

22nd AWLE Annual Training Conference in Saint John, NB



The Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement (AWLE) 22nd annual training conference was held in Saint John, NB from October 7th - 10th, 2014 with approximately 60 delegates in attendance. The conference provided excellent opportunities for networking for those in attendance. The theme of the conference was “Healthy Heroes Helping Others” and was co hosted by members of the RCMP and Saint John Police Service, led by Co-Chairs Cst Gillian Holden and Cst Katie Roy.

Chief Leanne Fitch, Chief of Police for the Fredericton Police Force was the keynote speaker. Chief Fitch shared her personal and professional experiences about her rise to the top over her 29 year career. Her secrets have involved faith, family, hope, an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, love of nature and animals, ... and a little thing called “dogged determination”. She spoke of how she is committed to improving professionalism, compassion, ethics and community partnerships in the field of policing. She remains active in various Policing Associations as well as in her community.

Over the three day training conference, other speakers included Janice Butler. Her presentation was of Work-Life Balance. and how bringing more balance, play and living out your personal dreams trigger an energy that spreads into your professional and personal life. Kelly Keith is a Use of Force Expert and spoke on street survival and mental toughness with tactical demonstrations. Sean Barker who is a Fitness Coach / Author spoke about motivation and unlocking your personal success formula and becoming your own super hero. Barker continues to be driven to succeed in spreading his passion for achieving health and happiness. Cst Brandy Steeves a member of the RCMP in Halifax, conducted an informative presentation on “It's Easy Out There for a Pimp.” She showed how social media has taken away the need for pimps to groom. Heidi Fitzgerald is a Licenced Psychologist and Angela Keetch a Registered Social Worker. They gave a presentation on Day to Day Stress Management and information

on Critical Incident Stress Management. Cst Tammy Spence with the Saint John Police Force presented an informative and interesting presentation on Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs in Atlantic Canada . The case study “The Killer in Command; Colonel Russell Williams” was presented by Superintendent Chris Nicholas, Director of Drug Enforcement Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau with the Ontario Provincial Police, an overview of the investigation of David Russell Williams, a convicted murderer, rapist, and former Colonel in the Canadian Forces.

These presentations were interesting and informative. Delegates were presented with a great deal of information that will assist them in their professional careers and personal lives.

The highlight of the week was the Awards Banquet. There were delegates and dignitaries from around the Atlantic provinces including representatives of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and municipal police departments. The following awards were presented:

Officer of the Year

Corporal Charla Keddy graduated from RCMP Depot in November 2001. Since then she has held Constable positions in Nova Scotia. Including time spent in Barrington and then a transfer to Federal Drug Section in 2007. In 2011, she was promoted to Corporal. Presently, Cpl. Keddy is in charge of the Quick Hit Response Unit Team # 2. She is responsible for general operations of quick/intense investigations that mainly include formulating grounds from a number of sources, preparing the information, then executing search warrants under the CDSA, Criminal Code, Custom & Excise or appropriate Act. Her team is trained and have working knowledge in a variety of areas such as: marihuana grows, synthetic and street level drugs, intro-provincial cigarette trafficking and counterfeit clothing and other items. They are often called upon to assist other agencies or units, cultivating human sources, conducting physical surveillance or obtaining information where need be.

Cpl. Keddy is recognized today as a leader in covert operations, complex wiretaps, court testimony and judicial authorizations. These are all high risk areas within the police world, as they all require extensive specialized training, integrity, commitment, dedication and accountability. She has demonstrated that she not only possesses these qualities, but continues to hone her skills to become a highly regarded and sought after police professional. Cpl. Keddy has been part of numerous operations.

Management is regularly seeking Cpl. Keddy to be at the forefront of complex investigations such as Part VI interception and Police Agents. She being very experienced, was able to spend several weeks training the members on the procedures

and protocols of monitoring private interceptions. She advised them on preparing monitoring logs, vetting calls, scheduling and crown brief preparation

Preparing legal documents is an area where Cpl. Keddy is a leader and she is considered a Subject Matter Expert. She is a sought after facilitator for the National Search Warrant Course. Through her calm and professional demeanor, she is able provide insight and mentor junior members on judicial authorizations. She is often sought out by many of the members to assist and guide them on investigative matters when preparing legal documents. Her knowledge and demonstrated ability to share her expertise is of great benefit to her unit. Cpl. Keddy's working skill set provides Federal Operations and in fact the RCMP the ability to maintain and further develop its corporate knowledge in judicial authorizations.

Cpl Keddy excels and is a subject matter expert in drug opinion evidence. Senior management has relied heavily on her to be a leader in this discipline. She takes on this responsibility with vigor and an absolute focus on being the best. On a number of occasions and due to time constraints, she will take on a last minute request to prepare drug opinion evidence. She will prepare these sometimes complex and lengthy reports on her own time, just to make sure they are done properly and in a professional manner. She does this without hesitation always thinking of the best interests of the investigation and more importantly the perception of the RCMP. She also is mentoring a number of members in drug opinion evidence and right now is the cornerstone of the drug opinion program in "H" Division.

Cpl. Keddy is a strategic and forward thinking police officer. She has the ability to quickly understand information. This allows her to properly assess the situation and to understand the legal requirements thus allowing her to move the investigation forward. Her experience gives her the ability to explore new applications or variances to certain police techniques which allows her to solve issues and think outside the box. Her global investigative knowledge as an undercover operator, cover person, agent handler, affiant, lead investigator, subject matter expert in drug evidence and proven leadership qualities, bodes well for her future, and she continues to work on national and international investigations.

Community Service

In September, 2010, Constable Krista MILLER began her career with the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC). Her first assignment was in St. John's, where she served as a patrol officer, and two years later she transferred to Labrador, where she continues to perform patrol duties. In this position, Constable Miller provides first response to calls for service, in a remote geographic northern area of Labrador.

As an example of her willingness to become involved, Cst. Miller has stepped forward for a number of “secondary duties,” she serves as a trainer for Mental Health First Aid for youth, and is a serving member of the RNC Domestic Violence Working Group, a member of the RNC Honour Guard, the liaison officer with the Labrador City Traffic Division, a radar coordinator and a qualified Breath Technician.

Cst. Miller distinguishes herself through her community service. She is an active member of the Faith Haven Animal Shelter, as the Director of Public Relations in Wabush, Labrador and a serving board member of the Iris Kirby House Foundation. Her extracurricular activities include the local women’s softball league, the women’s basketball league and other outdoor activities. This devotion of time and energy to the community continues with her volunteer activities in recent years, which include Habitat for Humanity, Internationally in Jordan and on a local level in her hometown of Mount Pearl, and the CIBC Run for the Cure, as well as the Run for Autism. Young children are delighted at Christmas time, as a result of her volunteer team efforts in helping to organize the John Howard Society-Howard House children’s party.

Exhibiting a true commitment to community as an advocate against domestic violence, earlier this year, Cst. Miller stood before a captivated audience of men and women as the guest speaker at a community fundraiser for the Status of Women’s Council in Labrador City. In a quiet voice, often filled with emotion, she recounted publically for the first time a circumstance in her life at age 26 when violence was the single overwhelming issue that she faced. A relationship with a young man who appeared funny, attentive and caring, soon turned out not to be the dream companion she had hoped to find. Committed to the relationship, she tried to make things right, but his controlling behavior escalated and led to physical abuse. She recounted to the audience how her own experience with domestic violence resulted in a number of violent outbursts, several beatings and strangulation to the point that she almost lost consciousness. Although the emotional toll of her experience could have destroyed her, counselling and strong support from family and friends helped her to regain her confidence. Always taking a positive approach, she explained to the audience, “I realized after seeing what those officers did that day for me, that was what I wanted to do; to help someone else get out of the same situation I was in.” She began her policing career at the age of 31 and has become a strong advocate against domestic violence.

Without a doubt, Cst. Krista Miller will continue to offer a stronger voice in addressing the issue of domestic violence. She is a positive role model for others and committed to creating a safer community.

Mentoring Award

Sergeant Nancy Rudback started training with the Halifax Police Department in the fall of 1988 and was hired on April 1, 1989. Sgt. Rudback has conscientiously served the people of Halifax for the past 26 years. As with most police officers, her initial assignment was with uniformed patrol services; foot, bike and patrol car. She was a solid and dependable patrol officer, respected by all who worked with her.

Sgt Rudback has worked in many areas, including Drugs, Vice, the Prostitution Task Force, and the Nova Scotia Department of Justice Police and Public Safety Services Internal Investigations Unit, which looked at historical sexual and physical abuse throughout different provincial institutions.

Sgt. Rudback also volunteered for a United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, West Africa. She spent nine months in Sierra Leone working with the National Police in the capacity of a trainer and mentor, as well as monitoring human rights of those arrested or held by the Sierra Leone Police. She was appointed as the Family Support Unit Liaison Officer in her last position in Sierra Leone. In 2011, she presented at the AWLE conference in Halifax, on UN Missions. She spoke not only on what she did on the mission, but reviewed the issues facing women. This presentation generated great interest for other women to volunteer for a UN Mission.

During her time working as a police officer, Sgt. Rudback has been involved with police training. She was one of the first female officers in Halifax to become an Officer Safety Trainer, and she distinguished herself in the role, supporting many female officers with the training and ensuring the programs were properly developed for females. She has served as a coach officer and provided leadership and mentorship to junior patrol officers for many years. She is also a dry and live fire instructor. Sgt Rudback was one of the first four female sergeants in Halifax Regional Police. She is seen as a supporter of women in law enforcement, and assists many young female police officers in her role as a Sergeant.

For the past nine years, she has been involved as an Aide-de-Camp with the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. Here, one can see her pride in representing her agency in this volunteer role.

Sgt. Rudback has been a strong believer in Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement (AWLE) since its inception, and has attended almost every AWLE conference. She was one of the organizers for the 2010 AWLE conference held in Halifax. She encourages many of the younger female members to get involved and attend the AWLE conferences. She demonstrates continuous mentoring of her female police colleagues within HRP through her strong support of AWLE.

In her day-to-day work, Sgt. Rudback has been a strong leader to both men and women. She is very responsible and is an includer, working with others comes easily to her.

Sgt Rudback is a mentor. She has been a Sergeant in the downtown area of Halifax for nine years. This area is known to be an area where new police recruits start their career, and she assists in moulding them to be great police officers. Sgt. Rudback is the type of mentor any officer would be lucky to have. She is hard working and caring, and a fine example of a police officer.

Excellence in Performance

Corporal Chantal Farrah is the RCMP J Division Media Relations Officer and works with the Strategic Communications Unit. She has been in her current role since 2011. Cpl. Farrah holds a position that is high profile and critical for the division as she is most often the face of the RCMP to the general public. She represents the RCMP at special events, organises and delivers news conferences and media briefings, and develops communication strategies. She continuously displays a high level of competence in her role, using communications in a strategic matter to achieve goals and to provide a service of excellence to the province of New Brunswick.

Cpl. Farrah is very committed and dedicated to her role. The most recent example is the shootings in Moncton in June when three RCMP members were killed and two others wounded. The night of the shootings, while still on maternity leave, she contacted her manager to ask if she could assist. Recognizing she was on maternity leave, he declined the offer. The following morning she arrived at his office with her kit bag in hand saying she was, there to work even if that meant counting pencils. By that afternoon, she was in Moncton fronting a news conference that was broadcast live nationally. She continued to do media events for a few days, offering that reassuring voice to the public who were looking for information. After the manhunt ended and the suspect was captured, she became involved in the funeral for the three fallen members and acted as Master of Ceremonies. She did a stellar job under difficult circumstances. She could have easily stayed at home and no one would have questioned it but her actions show the kind of commitment she has to her job, to her colleagues and to the public.

This example is not simply a one-off for Cpl. Farrah. This is the type of dedication and commitment she shows every day. She has grown as a communicator and is always looking for ways to use communication to better connect with the public so that they can assist in helping police solve and reduce crime. In September 2013, a video was placed on You tube where she made a plea to the public to help identify a suspected pedophile in a nine-year old case. The video quickly went viral receiving more than 120,000 views; the most views an operational RCMP video had ever received in Canada. Dozens of tips came in that the Internet Child Exploitation Unit is continuing to work on.

Her approach to several high profile homicides and suspicious death investigations has been invaluable. Her skills as an investigator serve her well as Media Relations Officer because she is able to understand complexities of sensitive investigations and has proven herself and gained a lot of respect from different units. She works very closely

with Major Crime on developing communication strategies aimed at helping investigations. Her attention to detail and her goal of always striving for excellence have been key factors in the success in her job. She is adept at seeing the big picture on most issues. This helps greatly in analyzing the issue, weighing the risks and seeing opportunities. She regularly challenges units on what they are willing to release publicly and why so that she understands their issues and is better able to offer communication strategies as an investigative tool. In 2013 she assisted Major Crime in updating and adopting new business rules involving communications on their files.

Cpl. Farrah regularly does a great deal of work surrounding traffic fatalities with the aim of reducing them. Reasons behind road deaths such as; was there alcohol/drugs involved, victim not wearing a seatbelt, or aggressive driving are provided in news releases where applicable. Before anticipated storms, messages are delivered about the dangers associated with driving in poor conditions. This continued and consistent messaging has helped in reducing highway fatalities in New Brunswick.

While traditionally, Media Relations Officer may have been viewed as simply “the talking head” of the organization, Cpl. Farrah views the role as an investigator, but using a different set of tools to solve a crime. She does it well and effectively every day, using media and social media to share information with the public and the results are clear with crime down and fatalities the lowest they have been since records began. She displays excellence in performance every day.

Leadership

Staff Sergeant Debbie Craig is the Federal Policing Advisory NCO for the RCMP in New Brunswick. In this position she provides strategic advice to the Federal Policing Officer and his employees on investigations involving drugs, human sources, police agents, warrant and wire taps, to name but just a few areas. Given her numerous years of experience in Federal Policing, she is a sought after resource. She has been in the Division for her entire service, 29 years, and during this time she has served in various roles; from a general duty constable, Highway Patrol Officer, Custom and Excise investigator, to the District Policing Advisory NCO. She has provided advice and guidance to many members regarding their careers S/Sgt. Craig is currently the most senior serving female member in J Division.

Leading up to the Olympics in Vancouver, S/Sgt. Craig was the logistics coordinator for all human resource requirements from J Division that would be assigned to security duties for this event. Given the magnitude of the requirements, S/Sgt. Craig single-handedly did this for the division while doing her regular duties.

She was tasked with organizing resources to attend the G8/G20 summit in Toronto. Using her superior organizational and planning skills, she looked after sending the required number of employees to Ontario as well as ensuring their safe return.

S/Sgt. Craig is fully VIP trained and has participated in numerous high level visits. She led a team for President Bill Clinton’s visit to Fredericton. She was the Site Commander

for this visit. She showed and explained the roles and duties in a way that was easy to understand and everyone involved was put at ease.

In 2011 S/Sgt. Craig led a team of over 30 employees and investigators on a corruption file involving an officer. The team was covert and everything was done off site away from any police office. She had to not only set the direction and tone for the investigation; she ensured financial accountability for her human resources as well as the infrastructure and all the expenses that went with such an operation.

S/Sgt. Craig believes in continuing education. She assisted front line supervisors, through information sessions, to develop their supervisory skills. She herself has recently completed a certificate in Conflict Management from UNB.

Recently New Brunswick has faced stiff opposition to its Natural Gas exploration. S/Sgt. Craig helped develop and write the Operational Plan that members would follow. Last fall when tensions escalated in Rexton, she worked in the Division Emergency Operations Centre and coordinated all logistics for the members.

On June 4, 2014 a tragic event occurred in Moncton. S/Sgt. Craig led and coordinated all logistical support for the investigation. This undertaking was monumental.

S/Sgt. Craig led a team of 21 employees that looked after all logistical support for several events. During the early stages of the active shooter she and her team coordinated the arrival of over 265 resources, mainly police officers from outside the Division. After a 30 hour manhunt, S/Sgt. Craig and her team identified the appropriate investigators required for the investigations. The entire police department of 200 employees were replaced, so the employees went home to recover from the tragic ordeal. As well, under her supervision and direction, her team took care of all the logistical and human resource requirements for the funeral committee that organized the triple Regimental Funeral.

The June 4 tragic event was probably the biggest and most stressful event that she has ever had to work on all the while being a leader to others. Through it all S/Sgt. Craig held her composure. She led her team in a calm and professional manner. They fought through challenges, adversity and their own personal fatigue. Through it all S/Sgt. Craig never wavered from her duty. She mustered all of her experience and all of her strength to ensure our fallen comrades and their families received the support and respect they deserved and that the investigators responsible to capture and investigate the hideous crimes had all the support they required.

S/Sgt. Craig is someone that is highly competent, highly organized and very skilled at leading others. She remains calm under pressure and is able to extract the best in others through her demeanor, compassion and ability to lead. She is an excellent communicator that knows how to get the best out of everyone for a greater common goal. She has been a positive role model not only to female members of the RCMP and other police forces, but also to her male counterparts.

Team Endeavour

Cst. Sherri Samson went through the Police Training Program with Halifax Regional in 2009 and started working in the downtown core of Halifax in 2010, spending two years on a downtown beat. In the fall of 2012, she began working in the Gottingen Street/Uniacke Square community, an area known for its high crime and drug sales. In February 2013, she worked with the Vice Unit on 'Operation Improvise,' an internet luring sting which resulted in 5 arrests. She is currently assigned to the Gottingen Street Beat, with her partner Cst. Grant Fiander, who started working in Halifax in 2011.

They have established themselves as emerging leaders on their Watch with a reputation as honest and energetic workers who are respected by their peers. There are numerous incidents which illustrate how they have shown a great deal of promise by demonstrating professionalism, high integrity and excellence in policing. Here are just few examples of their activity:

Forging relationships with the community, Csts. Samson and Fiander gathered information in relation to a motor vehicle parked on a Halifax Street and being used to periodically store illegal controlled substances and weapons. Due to the shootings and gun violence in and around the Uniacke Square area, a search of the abandoned vehicle occurred and a loaded "sawed-off" 308 caliber rifle was recovered from the interior of the vehicle. There were live rounds in the magazine and one live round in the chamber. The firearm was secured and sent to the lab for ballistics comparisons to the recent weapon's incidents. As well, there have been several other occasions, where information led to CDSA search warrants, resulting in numerous charges being laid. A residence was searched by members, locating approximately 235 grams of marijuana in a child's bedroom. Scales, empty new packaging and score sheets were also located.

Tantallon RCMP members responded to a break and enter where by a puppy was stolen from the residence. The HRP/RCMP Integrated General Investigative Section was assigned to assist in this file and it was determined that there were no more viable leads to follow up on. The media was made aware of the incident in hopes to generate public support. As the result of forging relationships, information was received by Csts. Samson and Fiander, that resulted in the puppy being located and returned to his owner.

A resident of Northwood Manor, a senior's home, got stranded after his four wheeled electronic scooter malfunctioned. The resident reportedly flagged down Csts. Sampson and Fiander, who rendered assistance by calling for the patrol wagon and transported the resident and his "very heavy" scooter back to Northwood Manor. The resident and the in care living staff at Northwood felt the caring approach to the community that these two officers give, is above and beyond what is expected.

As a result of a tropical storm, there was a higher than normal call volume, Csts. Sampson and Fiander, who typically patrol the Gottingen Beat area on foot, were assigned to a vehicle. While conducting patrols, they noted a vehicle which they

deemed suspicious. Their concern related to damage observed to the vehicle, which was occupied by four to five people. Initially they suspected the driver may be impaired. Based on their suspicions, Csts. Samson and Fiander turned to stop the vehicle. When it became apparent the vehicle was attempting to flee from them, they self-terminated the pursuit recognizing the lack of any confirmed criminal offence, the bad road conditions and the danger presented to the public, themselves and the vehicle occupants. From a static position, they continued to observe the fleeing vehicle as it travelled at a high rate of speed onto the Halifax Commons and out of sight. Other members responded and were able to locate the run vehicle in a driveway of a residence, on a quiet street in the area, identified the vehicle as being stolen, located and apprehended two well-known and active criminals nearby, and with the assistance of a K-9 unit, linked those males to the stolen motor vehicle.

Reviewing the initiative, decision making, communication and actions of Csts. Samson and Fiander that night, an unknowing observer may well have mistaken them for officers well senior to their 2-3 years of service. Rather than being an anomaly, this is yet another example of their ongoing professionalism and passion to serve the residents of the Gottingen Beat zone.

Csts. Samson and Fiander have established themselves in the Gottingen Street area, they have made contacts with community partners and frequently visit the Northend Library and interact with the youth in the area and even take time to play Lego or board games in an attempt to bridge the relationship between the police and the community. They even personally purchased Halloween candy and handed it out from our HRP community office during our regular shift Halloween night.

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 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 PRO Kids, a non profit program that matches children and youth up to and including the age of 18 with organized registered recreation activities.

Cst Louanne McQuaid
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