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Roca Names Executive Director to Lead Its Work in Massachusetts

Roca COO Scott Scharffenberg promoted to oversee all Massachusetts operations

Chelsea, MA—Roca has chosen its Chief Operations Officer, Scott Scharffenberg, as the new Massachusetts Executive Director, a role with an intended focus on furthering Roca’s mission across the state. Scharffenberg will oversee operations in five locations, the implementation of the Roca intervention model and services, and lead efforts to grow Roca’s outreach to those that are the highest risk and hardest to reach.

“It’s an extraordinary privilege to know and work with the young people we serve. Second only to that, is the gift of working with a remarkable team of people who are also committed to serving young people with the hope that, in some small way, together we can promote justice and opportunity for everyone,” said Molly Baldwin, Roca Founder and CEO. “I have been deeply honored to lead the work in Massachusetts for just over 31 years and, as we expand our work to other places, I am thrilled to partner with Scott as he takes on the leadership of our work here.”

Since 2016, Scharffenberg has served as Roca’s COO, running the day-to-day statewide operations, managing directors and staff, and collaborating with community partners and local institutions.

“Scott’s doing hard work with a group of young men who need a lot of support,” said state Representative Paul Tucker. “I’m proud of him, and a big supporter of the work that Roca is doing.”

Scharffenberg joined Roca with 26 years of law enforcement experience working with the Essex County Sheriff’s Department. His work at the Sheriff’s Department involved program implementation and overseeing financial operations, inmate re-entry initiatives and prison operations and he was instrumental in creating lasting practices at ECSD.

“The crucially important work that Roca does requires the kind of leader who is able to build strong teams, is capable of forging and cultivating community relationships, and deeply cares about Roca’s mission – helping to positively transform the lives of young people,” said Suffolk County Sheriff Steven W. Tompkins. “I believe that Scott embodies these qualities, and, with his wealth of experience in this field, can be a change agent for both the young people Roca serves and the law enforcement community.”

Scharffenberg graduated from the F.B.I. National Academy in 2012, receiving law enforcement’s most reputable leadership training. He earned his Bachelor’s Degree from Northeastern University, his Master’s Degree from Springfield College, and has attended Harvard Business School for Strategic Perspectives in Non Profit Management.

Engaging institutions that touch the lives of high-risk young people is an essential part of Roca's approach. Scharffenberg not only has an extensive background in reaching a high-risk population in need of services but has deep experience in relationship building with community partners and stakeholders essential to this work in all regions of Massachusetts.

"Scott's conscious leadership style, his humble demeanor and passion for criminal justice reform have been instrumental to Roca Holyoke and Roca Springfield's success" said Hampden County District Attorney Anthony Gulluni.

In addition to running the Massachusetts operations and managing strategic partnerships, Scott will assist in the implementation of new grant projects and ongoing initiatives. The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs recently announced the Second Chance Act Reentry Grant and new developments in the ongoing Hampden County High-Risk Young Adult Reentry Initiative.

The goal of these grants is to give the highest risk, hardest to reach youth access to Roca's intervention model and services that will help them effectively transition away from violence and sustain long term behavior change.

The recently announced Second Chance Act Reentry Grant is funded by federal dollars from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. This four-year grant is in partnership with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and totals \$998,085—which will go toward coordinated reentry planning and work both behind the wall and after release in the community with 150 of hardest to serve young men in Suffolk County.

A significant portion of this grant will go towards the expansion of the young adult-focused PEACE Unit at the Suffolk County House of Corrections, which delivers enhanced, cognitive behavior change programming to young men while incarcerated.

A second grant funded by the Bureau of Justice, the Hampden County Young Adult Reentry Initiative, recently completed its first year, moving from the planning phase to the implementation phase.

Roca received \$515,353 through this grant and has been working to reduce recidivism and increase sustained employment among high-risk, violent offenders alongside the Holyoke Police Department, the Hampden County Sheriff's Department, and the Hampden County District Attorney's Office. This includes providing services behind the walls to 30 young men and in the community to up to 75 young men intensively at any given time.

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