



2021 IODE Ontario Police Community Relations Award



Living in Ontario, one cannot but notice the black and white vehicles with the familiar OPP logo. The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is present in more than 375 municipalities whether patrolling any of the more than 128,000 roads or on lakes in cottage country. In the course of their duties, officers speak to students and community members on safety, security, drug prevention, homelessness and many other subjects. When we think of the women and men of our Provincial Police Service, we think of those we see in uniforms on a daily basis, but the Constables and Officers are much more than law enforcers.

The IODE Ontario Police Community Relations Award was established in 1979 to recognize the outstanding service and efforts of members of the OPP in communities across Ontario, outside the scope of their normal duties. This year, IODE Ontario chose to acknowledge the good works of all OPP members for their dedication to communities across our province during the COVID-19 pandemic. Community relations have been strengthened through the volunteer actions of all ranks of the OPP.

When the police uniform comes off at the end of a shift, members carry on serving their communities as coaches or volunteer instructors, raising funds and mobilizing support for community programs, leading service groups and volunteering as board members. Below are but a few examples of the many interesting commitments undertaken by members of the OPP during COVID-19.

- A program involving high school youth development was implemented where the OPP and students work together to develop instructional guides to educate their peers on the dangers of texting while driving and how to deal with mental health issues. This is an ongoing project and has attracted the attention of "Teens-Learn-to-Drive" Inc., a North American non-profit organization dedicated to preventing death and injuries of teens and young adults through fun, interactive educational events.
- The OPP created the RUN ON for Nova Scotia, a virtual five-kilometre run held to honour the memory of RCMP Constable Heidi Stevenson. Over 2,000 participants were anticipated from every province and territory with each participant, running, walking or riding five kilometres and completing 23 push-ups (1 for each of her years of service). General Headquarters, Central Region and West Region Headquarters OPP members participated with proceeds from the sale of T-shirts donated to the Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Ribbon Society for scholarships, bursaries, monuments, memorials and supports for grieving families of fallen officers.
- A young pre-teen girl having faced five cancer treatments asked for 100 birthday cards to celebrate her birthday. Through the efforts of an OPP member using social media to reach out to community, the young 12-year-old received not only several

thousand cards and gifts from Ontario and around the world, but a pickup truck filled with gifts. The smile from the birthday girl was thanks enough for the proud OPP member.

- A total of 358 OPP registrants from 76 OPP detachments and bureaus participated by running, jogging or walking to raise more than \$40,000 during last year's '**Carrying the Torch**' event. Through the '**Draft an Athlete**' program, the OPP collectively drafted 103 athletes to help fund Special Olympics Ontario training programs.
- Through the efforts of one dedicated member, the OPP created the Dave Mounsey Memorial Fund designed to memorialize fallen Police, Correction officers, Firefighters and Paramedics. The fund has raised monies through innovative events from motorcycle rides to golf tournaments to a "*Dancing with the Stars of 911*". The "**Break the Silence**" program funds the donation of defibrillators to public-accessible buildings in the name of a First Responder who died by suicide from Operational Stress Injury.

The IODE Police Community Relations Award consists of a plaque, a certificate and a monetary gift to the charity of the recipient's choice. This year, Wounded Warriors will administer the award money on behalf of the OPP. The money will be earmarked for the OPP Memorial. The OPP Memorial consists of an outdoor gazebo and an indoor wall bearing memorial name plaques of OPP members who have died by suicide. The Memorial will provide a place of reflection for colleagues and surviving family members as a reminder of the importance of personal health and well-being.

IODE Ontario congratulates all members of the Ontario Provincial Police for their exemplary service during the COVID-19 pandemic.