

2008 AWLE CONFERENCE REPORT

Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement 16th Annual Conference, Sydney, NS, November 4-7, 2008.

Once again the Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement (AWLE) annual training conference was a huge success! The host committee from Cape Breton Regional Police outdid themselves with their powerful line up of top notch guest speakers. The enthusiasm of the guest speakers permeated through the conference and kept the delegates eager with anticipation for the next topic each day. Other guest speakers who proved to certainly lead the delegates in the conference themed "Aspire, Educate and Succeed" made this agenda one of the best training conferences for law enforcement officers in the 16 years of AWLE.

D/Superintendent Kate Lines from Ontario Provincial Police, the first female criminal profiler in Canada, was the key note speaker. D/Superintendent Lines kept the delegates on the edge of their seats with her powerful presentation that included case studies in which she was involved.

Sgt. Ron Campbell and Cpl. Dave Wilkinson from the "K" Division (Alberta) RCMP crisis negotiation team shared an incident with the conference delegates. A crisis negotiation intervention call in Spruce Grove, Alberta led to an RCMP K9 member being tragically killed by the suspect in a stand off with police. The presentation not only taught delegates how to manage post-traumatic stress but emphasized the importance of the combination of crisis negotiation, tactical response and the coordination of each unit or team responding to the call and how it affects the outcome of the incident.

Cpl. Gord Vail of the RCMP Synthetic Drug Unit conducted a presentation on Methamphetamine labs and the extreme cautions associated to first responders. The session was informative and certainly sparked the thought process for delegates to prepare for the real and forthcoming realities for responding to drug lab investigations.

Inspector Corey Bockus of Metro Toronto Police spoke of a major investigation, a homicide that she was the lead investigator on that had a Cape Breton connection. The case revealed twists and turns of some major case files and emphasized how important even the smallest piece of evidence or clue can be the turning point in any investigation.

Dr. Nicole Gaskell, a naturopathic practitioner of alternative medicine, informed delegates of the importance of healthy living, especially for shift workers, and the importance of healthy eating. A healthy lifestyle can exponentially aid with stress and sleep issues, and can contribute to a healthier body and mind on and off the job. This was a refreshing mind opening topic to discuss and was beneficial to those attending.

Sgt. Lloyd McCormack of Cape Breton Regional Police held the conference room silent as delegates strained to hear every detail about a major murder investigation that took ten years to solve. Sgt. McCormack presented the entire case file to members demonstrating once again, the importance of every detail of a crime scene and that no piece of evidence is insignificant. The presentation went from start to finish and demonstrated great investigative techniques and the use of all resources available in relation to any investigation.

Each year at the annual training conference we recognize the contributions of women through the presentation of awards for Officer of the Year, Community Service, Excellence in Performance, Leadership, Medal of Valour, Mentoring, and a Team Endeavour Award, which is an award given to a female officer and her male partner(s), if applicable, for their teamwork.

S/Sgt. Kim Quartermain of the Fredericton Police Force was named Officer of the Year and was recognized for her leadership, dedication and professionalism. Her leadership style has earned her the admiration and trust of others through uncompromising integrity and honesty. She is equally committed to her community and to special events in the area. Often officers communicate their appreciation on how she has helped them. She is known for her high degree of professionalism, integrity and compassion.

The Community Services Award was presented to Cst. Joany Paradis of RCMP "J" Division (Neguac), who had less than two years service when she was nominated for the award. Her accomplishments with regards to community, school projects, Neighborhood Watch, citizens meetings, and cultural groups have been tremendous within her community. She has been a driving force behind numerous programs and successful community initiatives. Cst.Paradis' compassion and understanding for the community she serves is second to none.

Cst. Lisa Wittington received the Excellence in Performance Award. She was able to infiltrate a crime group over a seven month period as an undercover operator. Her work is considered by many of her peers as absolutely brilliant. Her incredible attention to detail proved to be a vital asset to the investigation. Her sense of recall when preparing her notes after encounters with the targets was nothing less than amazing. Eight persons in the group were charged with a variety of offences, totaling in excess of 100 charges.

Cst. Tammy Macdonald was presented with the Mentoring Award. She was recognized for her dedication to mentoring and helping others in the profession and the community. Her commitment to mentoring others is constant in her day-to-day activities. Outstanding service and professionalism are exhibited by Tammy in the execution of her duties and everything she is involved in. She is a role model to many of her peers and is a shining example of what every mentor should be.

The Leadership Award went to Cpl. Annie Neilson of RCMP "J" Division (Bathurst). Annie was the third member at the scene of a fatal collision which involved a school van and a tractor trailer. There were eight persons fatally injured and three others seriously injured. Throughout the investigation, Annie's actions were extremely methodical, compassionate and efficient. Attracting international media, with the crash claiming seven members of a local high school basketball team and the coach's wife, all of Cpl Neilson's expertise both as an investigator and a leader were put to the test.

The Team Endeavour Award was presented to the Scarlet Soiree Organizing Committee. Cst. June Chiasson and the 23 members of this committee brought together women of all ages and social classes in a gala event with formal dress, great food, great auctioneering and a great reason to be there; charity. The evening auctioned off purses that were donated by celebrities and businesses that were filled with items. In 2007, with the overwhelming support, the Silent Witness program received \$13,000 and in 2008, Homebridge Youth Society: Youth at Risk received \$19,000.

The conference was an overwhelming success, with excellent training, a unique forum for networking, and a look into our future in law enforcement to "Aspire, Educate and Succeed"!

Thanks to Erin and Roberta and the Cape Breton Regional Police for hosting a great conference!