having respect for people, minus what you may think personally. The ultimate message is that we need to treat everyone with respect and try to get a better understanding of the fact that we are all human beings,"





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

IN CELEBRATION OF

# PRIDE MONTH JUNE 2023

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# SHERIFF TOMPKINS TAKES THE STAGE FOR HARVARD, RCC COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES



Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins was a proud participant of the pomp and circumstance surrounding the recent commencement exercises held by Harvard University and Roxbury Community College, respectively.

Sheriff Tompkins joined Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian onstage for Harvard University's Order of Exercises for the Three Hundred Seventy-Second Commencement. Sheriff Koutoujian performed the customary opening of ceremonies, which featured the Commencement Address delivered by actor and activist Tom Hanks; the conferring of Honorary Degrees including a Doctor of Science for Jennifer A. Doudna, who has dedicated her career to understanding the molecular structure of RNA and thereby improving the human condition; a Doctor of Arts for Tom Hanks, the renowned actor, producer, writer, director, and humanitarian; a Doctor of Science for Katalin Karikó, a biochemist who successfully explored the therapeutic potential of messenger RNA and is a professor at the University of Szeged and adjunct professor of neurosurgery at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine; a Doctor of Laws for David Levering Lewis, an historian, biographer and the Julius Silver University Professor Emeritus at New York University; a Doctor of Humane Letters for Hugo Noé Morales Rosas, a trailblazing figure in public broadcasting and a lifelong advocate for elevating marginalized voices; and a Doctor of Laws for Michael Glenn Mullen, of the U.S. Navy (retired) who is a decorated military leader with a career of service spanning 43 years, which culminated in his work as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Sheriff Tompkins and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Honor Guard also rejoined the Roxbury Community College (RCC) family to initiate and celebrate their 47th Annual Commencement during the college's 50th Anniversary. As the Chairman of the Board of Trustees for RCC, Sheriff Tompkins stood with Interim President Jackie Jenkins-Scott to welcome Commencement Speaker David Banks, Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education; Michael Curry, Esq., CEO of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and 2023 Community Service Award recipient; Jose Masso, Inductee of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame and 2023 Lifetime Achievement Award winner; Tashanea Whitlow, winner of the Alumni Achievement Award and Co-Anchor of Good Day Wake Up New York; and other presenters including Latifa Muhammad Turner of RCC's Class of '16 who gave the Alumni Network Welcome and Commencement Singer Athene Wilson, among others.

Congratulations, to Class of 2023 graduates everywhere, and Happy 50th Anniversary, RCC!



# AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY:



## DEPARTMENT GIVES ASSIST TO REVERE'S BEACHMONT VFW

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department visited the Beachmont VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Post to lend a helping hand in preparation for the organization's Summer Kickoff event. A crew from the Department's Community Works Program (CWP) assisted with repainting the post headquarters and, later, Department staff members gave away Safety Tips for Kids coloring books and crayons, and Junior Deputy badges to event patrons.

## SCSD TAKES PART IN BUNKER HILL DAY PARADE

Members of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department joined celebrants in Charlestown for the Annual Bunker Hill Day Parade. The Department's Motorcycle Unit and fleet vehicles made their way around the route, which was marked by cheering residents and visitors.



## DEPARTMENT CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH WITH MULTIPLE EVENTS

Suffolk County Sheriff's Department Special Sheriff Abe Ayuso delivered a Juneteenth address at the 2nd Annual Juneteenth Celebration at Harbor Point on the Bay Apartments while SCSD members also traveled to Hyde Park to participate in the celebration titled "Juneteenth Joy: Focus on Freedom" at the Martini Shell near Truman Parkway.

## SCSD CONTINUES RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AT MAMLEO JOB FAIR

A team comprised of SCSD Human Resources and custody staff members paid a visit to the Salvation Army's Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center near Upham's Corner to speak with participants in the MAMLEO (Massachusetts Association of Minority Law Enforcement Officers) Job Fair. More than a dozen law enforcement, union trades and first responder organizations were on hand to provide information and insight into working as a first responder, tradesperson or member of a law enforcement agency.







SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS  
SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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