



Spotlight on Sheriffs

Police Executive Research Forum

April 2019

Innovations and Promising Programs in the Seminole County Sheriff's Office

The Seminole County, FL Sheriff's Office (SCSO) is a full-service law enforcement agency that provides uniformed patrol, investigative, and support functions across the county. The SCSO also delivers child protective services, houses the county's probation office, maintains a correctional facility, provides a range of youth services, and operates a school safety division that provides on-site coverage for all public schools in the county. The SCSO's core philosophy combines community policing with problem-oriented and intelligence-led policing strategies. The SCSO also provides a range of diversion opportunities and innovative solutions to many of the challenges inherent in providing care for its jail population. This report highlights several of SCSO's promising programs and initiatives.

School Safety –

A Priority in Seminole County

School safety has become a priority for law enforcement agencies across the country. In Florida,

in the wake of the deadly shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland on February 14, 2018, lawmakers mandated that law enforcement agencies provide a school resource officer/deputy, school safety officer, or guardian in every public school in the state.

While many jurisdictions and school districts are struggling to meet this mandate, SCSO has been providing law enforcement (school resource) coverage for all public schools in Seminole County since 2015. Before 2015, the SCSO and seven municipal police organizations shared responsibility for providing services across the county's school district, which created a fragmented approach to this important function. To improve the law enforcement presence at every school in the county, create a uniform strategic direction, and improve services, SCSO worked with the seven municipalities to implement a more consistent approach.

SCSO Captain Rick Francis leads the School Safety Division (SSD) and serves as the school district's

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About This Series

As part of PERF's Sheriffs Initiative, PERF researchers are conducting site visits of sheriffs' offices around the country to study and document their operations and share innovative practices with the profession.

At the invitation of Sheriff Dennis Lemma, PERF staff members Dan Alioto and Matt Harman visited

the Seminole County, FL Sheriff's Office in October 2018. Alioto and Harman met with Sheriff Lemma, Undersheriff Lou Tomeo, Chief Dan Purcell, Chief of Staff Mark Conway, Captain Mark Pergola, Captain Rick Francis, Forensic Laboratory Director Jennie Ahern, and Chief of the Department of Corrections, Dr. Laura Bedard and her staff. For two

days, PERF toured SCSO's Forensic Laboratory Services Division, Special Operations Division, School Safety Division (and schools), and the Seminole Neighborhood Policing Division (patrol), where PERF members participated in ride-alongs and toured the correctional and probation facilities.

About the Seminole County Sheriff's Office

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office has its headquarters in Sanford, Florida, which is the largest city in the county. The county covers 345 square miles and has a population of approximately 462,700.¹

The sheriff's office is one of the largest employers in the county, with 1,227 full-time employees and 156 part-time employees. The four departments of the sheriff's office are Law Enforcement, Youth Services, Corrections, and Administrative Services. The sheriff's office operates the John E. Polk Correctional Facility (JEPCF), which houses felony and misdemeanor inmates awaiting trial, inmates who have been found guilty of misdemeanor charges and sentenced, felony inmates awaiting transfer to a state facility, and inmates awaiting trial in federal courts.²

Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma took office on January 3, 2017. He started in the agency as a Correctional Officer in 1992. Sheriff Lemma has served as Sergeant of the Special Operations Section, Lieutenant in the Community Services Division, Captain of the Seminole Neighborhood Policing Division (patrol, traffic safety, property crime investigations, code enforcement, and other support functions), and Major of the Department of Neighborhood Policing. Before being elected Sheriff, he served as Chief Deputy to Sheriff Don Eslinger (Ret.).

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office has an online presence on the following platforms:

- Facebook – www.facebook.com/SeminoleSheriff
- Twitter - @SeminoleSO
- Youtube – youtube.com/SeminoleSheriff
- Instagram - @SeminoleSheriff
- www.seminolesheriff.org



Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma

1. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/seminolecountyflorida>

2. <https://www.seminolesheriff.org/page.aspx?id=92>

director of school safety. Captain Francis is co-located with the school superintendent, so decisions are made on behalf of the Sheriff and the school district.

Captain Rick Francis oversees the SSD's 72 school resource deputies and officers. (Under the county's unified approach to school safety, municipal police officers are employed by city agencies but they take direction from SCSO's Captain Francis). Because the 72 school resource deputies/officers work exclusively on school property, the school district pays 50 percent of their salaries. For SCSO, this is a savings of approximately \$2.5 million per year. All deputies who wish to become school resource deputies (SRDs) must have a minimum of 3-5 years of patrol experience. School principals may participate in the selection process for filling SRD positions in their schools.

Deputies selected to be SRDs go through additional specialized training before beginning their new assignments. This training occurs during the summer months or when school is not in session, and focuses on a wide range of topics, including youth mental health, threat assessment, active threat situations, crisis intervention, trauma-informed care, autism and exceptional student education awareness, bullying prevention, sexting, "Stop the Bleed" training, cyber safety, incident/unified command, and de-escalation.

Captain Francis reports to the Chief of the SCSO's Department of Youth Services, but also works closely with the Seminole County School Superintendent, Dr. Walt Griffin. Captain Francis and Superintendent Griffin have worked together to promote a safe learning environment by increasing school safety. The SSD has participated in student and community safety forums to hear high school students' and parents' safety concerns and ideas. The SSD has also delivered classes on safety, drug awareness, and cyber-bullying at all middle and elementary schools.

In addition, the office partnered with the FBI to teach a "Digital Citizenship" course in the high schools and middle schools. This course instructs students on the importance of limiting the information they share online, the risks of sexting, how information posted online can impact college and job prospects, and cyber-bullying.

SSD's outreach efforts have included creating student and adult advisory groups on school safety. The advisory groups support SSD's initiatives, generate fundraising ideas for new safety programs and security technology, and explore new technologies and best practices to make the schools safer.

Mental Health Response

A major focus of the school resource deputies is to provide appropriate supervision and care to students with mental health challenges. SRDs work closely with the school district's mental health counselors to ensure that the deputies can give proper guidance to students who may be experiencing mental health issues.

When a potential safety issue arises with a student in a Seminole County school, a threat assessment team made up of the school's principal, an SRD, the school's mental health counselor, guidance counselor, and other faculty or staff members meet and conduct a formal review of the incident. If needed, the team interviews teachers, coaches and other students, and may conduct an unannounced home visit. A district-level oversight team meets monthly to discuss any incidents under investigation. The school district also partners with the University of Central Florida (UCF), which for the last five years has assisted mental health counselors on several elementary school campuses.

Using Technology to Enhance Critical Incident Prevention and Response

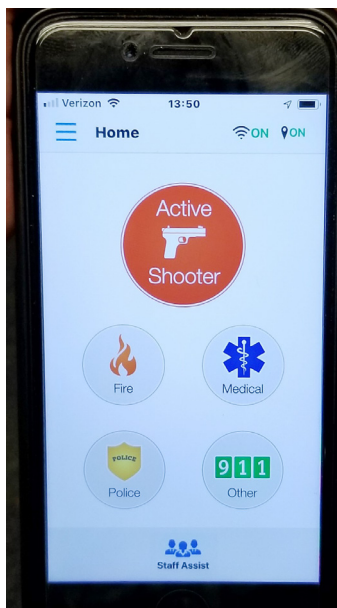
Under Captain Francis's leadership, the SSD is using several school safety and security technologies to support its response to and prevention of active threat incidents. In addition to adding several layered, target-hardening products in the schools, the SSD monitors social media for school threats, and the students can use an app to report bizarre, suspicious, or threatening behaviors anonymously.

In an era where school shootings are a concern across the country, any averted crisis is significant. Unfortunately, school-related active threats are becoming common in the United States. In recent years, the number of gun-related incidents occurring on school campuses has increased significantly.

In July 2017, SSD launched a panic button app in Seminole County Public Schools. When an emergency occurs, students and teachers can open the app on their phone and hold a button for 1.5 seconds that indicates the type of emergency they are experiencing. The app will then connect them with a 9-1-1 call taker. The school panic button app is designed to improve the outcome in an emergency by enabling a faster response and more effective communication between school faculty and staff and first responders.

Seminole County Public School staff members can almost instantly declare an emergency, begin the lockdown process, notify all campus employees, connect to 9-1-1, share video, and inform several layers of first responders off campus, thus ensuring a quicker response time. The app has been used several times to summon school, police, and medical personnel more effectively and efficiently.

If an emergency is confirmed, every app user in the geo-fenced area is notified. This can include students, teachers, school administrators, and



SRDs; SCSO; and school district leaders. This instant communication can speed up evacuation and response times. A separate computer system can forward security camera video feeds, photos, and floor plans to incident commanders, responding deputies, and medical first responders so they can best respond to the critical incident.

Launched in Seminole County Public Schools in July 2017, the panic button app connects users to 9-1-1 within seconds.

Millennium Middle School – Incorporating School Safety from the Ground Up

Millennium Middle School, which opened in August 2018, is a fine arts and communication magnet school in Sanford that serves 1,550 students from across the county. The State of Florida mandates that law enforcement officials must be consulted whenever a new school is designed, and security features were a top priority when designing Millennium Middle School. Fencing encircles the campus and its five buildings. While there are several exits strategically placed around the campus, there is only one entrance that all students, teachers, parents, and other visitors are required to use. Students must walk through the single entrance and sign in when they arrive at the school. All visitors must be checked in and approved to enter the school grounds.

To prevent students or other unauthorized people from entering rooms and buildings that are not in use during the day, doors are generally kept locked.

Every school day starts in a modified lockdown status, where doors and gates are locked, until the initial homeroom class is over, in order to keep students in the classrooms and limit their mobility throughout the campus. Classrooms, and lunch and recess times, are separated by grade in order to limit opportunities for inappropriate behavior like fighting and bullying.

SCSO Deputy Fred Hillaire is the school resource deputy assigned to monitor Millennium Middle School during the school day. As a magnet school, Millennium attracts students from across the county, making its student body diverse. Relating to children can sometimes be challenging, especially children with a wide variety of backgrounds, but Deputy Hillaire strives to be approachable and to serve as a role model, not merely someone who gets involved when there is a disruption in the school.



SCSO Deputy Fred Hillaire

Forensic Laboratory Services Division – *New Focus on Opioids and Ballistics Evidence*

SCSO's Forensic Laboratory Services Division (FLSD) has four evidence specialists and one volunteer who maintain the evidence storage room and safely and efficiently process a wide range of evidence. The FLSD recently implemented a new policy to handle fentanyl and other dangerous opioid evidence submissions safely. SCSO does not test for fentanyl; instead, evidence specialists must receive the evidence and send it to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for testing.

To do this, two evidence specialists retrieve, intake, and store evidence while wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). Naloxone is available in every evidence room in case a specialist is exposed to fentanyl. Personal protective equipment and a ventilation hood are located in an area where law enforcement officers package dangerous drug evidence or paraphernalia. Laboratory personnel also have a ventilation hood in the secure lab area where they process evidence.

The Forensic Laboratory Services Division uses up-to-date procedures and technologies to process ballistic evidence. The Division comprehensively traces recovered firearms through eTrace, an online system managed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). eTrace provides information on the first retail purchaser of a firearm. This information helps SCSO generate investigative leads when they recover guns used in a crime.

The FLSD also has a BrassTrax HD3D Acquisition Station. This equipment allows forensic analysts to enter fired shell casings into the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). NIBIN generates investigative leads by matching the markings on used shell casings to images of previously entered casings found at shooting scenes. This information can connect multiple shootings, which were not previously known to be related, to the same firearm.

The ability to use NIBIN gives SCSO significant investigative leads and evidence in gun violence cases. While the state conducts the actual NIBIN correlations, having the BrassTrax HD3D Acquisition Station in the Seminole County lab reduces the turnaround time for submitting and processing ballistic evidence, which is vital to following up on investigative leads quickly. SCSO's Forensic Laboratory Services Division entered 107 cartridge cases in 2018. This equipment is also utilized by

other qualified local law enforcement agencies in the Central Florida area.

SCSO has many labs and forensic analysts to process other types of evidence in-house. For example, SCSO conducts body fluid analysis in its Biology Screening lab, has three analysts for footprint and cast analysis, and maintains a garage to process evidence found in seized automobiles.

Special Operations Division – *A Regional Asset for Emergency and Disaster Response*

Captain Mark Pergola oversees SCSO's Special Operations Division (SOD). The division is made up of several units, including Emergency Management, SWAT, Hazardous Device Team (HDT), Crisis Negotiation, Underwater Search and Recovery, Aviation, Canine, Search and Rescue, and the Range and Water Unit.

The SOD has dozens of tactical vehicles and other equipment that it uses for various missions. Some equipment was obtained as military surplus, and some vehicles have been seized during drug investigations and refitted and repurposed to serve Sheriff's Office needs. The SOD also has two robots it can use to investigate suspicious packages and defuse bombs, and a single-vent bomb trailer where the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team can safely disarm or detonate explosive devices.

SCSO's Aviation Section has five full-time pilots, two part-time pilots, and four flight officers who operate SCSO's two Airbus H125 helicopters. Ninety percent of the helicopter missions are to assist patrol and other special operations units with thermal camera work. Flight officers are cross-trained as crew chiefs, allowing the Aviation Section to be deployed for search and rescue operations. The Seminole County Fire Department provides paramedics for these rescue missions. The helicopters are also used for firefighting. In 2017, the Aviation Section recorded more than 100 helicopter water bucket deployments. Each deployment can dump approximately 210 gallons of water. SCSO also has a state-of-the-art helicopter flight simulator, which enables pilots to maintain necessary certifications and train when not flying a mission.

The SOD is responsible for patrolling the 55 miles of the St. Johns River that flow through the county. The SOD operates three different types of boats that can be utilized at different water depths to patrol



Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team robots (**above**); two Airbus H125 helicopters in SOD hangar (**right, above**); flight simulator supports pilot training and certification (**right**).

the county’s waterways adequately. SCSO also can perform search and rescue dives. The Underwater Search and Recovery Team has access to a dive trailer fully equipped with scuba gear and other tools for dive missions. When the St. Johns River floods during hurricane season, the SOD has five light military transport vehicles it can use for delivering large quantities of sandbags to county residents and performing high-water rescue missions.

In preparation for significant weather events, Captain Pergola coordinates with the Florida Sheriffs Association and regularly meets with regional commanders to discuss disaster preparation and response. SCSO also provides a list of resources to the Florida Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC coordinates all of the state’s emergency response resources and often sends local agencies to natural disaster areas.

For example, in the fall of 2018, the SCSO Disaster Response Team (DRT) was deployed to Calhoun County in the Florida panhandle to support law enforcement operations in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. The DRT can be deployed into a disaster area and be self-sufficient to support a team of 30 for up to 72 hours before requiring resupply. Thirty members of SCSO spent three weeks in Calhoun County supporting the Emergency Operations Center and

assisting the Calhoun County Sheriff’s Office. SCSO deputies staffed shelters and points of distribution, and patrolled all areas of the county.

Seminole County Jail – *Focusing on Programs and Services*

Dr. Laura Bedard is the Chief of the Department of Corrections for Seminole County. She was hired in 2015 to oversee and modernize the county’s jail system. Chief Bedard and her staff, including Captain Kip Beacham of the Probation and Inmate Programs Division, Latisha Howard of the Administrative Services and Security Division, and Sergeant Anthony Pastor of the Reentry Division, provided PERF staff members with tours of the jail facilities, highlighting services and programs provided to the inmates.

According to Chief Bedard, a significant challenge in managing the John E. Polk Correctional Facility (JEPFCF) is the design and layout of the facility. The original jail facility was built in 1978, with several additions since then. While the bed space of the facility expanded over the years, ancillary services have not expanded at the same rate. This causes management and logistical challenges. While the additions are slightly more modern, they are challenging to lock down and secure. Future

upgrades to the jail will include a new locking system, control room renovations, and a large-scale kitchen expansion project.

The jail has several unit layouts for housing different classifications of inmates. The older buildings house inmates in pods laid out in an octagon. In the center of the octagons are control rooms where corrections deputies observe the inmates in the surrounding multiple pods. Each pod has 16 cells with two beds each. Inmates classified as having a mental illness are housed in four linear pods, where two deputies monitor them.

Direct Supervision Unit

The jail also has six direct supervision units, including a medical unit. Direct supervision housing is designed to house a large number of low-risk inmates, supervised by only a few deputies. This design is intended to promote positive inmate behavior by providing many opportunities for inmates to interact with each other and with correctional officers in an open setting, rather than being locked in cells for many hours per day.³ Each direct supervision unit can house 72 inmates. There are no televisions inside the units, but the inmates have access to books, board games, telephones and kiosks, and a recreation yard that is attached to each direct observation unit.

This model allows one deputy to supervise the entire room. A deputy located inside the unit monitors and interacts with the inmates. Additional

deputies are stationed outside of the room to assist in monitoring, and to respond to any issues that occur if the lead deputy needs backup.

Housing Persons with Mental Illness

Upon arrival at the JEPCF, inmates are processed through the intake unit. This unit operates 24/7 to classify inmates as they come in. New inmates are classified and screened for mental illnesses and for whether they are likely to harm themselves or others. Currently, approximately 37 percent of inmates are classified as having a mental illness upon their arrival to the jail.

To work in the mental health units, deputies must complete an internal application process. Deputies who are accepted are required to complete Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and must demonstrate an ability to communicate well with inmates with mental illness.

SCSO has three civilians who help provide care to inmates with mental illnesses. The mental health staff classifies inmates, triages and responds to referrals, and manages the medical needs of this population. The mental health staff holds a classification meeting with jail administration officials once a week to review the mental health status of each inmate in the mental health unit. One goal of these regular reviews is to identify inmates who can be reclassified to live with the general jail population.

Dr. Laura Bedard

Chief Laura Bedard has been in the corrections field for 35 years. She earned her Ph.D. in social work from Florida State University (FSU) and began her career as a county jail administrator in 1984. From 1989 to 2005, Dr. Bedard served as a faculty member at FSU. In 2005, she became the first female deputy secretary of the Florida Department of Corrections, making her responsible for the third largest correctional system in the country. Dr. Bedard worked for a private-sector prison management company from 2008 to 2015. During her time there, Dr. Bedard worked as a warden at five facilities housing inmates in federal and state prisons.



3. "Direct Supervision: The New Generation of Corrections." Seminole County Sheriff's Office. <http://www.seminolesheriff.org/webbond/docs/DirectSupervision.pdf>

The jail uses the Step-Down Program to facilitate this process. The Step-Down Program provides a structured system for classifying and reclassifying inmates with mental illness, based on their mental health status and their potential to harm other inmates or deputies. Inmates with severe mental illnesses may be unable to participate in the Step-Down Program.

After being classified, inmates are assigned to one of three levels of housing and supervision in the jail.

The first level is for inmates with severe mental illness. The housing is in a small pod where the inmates do not interact with each other, and their contact with deputies is limited. These inmates stay at this classification level until they are reevaluated and reclassified by the mental health staff. If the staff reclassifies an inmate's condition as having improved, the inmate is moved to the intermediate level of mental health housing.

At the intermediate level, the inmates can leave their cells for one hour each day, usually during lunchtime. During this open-door hour, all doors in the pod are opened, and inmates may congregate in the pod's common area, eat lunch, and interact with other inmates, corrections deputies, and mental health staff members. They can also access a phone and an inmate kiosk that allows them to communicate with and submit requests to jail administrators. The mental health staff allows

inmates to collect books and magazines, puzzles, and drawing supplies to bring back to their cells after the open-door hour is over.

Inmates classified or reclassified as lower-risk are placed in an open mental health pod. Here, cells remain open during the day and are locked down only at night. The inmates in this pod are allowed to participate in selected programming, such as church services, individual counseling, and expanded recreational options. A graduate student on staff helps mentally ill and homeless inmates find housing upon reentry.

Reentry Programs for Inmates

In addition to the routine jobs that many inmates have within the jail (e.g., kitchen, laundry, and janitorial work), the jail's Reentry Unit offers many programs to help prepare inmates for release back to the community. These include a reentry symposium, therapy resources, and an initiative to connect inmates with housing opportunities. Inmates can sign up for these programs through the kiosks located in their housing units.

One of correctional facility's innovations is a gardening program, in which inmates learn to plant and grow lettuce, eggplant, tomatoes, and other vegetation year-round in a large greenhouse. The greenhouse is watered using an automatic drip

An Overview of SCSO's Reentry Unit Programs

- General Educational Development (GED)
- Faith-based programs
- Computer skills
- High school courses
- Parenting skills
- Trauma therapy
- Life skills
- Thinking for a change
- Anger management
- Substance abuse education
- Hydroponics program
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
- Batterers intervention class
- Celebrate recovery
- Veterans outreach
- Veterans peer support group
- Goodwill job center
- 10 Choices: A Proven Plan to Change Your Life Forever
- Credit score program
- Occupational therapy
- Training for Manufactured Construction (TRAMCON)
- Re-entry symposium

irrigation method that collects and reuses water to minimize costs and be environmentally sound.

The JEPCF has been using its hydroponic gardening program for more than 20 years; it was the first of its kind in 1996.⁴ The jail holds four to five classes a year, in which 15 female inmates in each class learn about planting, maintaining, and harvesting plants, as well as plumbing and hydroponics, over the course of several months. The inmates can see the results of their labor as their plants are grown and harvested, and the program helps them to develop a work ethic and learn skills that can be used upon reentry.

The jail also offers opportunities for male inmates to learn about sewing and embroidery. Inmates can help mend inmate jumpsuits, tailor deputies' uniforms, and manufacture mattress covers. Participating inmates have access to an embroidery machine that allows them to work on complicated designs, such as the logos on SCSO polo shirts. This program teaches inmates useful skills that may be used upon reentry, while saving the sheriff's office approximately \$16,000 a year in sewing and repair costs.

The Reentry Unit holds a Reentry Symposium several times a year for inmates who will soon be released. The symposium help the inmates to find jobs and housing upon reentry. As many as 140

inmates attend this event, along with approximately 50 service providers who make presentations and set up information tables. The goal is to bring service providers to the inmates so they can establish relationships before they reenter society. Many other programs are taught by volunteers recruited by the sheriff's office.

The jail also utilizes the Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) program, in which the state Department of Highway and Motor Vehicles uses mobile units to bring services to inmates and other groups.⁵ FLOW can help inmates obtain official identification cards that they will need following release. IDignity is another program that helps inmates get essential documents such as birth certificates and Social Security cards.⁶



Certification ceremony for hydroponic gardening program participants (**diagonally left**); plants and vegetables grown in the jail's greenhouse (**left and below**).



4. <https://www.seminolesheriff.org/page.aspx?id=92>

5. "Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW)." Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. <https://www.flhsmv.gov/locations/florida-licensing-wheels-flow/>

6. "IDignity: Restoring dignity and hope by providing identification." <https://idignity.org/>

Pretrial Diversion –

Using Technology to

Supervise a Growing Pretrial Population

SCSO's Pretrial Diversion Unit is responsible for the growing number of defendants who have been granted pretrial release. Rather than waiting for their trial in jail because they cannot pay a cash bond, many individuals accused of low-level offenses in Seminole County (and across the country) are being granted pretrial release. This is creating challenges for sheriffs' offices, probation offices, and other agencies that are responsible for supervising these individuals and ensuring public safety.

The Electronic Monitoring Protection and Crime Tracking (EMPACT) program is an essential tool that the SCSO uses to monitor individuals who are granted pretrial release. A GPS tracking bracelet, attached to an offender's leg, sends an alert to SCSO's 9-1-1 Center if the offender enters an area he or she is not permitted to go. EMPACT is particularly valuable for enforcing protection orders in domestic violence cases by allowing deputies to quickly respond if a violation is detected. More than 200 individuals are under GPS monitoring in Seminole County, in most cases for domestic violence or drug-related crimes.

Conclusion

Like other sheriffs' offices across the country, the SCSO faces many challenges, including school safety, responding to hurricanes and other natural disasters, managing jail inmates with mental illness, and monitoring suspects who have been released to the community pending trial. The SCSO has implemented many innovative programs to address those challenges.

The issue of **school safety** made headlines in Florida and nationwide in February 2018 when 17 students and staff members were killed at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Fortunately, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office had already been focusing on this issue for years. SCSO assigns school resource deputies to all public schools in the county, and selects and trains those deputies to deal with critical challenges, including persons with mental illness in schools. The SSD is using multiple forms of technology to prevent and respond to emergencies in schools.

In response to major **critical incidents** like **natural disasters**, SCSO has made itself a regional asset. SCSO has been able to provide important training to Special Operations Division deputies and to maintain a variety of vehicles, equipment, and supplies to serve not only Seminole County, but communities across the state.

The Seminole County Jail, like many correctional facilities across the country, is facing challenges of providing care to **the increasing number of inmates with mental illnesses**. The sheriff's office provides a wide range of programming to its mentally ill inmates, and uses a Step-Down Program designed to assimilate these inmates into the general jail population as much as possible.

SCSO has also made providing **reentry programs** a priority. Through a variety of educational, therapeutic, and training programs, the Reentry Unit offers inmates opportunities to learn and develop skills, receive job training, secure housing, and connect with community service providers.



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