



COMMON GROUND

FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT JOINS NEW FAMILY HEALTH INITIATIVE



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SHERIFF'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY, 2024

Greetings,

As many familiar with this newsletter already know, our mandate is for the safe care and custody of people remanded to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department by the courts.

Beyond the parameters of that mandate, however, we at the Department have made it our collective mission to continue broadening and expanding the definition of "care" and how it relates to the bigger picture for people reentering our communities from our facilities. The list of key components for a successful reentry is short, but vitally essential: stable housing, sustainable employment,

easy access to mental and physical healthcare, and recovery support programming. But, another critically important part of re-entry for many rests within the family unit and the powerful role that it can play in the success of the men and women who are returning home to them.

To this end, the Department has implemented a number of initiatives that were created to bolster the overall health and wellness of the family unit, including our Family Matters Program, which helps to connect families to resources that help stabilize the household for the release and return of a formerly incarcerated member in order to prevent incarceration and reduce recidivism; our Richard P. Pacitti Re-entry and Transitional Center, which primarily focuses on employment and healthcare for returning citizens and their families; our CREW Program – Community Re-entry for Women; and several others.

In this issue, we report on a new collaborative program that is designed to create and implement specialized behavioral health programming for people in our care, which focuses on the mental wellbeing and social emotional development of their children. We also highlight a recent graduation of participants in another of our collaborative endeavors, the Nurturing Fathers Program, in addition to several other items.

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 editions to come.

-Steven W. Tompkins

COMMON GROUND NEWSLETTER

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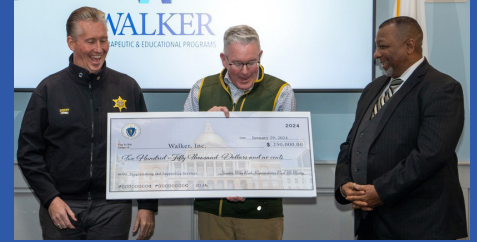
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NEW COLLABORATION FOCUSES ON FAMILIES, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department has entered into a new partnership for a behavioral health program designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of returning citizens and their children.



Meet our February, 2024 Officer of the Month Award recipients from the House of Correction and Jail.



NURTURING FATHERS GRADUATE PROGRAM

A group of participants in the Department's Nurturing Fathers Program recently completed training developed to help them to become better parents.



AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins welcomed Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to Roxbury Community College; members of the Department visited the Samuel W. Mason School in Roxbury to administer the Choice Program, and visited East Boston High School to participate in a College and Career Fair.

SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE JOINS NEW FAMILY HEALTH INITIATIVE SUPPORTING INCARCERATED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN



The Suffolk County Sheriff's Office and Norfolk County Sheriff's Office joined in a new partnership with Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs (Walker), a leader in the fields of children's behavioral health and child welfare. This collaboration, generously supported by a grant from Massachusetts State Senator Michael Rush, aims to develop and implement specialized Behavioral Health programming for incarcerated individuals, focusing on the mental wellbeing and socialemotional development of their children.

Gene Takahashi, CEO of Walker, expressed his vision for the initiative: "At Walker, we recognize the profound impact parental incarceration can have on children. This initiative is not just about intervention; it's about hope, healing, and building a stronger future for these families. With the support of Senator Rush and our dedicated team at Walker Solutions, we are setting a new standard for how we support children and families in these challenging situations."

Senator Rush formally presented the funding to Walker at the Norfolk County Sheriff's Department in Dedham. This ceremony represented a pivotal moment in collaborative efforts to address the intricate needs of children affected by parental incarceration.

As one of the agencies participating in this new endeavor, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department welcomed the opportunity to positively impact the lives of incarcerated men and women by providing needed services to their children and families.

"In my work as the Sheriff of Suffolk County, I am well aware of the deleterious effect that having an incarcerated parent can have on the lives of children, not just for the duration of the incarceration, but across their lifetimes," said Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins. "This program offers the opportunity to strengthen the family unit, provide critical services to help children reconnect with their parents, and, as a result, help to break the cycle of incarceration that is often begun when a parent is incarcerated."

Norfolk County Sheriff Patrick W. McDermott echoed this sentiment. "We can't begin to talk about successful re-entry without addressing the impact the justice-involved individual's incarceration has had on their families and, in particular, their children. This initiative, which will provide programming both pre- and post-release, will help individuals and their families work through these challenges to rebuild relationships and strengthen their bond," said Sheriff McDermott. "Adding this initiative into the existing programming we provide will give the individuals in our custody an even stronger foundation to break the cycle of recidivism. Thank you to Senator Rush and Representative McMurtry for understanding the positive impact programs like this will have on incarcerated individuals, their children, and their families."

The program, spearheaded by Walker Solutions, will target the adverse effects of a parent's incarceration on their children. It aims to strengthen family bonds during and after the incarceration period, providing continued post-release support. This initiative is a step forward in reducing recidivism rates by motivating formerly incarcerated parents to remain actively involved in their children's lives, thereby fostering their overall health, wellness, and positive development.

An integral component of this initiative is the Parenting Pre/Post-Release Workshop series, tailored for incarcerated parents. These workshops are designed to:

- Emphasize the critical role of parents in their children's social-emotional wellbeing, particularly under the strains of incarceration.
- Equip parents with practical, positive parenting skills and strategies to reinforce familial bonds.
- Ensure continuity in parenting roles and relationships, during and following incarceration.

This innovative program underscores Walker's commitment to enhancing the lives of children and families across Massachusetts, and bolsters Suffolk County Sheriff's Office's existing programming for family reunification and re-entry, which includes Family Matters and the Richard P. Pacitti Re-entry and Transitional Center, among others.

OFFICERS OF THE MONTH RECOGNIZED FOR JANUARY, 2024

To recognize the exemplary performance of our custody staff, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department introduced 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.

The Officer of the Month Award was instituted 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.

Congratulations to Suffolk County House of Correction Sergeant Joseph Lee and Suffolk County Jail Officer Kelly Brandano for their selections as January, 2024 Officers of the Month.



SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE GRADUATES NEW GROUP OF "NURTURING FATHERS" AT HOC



Staff members of Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins' Richard P. Pacitti Re-Entry and Transitional Center presided over the graduation of nine returning citizens who were part of the third and final cohort of the Nurturing Fathers Program for 2023.

During the nine-week cycle, the men received training from Suffolk County Sheriff's Office program instructors Frantz Dorcena and Adjie Burnett. The program curriculum is instrumental to the participants as they prepare for re-entry into society, supported by new techniques and training about how to be better fathers.

During the graduation ceremony, which was attended by family members of the men in the program, each Nurturing Father Program participant read a statement that he wrote to his children and family. Each statement reflected participants' recent growth and new commitment as fathers, and they were entitled "The Father I Choose To Be."

John O'Neil, Nurturing Father's Program Director for the Family Nurturing Center in Dorchester, presented the graduates with their diplomas and offered words of inspiration and congratulation.

"The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts have enjoyed a very successful five-year partnership," O'Neil said. "In that time, over 200 fathers have completed the Nurturing Fathers's; Program while residing at the South Bay [House of Correction] facility. Of those 200-plus fathers, fewer than ten percent have recidivated since the program has been in existence. That is a testimony to how well the program is run, and also to the fact that these men genuinely want to be better dads."



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

Celebrate
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AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY – FEBRUARY 2024

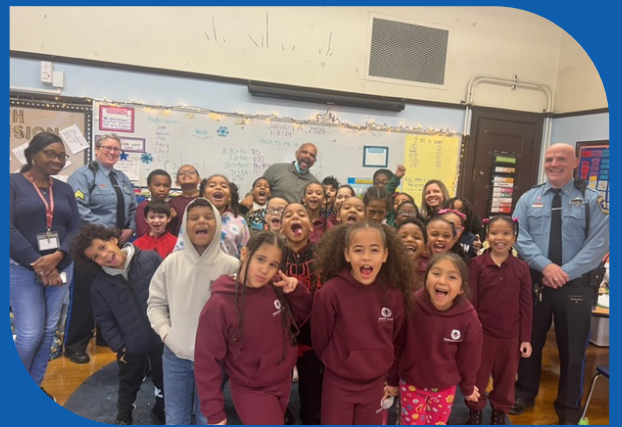


SHERIFF TOMPKINS WELCOMES U.S. TREASURY SECRETARY YELLEN TO RCC

Suffolk County Sheriff and Roxbury Community College (RCC) Board of Trustees Chair Steven W. Tompkins was joined by Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, RCC Interim President Jackie Jenkins-Scott, and others in welcoming United States Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen to the school. Treasurer Yellen visited RCC to speak about some of the green, cost-cutting solutions championed by U.S. President Joe Biden and his administration for schools, businesses, and families, which also advance the nation's climate and energy security goals. Secretary Yellen also toured the school and offered praise for RCC's groundbreaking energy projects and student training programs, and also took part in a panel discussion.

SCSD'S CHOICE PROGRAM VISITS MASON SCHOOL

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department's Choice Program paid a few visits to the Samuel W. Mason Pilot Elementary School in Roxbury to talk to students about making smart choices and being active participants in the neighborhoods and communities we live in. Special thanks to Principal Allston for having us in, Family Liaison Ms. West for sharing our information, and Ms. Russo for inviting us. For more information about the Mason School, visit: www.masonpilotelementary.org. To have the Choice Program visit your school, contact Sergeant Stacey Wood at: swood@scsdma.org or (617) 704-6672 and Deputy Tom Maguire at: tmaguire@scsdma.org or (617) 704-6686



SCSD DEPUTIZES OFFICERS FOR UMASS BOSTON, FISHER COLLEGE

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently deputized members of the University of Massachusetts/Boston Police Department and the Fisher College Police Department, with Superintendent John McLaughlin delivering the oath.



MEMBERS OF SCSD TAKE PART IN EAST BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE & CAREER FAIR

The Suffolk County Sheriff's Department recently participated in East Boston High School's College and Career Fair to share information and experiences about working for the Department and what a future career in law enforcement might look like for participants. For information about East Boston High School, visit: <https://www.ebhsjets.net>. To learn more about open positions available at the Department, visit: www.scsdma.org/careers.





SHERIFF STEVEN W. TOMPKINS
SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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