

2013 AWLE Conference Report

The Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement (AWLE) 21st annual training conference held in Charlottetown, PEI, from November 5-8, 2013 was a tremendous success, with approximately 90 delegates in attendance. The presentations were informative and valuable and the conference provided excellent opportunities for networking for those in attendance. The theme of the conference was “Beyond HERoes and HERizons” and was cohosted by members of the RCMP, Charlottetown Police, and Summerside Police.

Judge Nancy Orr was the keynote speaker. Judge Orr was appointed a Judge of the Provincial Court of PEI in 1995; the first female judge to be appointed. She spoke of her legal career and how she remains active in various legal associations as well as in her community.

Over the three day training conference, other speakers included Parry Aftab, internet privacy and security lawyer and Executive Director of StopCyberbullying.org. Her presentation on cyberbullying, sexting, and sextortion provided some practical aspects of investigating cybercrime. Dr. Marnie Wood is a Forensic Pathologist and Medical Examiner in the province of Nova Scotia who presented on Medicolegal Death Scene Investigations and preserving and collecting evidence. Caroline Leblanc is a Clinical Psychologist and gave a presentation on mental health issues and how, as peace officers, we can transition “from survivor to resilient” in our careers. Cst. Natasha Jamieson, a member of the RCMP in Halifax, conducted an informative and interesting presentation on Human Trafficking and how it impacts society on a local to global scale. Anne Marie Hagan is from Newfoundland and Labrador and her story of how she forgave the neighbour who murdered her father with an axe was inspiring and riveting. Her journey from tragedy to forgiveness demonstrates the strength and versatility of the human spirit and instills hope. New Brunswick Crown Attorney Karen Lee Lamrock and New Brunswick RCMP Constable Tonia Williams presented the case study of a large scale international child pornography investigation and successful prosecution that took place in rural New Brunswick, where the accused received a fifteen year jail sentence. Stephanie Knickle-Currie, motion Pilates Fitness & Consulting owner/operator, led conference delegates through a high energy workout and spoke of the importance of maintaining a healthy body. The case study of the abduction and homicide of Victoria (Tori) Stafford was presented by Detective Inspector Mike Bickerton of the OPP and Detective Constable Karen Overbaugh of Woodstock Police Service. The outcome of the investigation made an impact not only on the people involved in the case but the community that supported that investigation from beginning to end.

These presentations provided delegates with a great deal of knowledge that will assist in their professional careers and personal lives.

The highlight of the week was the Awards Banquet hosted by local radio personality Kerri Wynne MacLeod with delegates and dignitaries including representatives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police departments. The following awards were presented:

Officer of the Year – Constable Katie Roy, Saint John Police

A bilingual native of Moncton, New Brunswick, Cst. Katie Roy joined the Saint John Police Force in 2007 and has immersed herself in her job with the Saint John Police Force, and with her community on several levels.

Aside from her regular patrol duties, Cst. Roy is also a key member and only the second-ever female to pass the selection process of the Regional Emergency Tactical Services Unit, and is also a member of the Regional Public Order Unit, a Use-of-Force and firearms instructor, and a certified Drug Recognition Expert.

Cst. Roy exemplifies leadership in everything she does for the police force; her patrol tactics are exemplary, and she demands the same of her co-workers, greatly enhancing officer safety. She challenges everyone to improve and volunteers her time to train and organizes others to do so as well. Typical of her high standard for self-improvement, Cst. Roy maintains an exceptionally high level of tactical and knowledge proficiency in policing; whether in defensive tactics, less-lethal weaponry skills, fitness or knowing her district and addressing its challenges, Cst. Roy typifies not only what is best about women in policing, but what is best about policing.

As a patrol officer, Cst. Roy is extremely proficient at targeting criminals on the Prolific Offender List and her knowledge of the criminal element is exceptional. She displays a great deal of empathy for her community, but in particular women's issues. Over the past few years she has designed and delivered personal safety and wellness programs to female students, immigrants and the community on her own time and in general free-of-charge. The feedback was outstanding, reflecting very well on the police service and women in policing in particular.

Cst. Roy, along with other female members of the police force and local high school staffers created the 'Lady Lifters' program at a local high school. Cst. Roy's involvement in the Saint John Police Force Fitness Center, as a fund-raiser, instructor, mentor and even a 'mover of equipment', has inspired a number of employees to modify their lifestyles for the positive. On a routine basis, one will see Cst. Roy in the gym mentoring a young police or civilian employee, or one-on-one with an older member who has fallen into a dangerously sedate lifestyle. It is easy to see that Cst. Roy approaches this with compassion and willingly gives of herself to help others feel better and therefore contribute to the community. She also remains active by both coaching and participating in women's rugby, women's ice hockey, mixed martial arts / self-defense and judo. Through her volunteering to do these seminars and programs, Cst. Roy very much connects with women in the community, law enforcement and civilian employees. To simply say that Cst. Roy is a 'role model' for young women, police or civilian, would be an understatement.

While terms such as 'leader' or 'exceptional' may be simple to apply, it is police officers like Cst. Katie Roy who exemplify these ideals, both through practice and in the way they approach their co-workers and the public. Cst. Roy routinely goes out of her way to provide excellence in service and leadership, whether on a routine call-for-service, or at a high-risk warrant service as a member of the advanced tactical unit.

Constable Katie Roy exemplifies the qualities encapsulated by the 'Officer of the Year' award; Leadership, Community Service, Mentoring and Excellence in Performance and is very deserving of the award.

Community Service Award - Constable Jade Kean, Newfoundland and Labrador RCMP

Cst. Jade KEAN has been a member of the RCMP since 2010 is assigned to the Northern Labrador community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where she is responsible for policing several diverse aboriginal groups including Inuit, Innu and Metis. Cst. Kean is sensitive to the many cultural differences of her clients and takes these into account when dealing with the public. Despite the busy work commitments that Cst. Kean carries, she has been an active member in the community. From the beginning of her service, she has been very involved with the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. As with many Northern communities there has been a constant issue of large populations of stray dogs. Jade volunteers at the shelter and often fosters multiple dogs at her home. In 2012, she helped to organize the shipment of over 60 dogs from the community to the Province of Nova Scotia for adoption, through the partnership of several local business as well as Fedex, who provided air transportation for the animals. Although this initiative was a short term solution, Jade realized that something more had to be done to help the chronic problem of stray dogs in the community.

Through Cst. Kean's research on stray dog problems, she learned about a program called "Dogs with No Names" developed by Dr. Judith Samson-French, which was initiated in 2009 in southern Alberta. Contraceptive implants were inserted under the skin of female dogs as a form of birth control in a program designed for communities where shelter facilities do not exist. Through community participation and fundraising, Cst. Kean was able to bring Dr. Samson-French and her co-workers to Labrador where one hundred and seventy six dogs received a vaccination against rabies and were dewormed and sixty three female dogs received the contraceptive implant. The program was a massive success.

Cst. Kean's tremendous initiative and efficiency in implementing the "Dogs with No Names" program, her motivation to act to create positive change in her community, and her commitment to representing her organization with a high level of professionalism, make her the 2013 AWLE Community Service Award recipient.

Excellence in Performance – Constable Kate McQuaid, Nova Scotia RCMP

Cst. Kate McQuaid joined the RCMP in 2005 and is currently posted to the Human Source Unit within Covert Operations of the RCMP in Nova Scotia, having been transferred from the H Division (Nova Scotia) Marijuana Grow Op Enforcement Team. She was the Primary Investigator for a complex eleven month Part VI (Interception of Private Communications) investigation targeting a priority organized crime group. This group was suspected to be involved in the illegal production, importation and distribution of multiple kilo levels of marijuana into Halifax.

Upon arriving to the team, Cst. McQuaid quickly established herself as a highly competent and conscientious investigator with tremendous attention to detail, which led her to be identified as the Primary Investigator. In addition to gaining an understanding of the complexities of this

investigation, she had to build her knowledge of Major Case Management and also master the use of the RCMP's Evidence & Records program for file management. On both counts Kate stepped up and took on the challenge and has become highly proficient at both. This investigation presented Kate with new learning experiences which she embraced. It was the first Part VI investigation she had worked, as well as the first file she managed utilizing the Major Case Management principals.

Kate supervised the speed, flow and direction, and overall coordination of all aspects of the investigation. She conducted daily meetings with investigators to ensure proper direction and coordination was maintained. She tasked the investigational team with clear, concise instructions and reviewed all completed tasks. In addition to her role as the Primary Investigator, she conducted surveillance, reviewed judicial authorizations, and when necessary took on responsibilities in the Monitor Room. She arranged meetings with the Public Prosecution Service to discuss investigational strategies to ensure that elements of the offences were clearly understood and achievable. She focused on the main goals of the operation and directed tasks to achieve a successful conclusion. During the course of the investigation Kate put in many hours of voluntary time either before or after her regular shifts making sure that the investigation was progressing as it should.

The takedown involved over 150 police officers from the RCMP, Halifax Regional Police and Truro Police Service. Over the life of the investigation there were 19 residential locations searched, 29 individuals arrested, 124 CDSA and Criminal Code charges laid, 8 properties restrained, 5 vehicles, 5 long guns, 21 kg dried marihuana, 2,207 marihuana plants, \$100,000 cash and \$250,000 worth of grow equipment seized. By all accounts this investigation was a complete success and unmasked the criminal activity taking place by this organized crime group.

The building of case summaries was a demanding and tedious aspect of this operation that once again Kate demonstrated a superior attention to duty. The complexity of the building of cases cannot be overstated given the large number of persons charged, and number of charges. Many of the cases involved conspiracies involving three or more subjects. Kate showed tremendous perseverance and effort going through all the evidence collected, including thousands of intercepts, hours of video recordings, and hundreds of pages of surveillance notes to ensure all pertinent information was presented in the final disclosure package. One particular task included Kate reviewing in excess of 6000 documents to ensure they were vetted appropriately.

It was Kate's superior attention to duty and extra effort that directly resulted in the success of this project. She is the commendable recipient of the Excellence in Performance Award.

Leadership Award - Sergeant Leanne MacDonald, Nova Scotia RCMP

Sgt. Leanne MacDonald is a 21 year member of the RCMP currently posted to Windsor, Nova Scotia. Her current role is the Operations NCO, and she is responsible for all operational policing activities within the district from both an enforcement and community policing perspective. She directly supervises 22 employees who work General Duty, Street Crime Enforcement and General Investigations and is responsible for employee development and providing both supervision and mentoring.

Upon her arrival in Windsor, Leanne was faced with several challenges involving morale, office engagement, and operations. Coming out of an administrative role, Sgt. MacDonald took it upon herself to become re-acquainted with District operations, which have allowed her to work with members and not just supervise them, which proved to be a very positive influence on the junior members.

Being a positive role model reaches outside the policing sphere. As a member of the African Nova Scotian community, Leanne is recognized as a leader and this brings her leadership qualities in policing to a different light. She is an example to black youth, adults and the elderly as to what can be achieved if you reach out and try.

During the past two years, Leanne has provided support and guidance to assist her co-workers in dealing with personal issues. At times the conversations have been difficult and uncomfortable; however when faced with these situations, Leanne has never shied away from reaching out to help a co-worker. She consistently demonstrates the qualities of a leader willing to get involved. The same characteristics are seen in her interactions with the public.

Sgt. MacDonald is a solid police officer and draws on her broad experience to meet the demands of a constantly changing work environment. She is fully engaged in the investigational activities of the district which allows her to mentor the members whom she supervises. Sgt. MacDonald takes every opportunity to educate the members, ensuring they are developing into quality police officers and not only supervises investigations, but has been the lead investigator on several high profile matters.

On several occasions Sgt. MacDonald has acted in the capacity as the District Commander. In this role she interacts with the three local municipal councils, their respective police advisory boards and area citizens. Since her arrival as the Operations NCO, she has provided outstanding service and guidance to all three groups.

Windsor District has become a location for large public events attracting several thousand individuals. Sgt. MacDonald has taken the police lead in interacting with other emergency services in developing action plans to ensure public safety. During these large events she has taken the command role and has demonstrated to her partners her ability to plan and organize the resources required to ensure public safety.

Windsor District has overcome many policing challenges and obstacles due to Sgt. MacDonald's leadership abilities and for this reason and many others, she is the recipient of the Leadership Award.

Team Endeavour - Constable Brandy Steeves and Constable Susan Foote, Nova Scotia RCMP

Cst. Brandy Steeves is a member of the Bridgewater Detachment and is in the position of School Safety Resource Officer. Cst. Susan Foote recently retired, after being stationed in the Chester Detachment as the Community Policing Officer.

The Lunenburg County RCMP Youth Advisory Committee was created in the fall of 2011 by Cst. Steeves and Cst. Foote. The objectives of this committee were to raise awareness on bullying and youth issues, provide resources and information to their peers and community, develop leadership skills in the area of public speaking and the media, and focus on current youth issues. Csts. Steeves and Foote facilitated the creation of their own power point presentation on bullying and created two videos for the Advisory Committee as part of the bullying presentation, which won awards for their quality. The Committee also created and read Public Service Announcements on the local radio station to increase bullying awareness.

The Advisory Committee partnered with Cst. Steeves' "Name the Shame" group to create a video that promotes sexual harassment awareness within the school community and amongst youth in their interactions with each other. Name the Shame is a youth driven program developed by Cst. Brandy Steeves, with Cst. Foote and community stakeholders with the goal to reduce sexual harassment and abuse to this affected group through knowledge, awareness and skills. Presentations on Relationship Safety, Sexual Harassment/Assault, It's a Teen's World, and Luring have been completed at numerous junior high schools throughout Lunenburg County, Annapolis County, and Liverpool.

Name the Shame has hosted three Girls Power Strength weekends consisting of presentations and workshops geared towards empowering girls to make informed decisions in their lives. One boy's weekend of The Male Experience was also held.

This timely topic has broad implications for law enforcement and this great work being done by Cst. Steeves and Cst. Foote resulted in them receiving the Team Endeavour Award.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients, who are selected by an independent committee based on nominations submitted.

In addition to the professional training and the awards presentations, delegates of the conference participated in unique networking opportunities. As well, at each conference a donation is made to the charity of choice of a conference committee; the recipient this year is Anderson House, a safe and supportive shelter for women and their children who have been physically or emotionally abused or who live in constant fear of abuse.

Cst. Paula Raymond
President, Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement