



# Office of the Sheriff

MONROE COUNTY  
"ONE TEAM"



Sheriff Todd K. Baxter

Undersheriff Corey K. Brown

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE UNVEILS 'ANDREW P. MELONI STRATEGIC TRAINING ADVANCING RE-ENTRY (S.T.A.R.) ACADEMY'

*Former Monroe Correctional Facility Transformed into Revolutionary Transitional Jail*



**February 24, 2020 (Brighton, NY)** – On February 24, 2020, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, under the direction of Sheriff Todd K. Baxter, unveiled the Andrew P. Meloni Strategic Training Advancing Re-entry (S.T.A.R.) Academy designed to develop, educate, and provide the necessary tools and resources to shape inmates into citizens who strive to become model neighbors in our community after incarceration.

The Meloni S.T.A.R. Academy (MSA) is located at 750 E. Henrietta Rd., Brighton, NY, formerly known as the Monroe Correctional Facility (MCF). It is modeled after working transitional jails throughout the world. This effort involved studying, researching, and examining corrections and behavioral health inside correctional facilities in a new light. This innovative, one of its kind program uses no additional tax dollars and partners with 26 other agencies, all of whom bring their expertise and commitment to changing lives.

The goal is to one-day become a regional re-entry facility providing programming to outside agencies, to include the NYS Department of Corrections.

*"I am excited to witness the growth, development and success of individuals who want to live a clean, healthy life-style and embark on a different journey; one filled with responsibility and accountability for one's actions, hope for repaired relationships, self-sufficiency and success," said Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter. "Think about a program that is taking a population that is often viewed as a burden on our society and evolving those individuals with healthy living skills into part of our community with stronger families and a higher tax base."*



On June 1, 2019, MCSO completed the relocation of inmates to the Monroe County Jail (MCJ), located in downtown Rochester. Over the past few months, MCSO has conducted research, built relationships in the community, trained staff and selected inmates for the program. The S.T.A.R. Academy will conduct a test cohort of up to 12 male inmates, selected by MCSO based on need, work ethic, behavior and a desire to transform their lives. The number of individuals enrolled in the program will increase as the program grows. MCSO will work with and track these individuals through their graduation, and for two years beyond. In the summer of 2020, MCSO will integrate female incarcerated individuals into the S.T.A.R. Academy. It is a holistic model that requires sweat equity for those committed to writing a different narrative than the one they've been living.

*“I commend Sheriff Baxter and his deputies for their proactive efforts to ensure incarcerated individuals have this opportunity to transform their lives,” said Monroe County Executive Adam Bello. “Under Sheriff Baxter’s leadership, the S.T.A.R. Academy will provide individuals with vital life skills training, education and workforce development so they can reintegrate into our community and live better, self-sufficient and successful lives. With mentoring, vocational training, transitional housing and a support network in place for those who choose this better path, the S.T.A.R. Academy is an excellent example of bold, creative thinking that lifts people up and fosters an environment where every person, and every family, can have the opportunity to grow and thrive.”*

#### **Phase One - Life Renewal and Character Enhancement:**

- ✚ Incarcerated individuals who express a commitment to work are assigned an MCSO deputy mentor, a counselor, and a spiritual mentor
- ✚ Participants and their mentors work on life improvement skills that best suit the individual’s needs for growth and development
- ✚ Programs introduced that address a participant’s deeper struggles with addiction and recovery, conflict resolution, mental health, anger management, and moral recognition therapy
- ✚ Participants work six days a week on improvement and positive work habits

#### **Phase Two – Vocational Training and Development:**

- ✚ Vocational training programs, designed around the middle skills gap, are integrated into participants’ development
- ✚ Deputy mentors and participants build personalized progress reports
- ✚ Educational groups and exercise groups are introduced
- ✚ Participants build practical activities that teach real-life skills; including meal planning, financial literacy, driver safety and CPR/AED training
- ✚ Conduct volunteer work with community organizations; building a sense of responsibility and community



### **Phase Three – Program Skills Implementation and Support:**

- ✚ With the ongoing support of deputies and staff, accountability for past actions is realized and right-sized, including paying off existing fines, back child support, etc.
- ✚ Goals of the program evolve into building a support network necessary for long-term success
- ✚ Open visits with family members introduced leading to stronger relationships and healing
- ✚ Participants advance their training and embrace paid employment opportunities, fill middle skills job gaps, reducing the current shortage of skilled workers locally and nationwide (particularly in the construction industry) and begin to work toward a self-sufficient lifestyle
- ✚ Facilitate transitional housing to those participants who have served their sentence, helping to ensure a safe and secure place to live while obtaining self-sufficiency

The S.T.A.R. Academy houses inmates directly involved in the MSA, as well as inmates in the Outside Work Program and kitchen trustees. The MCSO Jail Bureau’s Outside Work Program allows select individuals, under jail security and supervision, to work outside of the jail on details that enhance our community. The program teaches work ethic, responsibility, and rewards positive behavior. Inmates engaged in the Outside Work Program have access to S.T.A.R. Academy programming in the evening. The kitchen trustees receive ServSafe training, a nationally accredited training program, preparing all meals at the MSA.

The MSA facility was rehabbed in preparation for the launch of the S.T.A.R. Academy as well as to provide flex space when portions of the Monroe County Jail downtown undergo renovations in the future. The Cpl. Catherine Crawford Housing Unit is designed to resemble a residential or dormitory-style living environment, with individual space. It is proven the environment in which a person lives has a direct influence on how the individual perceives himself/herself and fosters a positive, productive learning environment.

### **S.T.A.R. Academy Provider List**

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| 1). Alcoholics Anonymous                 | 15). Prime Care                                |
| 2). Delphi Rise                          | 16). Rochester Construction Training Center    |
| 3). East House                           | 17). Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry        |
| 4). Good News Jail and Prison Ministry   | 18). Rochester Regional Health                 |
| 5). Huther Doyle Memorial Institute      | 19). RochesterWorks!                           |
| 6). Issac Heating and Cooling            | 20). ROCovery Fitness                          |
| 7). Liberty Resources                    | 21). Spiritus Christi Prison Ministry          |
| 8). Mental Health Association            | 22). Trillium Health                           |
| 9). Monroe Boces                         | 23). Trinity Food Service                      |
| 10). Monroe Community College            | 24). United Brotherhood of Carpenters          |
| 11). Monroe County Library System        | 25). URMCC Behavioral Health                   |
| 12). Monroe County Office Workforce Dev. | 26). University of Rochester School of Nursing |
| 13). Narcotics Anonymous                 | 27). Urban League of Rochester Workforce Dev.  |
| 14). Person Centered Housing Options     | 28). Volunteers of America                     |

