

2020-10 Staff Spotlight Introducing Southeast Region Coordinator



October 14, 2020

We are excited to announce that Tom Saccenti has been approved by the Assemblies of God leadership as the new Royal Rangers Southeast region coordinator in September 2020. This position became vacant when Michael Keese stepped down in October 2019.

Tom Saccenti started in Royal Rangers as a five-year-old. He rose through the ranks and became a Gold Medal of Achievement recipient. He also graduated from the Ohio Junior Leadership Training Academy.

When asked about his favorite memories of Royal Rangers as a boy, Tom talked fondly of attending the Ohio district winter camp each year. “We would play broom hockey and sleep in a snow fort.” He also talked a little bit about district junior training camps. “I did not grow up in an ‘outdoor’ family, so going on the canoe expedition and survival camp were things that I normally would have never done. I loved them.”

As soon as he turned 18, he attended LTC and NTC and became an ICS instructor before his 20th birthday. Since that time, he has actively engaged in teaching Ranger Basics in whatever district he is living in. Tom has served on district staff with Ohio, South Carolina, and Georgia. He currently serves as the assistant district director for the Georgia district and serves as a member of the National Communications and Outreach Action Team. He has also served as a volunteer children's pastor and youth pastor at churches when they could not afford a full-time staff member to fill these rolls. Because his career has moved him so often, Tom has had the unique opportunity to help start Royal Rangers outposts at five different churches. He has led small outposts of five boys and larger outposts with over 80 boys.

Since he has worked in several different churches, I asked Tom about his favorite memories as a leader. I was surprised that the answer was not an event but a journey—a journey to mentor boys. "In every church/district that I have served in, I have been lucky enough to mentor at least one and sometimes more fatherless boys in our church. These boys weren't from a divorced home being raised by a single mother. These were boys who had literally never seen their fathers. It is so much fun taking them out and letting them experience 'guy stuff' that they had never done before. Camping, going to sporting events, or just having a birthday party surrounded by my family singing as loud as we can to them. It is so awesome to see them grow in an environment that they normally would not have been able to access outside of a ministry like Royal Rangers."

Tom and his wife, Sonya, have five children. For the past year, they traveled the country, speaking on the weekends at churches and community groups about emergency response in a faith-based environment. During the weekdays, he presented at colleges and universities on new law enforcement techniques and worked as a consultant for institutions throughout the country.

As the family traveled across the country, they spent Wednesday nights ministering at outposts throughout the country—encouraging the commanders and helping to demonstrate a model outpost meeting for them. During this time, the family not only got to minister together, leading boys to Christ, but they also got to minister to the commanders, praying with them and providing them with outpost resources to help them in their success. (If you were wondering, yes, Sonya earned the Missionettes Honor Star award.) Their sons are both in Discovery Rangers. Two of their daughters are in Rainbows and Daisies. Their oldest daughter is in Friends and also earned her Honor Star.

You may wonder how Tom's job has allowed him to travel the country this past year. Well, that's easy. Tom is self-employed. He currently owns a company that provides police dispatching services for campuses across the country, including our very own Evangel University in Springfield, MO. Fortunately, with his business, his office can be anywhere with Internet service.

Since the age of eighteen, Tom has worked as a commissioned police officer. He has served as a road officer, supervisor, undercover narcotics detective, state investigator, and police chief. He has worked for small agencies, supervising only a few officers, and for large agencies as the police chief, managing over 200 employees.

Tom holds Master's Degrees in Criminal Justice and in Higher Education Administration and Bachelor's Degrees in Psychology and in Criminal Justice. He is currently pursuing an Ed.D in Higher Education Administration. He has served as an adjunct faculty member for West Virginia University, teaching Investigations, Police Technology, and Police Administration. He is a certified Master Criminal Investigator and a Master Evidence Technician through the Ohio Peace Officers Training Academy and holds instructor certifications in multiple states. He is a former board member of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators and is the current president of the National Association of Campus Safety Administrators.

I asked Tom what excited him about this new position of leading Southeast region Royal Rangers. He said, "The Southeast has strong district leadership. Every single district director is committed to the ministry and is a solid leader. I am excited to not only partner with these great leaders but to learn from their decades of experience, having not only led a district but also been part of Royal Rangers for so long!"



Sandra Blanchard

Administrative Assistant to the National Director
Royal Rangers USA