

RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

SERVING THE POLICE COMMUNITY SINCE 1939

GAZETTE

**2017 MARCOM
PLATINUM
AWARD WINNER**



VOL. 80, NO. 1, 2018

SIMPLY GREAT POLICE WORK

STORIES FROM
THE FRONT LINE

SEEKING ASYLUM
STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN
SECURITY AND HUMANITY P. 7

LOST AND FOUND
PATIENCE KEY WHEN SEARCHING
FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM P. 15

HOME SWEET HOME
PROGRAM HELPS SENIORS FEEL
SAFE AFTER A BREAK-IN P. 20

RCMP - GRC . GC . CA



Royal Canadian
Mounted Police

Gendarmerie royale
du Canada

Canada

RCMP



ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

A UNIFORM WITH
YOUR NAME ON IT
IS WAITING FOR YOU

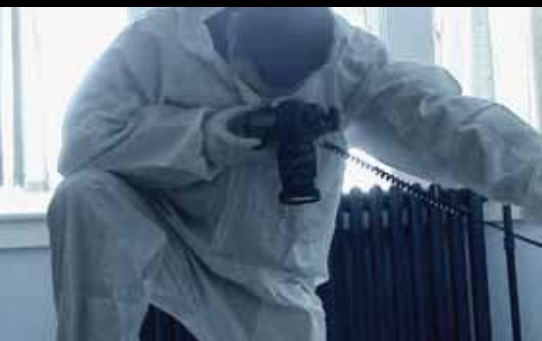


OVER 150 CAREER SPECIALIZATIONS

With a vast range of career specializations and opportunities for growth and training, the RCMP offers a career like no other.



rcmpcareers.ca



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada



7

COVER SECTION

- 7 Influx of asylum seekers requires nimble response
- 10 Officers reach out to Muslim community
- 11 RCMP investigator stops prolific graffiti vandals
- 12 Panel Discussion: What qualities lead to great police work?
- 15 Patience key when searching for people with autism
- 16 Submissions from the field
- 18 Quick actions, teamwork save woman from drowning
- 19 Alertness leads to rescue of stranded American boaters
- 20 Q&A: Auxiliary helps victims of property crime feel safe again

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Editorial message
- 5 News Notes
- 21 Just the Facts: Impaired driving
- 22 Fitness strategy encourages employees to get moving
- 23 Best practice: 529 Garage protects bikes from theft
- 24 Emerging Trends: Restorative justice expands in Nova Scotia
- 25 Ask an Expert: Diffusing critical incidents as a crisis negotiator
- 26 On the Leading Edge: B.C. study looks at who hitchhikes and why
- 28 Last Page: Indigenous summer camp helps guide youth



16



18



26



ON THE COVER:

As migrants streamed across the border into Canada last summer, police struck a delicate balance between enforcing the laws and supporting those seeking asylum.
Photo: Pascal Milette, RCMP



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Pascal Milette, RCMP



When we asked RCMP employees to send us examples of great police work for this issue, we weren't sure what we'd receive. But much like the variety of police work itself, our cover section is filled with an incredible diversity of stories about employees across the country who are working hard to make a difference in their communities.

For our cover, Deidre Seiden spoke to RCMP officers in Quebec who were on the front line of a mass influx of migrants seeking asylum along the Canada–U.S. border last summer. Aside from adeptly managing the sheer volume of people, read about how officers struck a delicate balance between enforcing the border laws and showing compassion in a difficult situation.

Seiden also looks at the rapid rise of police-reported hate crimes against Muslim Canadians, which has left the community on edge. But in British Columbia, a hate crime unit is reaching out to the community, attending mosques and Muslim prayer centres to let them know that police can help.

Our Q&A also features an employee who makes people in his community feel safe. Auxiliary Michael Dally in Oceanside, B.C., works with seniors who are victims of a break and enter. He helps them secure their homes and give them back their confidence.

Catching a prolific offender of property crime can save hours of police work — and victimization — down the road. In the case of graffiti vandalism, it can prevent tens of thousands of dollars in clean-up. Amelia Thatcher spoke to a constable in Moncton whose persistence paid off not only in identifying a prolific tagger, but getting the

evidence needed to get 64 counts of charges against him.

Patience and understanding are key factors when looking for a child or a person who's gone missing, especially when that person has autism. Two cases in New Brunswick demonstrate the extra care and attention that police used to successfully find and put at ease two young people on the autism spectrum when they went missing in dense, isolated bush.

Thatcher also describes in exciting detail two rescue missions on water. In the first, RCMP officers in Alberta reacted quickly as a team to save the life of a woman who was drowning. In our second story, officers patrolling the waters between Ontario and Minnesota saved two fishermen who had been stranded on a remote island.

We also share three submissions from employees who wanted to shed light on the great work of their colleagues. These stories show outstanding teamwork, tenacity and compassion.

Qualities like these are the focus of our panel discussion. We asked RCMP employees in a wide range of fields to identify the personal qualities that they think most lead to outstanding results.

Finally, during our research for this issue, we heard from employees who wanted only to shine the spotlight on others. One constable said his work paled in comparison to his colleague's more difficult, more courageous life-saving efforts. But as I explained to him, it's all great work. We think you'll agree. ■

— Katherine Aldred

GAZETTE

PUBLISHER: Kevin Fowler

EDITOR: Katherine Aldred

WRITERS: Deidre Seiden, Amelia Thatcher

WEB PUBLISHER: Richard Vieira

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Lisa McDonald-Bourg and Jennifer Wale

TRANSLATION: RCMP Translation Services

PRINTING: St. Joseph Communications

The *Gazette* (ISSN 1196-6513) is published in English and French by the National Communication Services of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Ottawa. The views expressed in any material published in the magazine or in its online version are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Cover design and contents are copyrighted and no part of this publication may be reproduced without written consent. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement 40064068. The *Gazette* is published four (4) times a year and is issued free of charge on a limited basis to accredited police forces and agencies within the criminal justice system. Personal subscriptions are not available.

The *Gazette* welcomes contributions, letters, articles and comments in either official language. We reserve the right to edit for length, content and clarity. © 2018 RCMP.

HOW TO REACH US:

RCMP *Gazette*
73 Leikin Drive,
M8 Building, 1st Floor, Room 801
Ottawa, ON K1A 0R2
CANADA

Phone: 613-843-4570
E-mail: gazette@rcmp-grc.gc.ca
Internet: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/gazette

STAY CONNECTED WITH THE RCMP



Visit our website:
www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca



Follow us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/rcmpgrc



Follow us on Twitter:
[@rcmpgrcpolice](https://twitter.com/rcmpgrcpolice) #rcmpgazette



Watch us on YouTube:
www.youtube.com/rcmpgrcpolice



DISTRACTED DRIVERS GET SECOND CHANCE

By Deidre Seiden

Sgt. Darrin Turnbull catches drivers using cellphones daily. While the \$287 ticket and three demerit points are meant to act as a deterrent, he says it's not always the case.

"I'm a traffic guy," says Turnbull, from RCMP Traffic Services in Alberta. "I've written thousands of tickets and I will write thousands more. But enforcement isn't always enough."

In Alberta, drivers ticketed for distracted driving have three options: pay the fine, dispute the ticket or go to court.

But now, Turnbull has created a fourth option for distracted drivers called Option Four.

Aimed at young drivers in the Calgary area, Option Four gives them a chance to attend a one-day seminar.

"The course is a wake-up call," says Turnbull. "Young people think they're invincible. This is a way to reach out to the youth so they come to their own realization how dangerous picking up the phone actually is."

Participants learn about the law in Alberta and how police can spot distracted drivers. They also get to see for themselves



the effects of distracted driving by taking a go-kart around a track while taking a selfie and sending it to a friend.

And they meet the Battles.

The Battles' lives were forever changed the day their daughter Melody drove her car into the back of a highway grader. She was texting her boss that she was going to be late.

Melody, now 22 years old, suffered a traumatic brain injury and is blind in her right eye. She had to re-learn to walk and talk. "With her injury, she can't cry, she doesn't

feel anger, she can't dream," says Melody's father, Stephen Battle. "She's a completely different person post-accident. One by one, her friends disappeared."

Melody and her parents often leave people in tears. Since partnering with the RCMP, they've started BADD, Battle Against Distracted Driving.

"Option Four gives distracted drivers a second chance," says Stephen Battle. "I share our family's story and tell them, 'You're alive right now. Stay that way.'"

UKRAINIAN POLICE TALK TRAINING WITH RCMP

By Amelia Thatcher

Top police officials from Ukraine visited Depot, the RCMP's national training centre in Regina, Sask., to learn how the RCMP trains its police this past September.

The weeklong trip was part of a Canadian government-supported program called the Police Training Assistance Project (PTAP), which is helping Ukraine advance its police services and develop a training academy for new recruits and current officers.

"We're drawing on the experience and skills of RCMP officers to develop a new training approach that responds to local dynamics," says Tom Monastyrski, director of the PTAP, which is run by Agriteam Canada, an international development company. "We want to enable the Ukrainian police with new capacities, equipment and facilities

so they can be sustainable long-term."

The PTAP falls under Canada's \$8.1 million, three-year police mission to Ukraine, supporting the reform of their police service. Following unrest surrounding the Maidan revolution in 2014, the Ukrainian government fired more than 10,000 of its police officers, opting to recruit new, young officers for the National Police of Ukraine (NPU).

Twenty Canadian police officers from the RCMP, Ontario Provincial Police and Toronto Police Service have been on the ground helping with this transition since 2016. They're training in-service officers while also working closely with Agriteam Canada to build a curriculum and training framework for a new police academy.

RCMP C/Supt. Bruce Kirkpatrick, commander of the Canadian police troop in

Ukraine, says the visit to Depot provided the Ukrainian delegation with a rare first-hand glimpse at how the RCMP trains its officers.

"For us, there's a big focus on practical application of police theory," says Kirkpatrick. "We try to get away from strict academics to a model that incorporates different learning techniques with scenario-based training, the use of simulators and an updated curriculum."

Kirkpatrick and Monastyrski are working with the NPU to adopt some of the RCMP's best practices, including improved investigational techniques, gender-based awareness training, officer safety tactics and community policing models.

"We're shifting the learning culture and introducing innovative ideas — we're talking about institutional change," says Monastyrski.



DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM GETS REAL

By Deidre Seiden

As Carter Huber, 20, walked the streets of East Hastings in Vancouver's notorious Downtown Eastside, his eyes were wide open.

He's one of four hockey players from the Oilers Junior A hockey team from Okotoks, Alta., who spent two days in the city this past summer as part of Project Keep Straight.

"A lot of the things that we saw, heard and smelled were things that I'd never experienced before," says Huber. "It was a real eye-opener for me about what can actually happen if you make some bad decisions."

Project Keep Straight is a peer-to-peer drug-awareness program for youth created by the non-profit organization Odd Squad Productions, which is run by active and retired police officers from Vancouver.

The players were brought to Vancouver by two members of the Okotoks RCMP Crime Reduction Unit, Cst. Jeffrey Girard and Cpl. Darryl Dawkins. While there, they got a crash course on drugs and gangs unlike anything they'd heard before.

"The message was very real and very blunt," says Girard. "After that, we literally walked the streets of East Hastings, where they saw what they just learned, stepping over used needles and even witnessing people inject controlled substances."



Players from the Junior A Hockey Team in Okotoks, Alta., spent two days in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside witnessing the harsh reality of drug addiction as part of Project Keep Straight.

Courtesy of Project Keep Straight

Escorted by police, they spoke with those they met along the way who were more than willing to share their stories about how they ended up addicted to drugs and living on the streets.

"Everyone had their own unique story," says Huber. "To think it can't happen to you is just not true. When you're making those decisions at a young age, whether it's to try alcohol or marijuana, those small decisions can lead to some pretty big consequences."

Through previous Keep Straight initiatives, hockey players and police have

brought what they've learned to local schools with excellent results. "Kids hang on every word because they look up to the players," says Girard.

Now, back at home, Huber and his peers along with Girard and Dawkins, are sharing that message in the hope of keeping kids off drugs.

"I believe this experience and sharing this experience with peers is the most effective teaching method there is when it comes to educating youth about the effects of drugs," says Dawkins. ■

LIFEJACKET LOAN PROMOTES WATER SAFETY

By Amelia Thatcher

A loan-and-return station with 100 lifejackets is helping residents in Old Crow, Yukon, stay safe on the water. The life preservers are free for anyone to borrow, and come in a variety of sizes to fit children, youth and adults.

"You take a lifejacket when you go and when you come home, you put it back for the next person to use," explains Tracy Rispin, manager of the Old Crow Co-Op store who helped create the station.

She proposed the idea to local RCMP and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Government following a trip to Fort Yukon, Alaska — another Gwitchin First Nation community — where she saw a similar life-

jacket loan station.

"I thought, 'that's so convenient because not everybody can afford a good lifejacket,'" says Rispin.

Earlier this year, two residents from Fort Yukon died in a boating accident. The lone survivor was the only one wearing a lifejacket.

"It really opens your eyes to what can happen," says Rispin. "I wanted to work together for the safety of our people and our children. This could save lives."

Old Crow is a remote fly-in First Nations community with a population less than 300, making affordable access to amenities like lifejackets difficult. After Rispin proposed the idea, the Vuntut Gwitchin Government agreed

to purchase 50 lifejackets for the station, and Canadian Tire matched their contribution, donating an additional 50 jackets.

"The river is so important to the community" says Cpl. Yvon Largess, detachment commander of Old Crow RCMP who partnered with Rispin on the project. "This is just one more way we can promote water safety."

The loan-and-return station was erected at the town's boat launch on the Porcupine River in September. Largess says since the station was built, he's noticed many residents taking advantage of the lifejackets.

"It's for safety on the water when people go on hunting or fishing trips, or out for picnics," says Largess. "It's there so nobody will be stuck without a lifejacket in Old Crow." ■



An RCMP officer awaits asylum seekers as they illegally cross the border into Canada near Lacolle, Quebec.

IN SEARCH OF A BETTER LIFE

STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN SECURITY AND COMPASSION

By Deidre Seiden

It was a long night at the RCMP detachment-turned-processing centre in Lacolle, Quebec. Asylum seekers were doing their best to get comfortable, huddled up with blankets, to get some sleep.

The sound of a crying child drew RCMP Cpl. Caroline Letang out of her office.

"The child was scared, her mother said. She was just shivering and crying," says Letang. "I thought, 'Well, that's enough of that.'"

She brought the mother, her three children and crying infant and their blankets to an empty room. She gave them juice boxes, made sure they were comfortable and turned off the lights.

The family was one of many that had illegally crossed the border from the United States to Canada. Upon arrival, they, like the others, were taken into custody for the offence.

"I couldn't leave them like that," says

Letang. "It was one of those moments when you had to do something. And at that moment, I had a spare room."

The family slept in the room the entire night. And in the morning, Letang says she received the only thanks she would ever hope for. "I saw a smile."

UNPRECEDENTED NUMBERS

Letang is a supervisor with the RCMP's Champlain Integrated Border Enforcement Team (IBET). The RCMP is responsible for securing Canada's border in between ports of entry, protecting the country from threats to national security and illicit organized crime activity.

In Quebec, four IBETs cover 810 kilometres of the border between Canada and the United States. Champlain IBET is responsible for 168 kilometres.

In 2015, the number of people illegally crossing the border northbound was mini-

mal, maybe a few per week, says Insp. Martin Roach, the officer in charge of the West District IBET in Quebec, which is comprised of three IBETs including Champlain.

But month by month, beginning in August 2016, that number started to rise.

By August 2017, a year after the influx began, an average of 150 migrants were crossing the border each day, with more than 400 on some days.

While the IBET's mandate remains the same, the influx of migrants has meant it's been far from business as usual.

"We operate 24-7, but throughout the border doing patrols," says Roach. "Normally we wouldn't be 24-7 in one particular area, but because everyone was coming through one area, we had to establish a stronger presence there."

The team needed a space to process incoming migrants close to the site. At first, they were given extra office space from their



partners at Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Then they set up their own satellite office to be able to efficiently process the steady stream of asylum seekers.

With entire families being picked up by the RCMP, IBET members quickly realized they had to go out and buy car seats to transport children safely.

"The situation continued to evolve," says Roach. "Then police vehicles were no longer enough. We had to get buses to transport the migrants coming in."

Since migrants would be in RCMP custody for up to 24 hours to verify their identification, they needed food and supplies on hand, which was the responsibility of the RCMP.

"Now if you're hundreds of people, that's meals, that's diapers, baby food, all of that. Our members had to think of all of this," says S/Sgt. Brian Byrne, Champlain IBET.

ENTRY POINT

Migrants learned about Roxham Road in Lacolle, a small town south of Montreal, through a mix of traditional and social

media. It became the hotspot for migrants illegally crossing the border into Canada in search of a better life.

Letang's been on the front line in Lacolle since the influx began.

"You can see how desperate some of them were," says Letang. "It doesn't take much for the human in us to come out. It's not just a police officer talking anymore."

As migrants were preparing to illegally cross the border into Canada, the RCMP could see them coming.

"Before they cross, we try our best to encourage them to go to a port of entry," says Letang. "That's our job — to prevent crime. But as soon as they step on our side, the process starts. They're arrested."

It's the reality of the situation, says Letang. Although RCMP officers are aware that the migrants are fleeing, often from life-threatening situations in their country of origin, it's illegal to cross the border anywhere but a port of entry.

Yet those seeking asylum in Canada are willing to risk arrest. They've learned it's a way to bypass the Safe Third Country Agreement between Canada and the United

States. In this agreement, asylum seekers are required to claim refugee protection under the first safe country they enter. In this case, that's the United States.

However, the agreement only applies at legal ports of entry, which gives those who cross elsewhere — illegally — a chance to make a refugee claim.

Police officers quickly realized they had to adapt to the changing situation. It wasn't the typical criminal who was crossing the border — entire families were crossing. Even women in late stages of pregnancy with a child on their hip were arriving.

"There's a really human way of handling the situation," says Letang. "You search them for your own safety, but you can't handcuff them. It could cause emotional damage to a young child. You have to use your own judgement and do what you're comfortable with."

But that compassion must be balanced with protecting national security.

"We still have to be vigilant," says Byrne. "You can't say someone is just another migrant. All kinds of offences occur around the border and we have to



Asylum seekers come to Canada with little more than the clothes on their backs and whatever they can carry in search of a better life.

Pascal Millette, RCMP



The RCMP is responsible for verifying the identification of each asylum seeker who illegally enters Canada to ensure there isn't a security risk to the country.

investigate each person.”

After the arrest, a member of the RCMP will search the migrant and their belongings for safety purposes. They're then brought to the RCMP office where their identification is verified and they're interviewed.

“If we're satisfied that all elements have been covered, and there are no national security issues, then they'll be transferred over to CBSA where the immigration process begins,” says Roach.

A UNITED FRONT

From the start of the influx, the RCMP worked closely with CBSA, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada as well as its American partners, including Homeland Security, the United States Coast Guard, United States Border Patrol and United States Customs and Border Protection.

Roach says all government operation centres were activated throughout the situation.

Having established relationships with each of the partners allowed for timely exchange of information, communication and co-ordination of resources.

Steven Gaitan, the Chief of Operations at CBSA's refugee processing centre in Lacolle, says that ongoing communication has been key to the success of handling the needs of migrants.

“Our relationship with the RCMP is

extremely important,” says Gaitan. “They really understand what our reality is and I know what their reality is. We work together to be as efficient as possible.”

This includes sharing office space and supplies, like food and shelter, as well as transporting migrants.

It was through experience that the RCMP learned what it needed. And those needs changed, sometimes from week to week, whether it was supplies or the number of officers on the ground.

In March, after a beloved IBET member, Cst. Richer Dubuc, died in a car accident while on duty, they knew they needed to relieve the IBET members. In addition to grieving the loss of their co-worker, they had been working long shifts to keep up with the files.

According to Roach, the members had a hard time stepping back.

“Our members didn't like that too much,” says Roach with a smile. “They're dedicated and had become attached to Roxham.”

Internally, they created a team in charge of logistics, a team in charge of scheduling and a team in charge of operations to handle the evolving situation.

“Every day, I meet with the senior officers here to review what happened today, what we can do differently and what we had to adapt to every day,” says Roach.

ONGOING EFFORTS

While the numbers aren't as high as they were at their peak, they're still well above average.

“We have no idea what tomorrow will bring,” says Gaitan. “Technically, we're lucky because they all show up at Roxham Road. If they would come in all over the border, the RCMP would be running all over.”

Every day, RCMP officers continue to work along the border, speaking with refugees, carrying small children and helping people with their luggage.

“That was what we saw every day here — our members, giving kids high fives and trying to make people as safe and comfortable as possible,” says Letang. “We've never had to say to our members, ‘show compassion.’ Every member I work with was showing compassion automatically.”

Roach couldn't be prouder for how Letang, Byrne and all the members on the front line have stepped up over the past year. He says that pride extends to the RCMP officers from other provinces who deployed to Quebec to help with the effort.

“These are people coming to Canada for a better life,” says Roach. “We have shown them the professional image of the Mountie and are welcoming, while still carrying out our mandate. Our members have done a tremendous job doing that — they've taken the human approach.” ■



POSITIVE PRESENCE

OFFICERS REACH OUT TO MUSLIM COMMUNITY

By Deidre Seiden

Side by side, two police officers stand at the front of a mosque addressing the crowd on a Friday night during the holy month of Ramadan.

The police officers, RCMP Cpl. Anthony Statham and New Westminster Police Department Det.-Cst. Gareth Blount, are members of the British Columbia (B.C.) Hate Crime Team. Their message is simple. “We want you to know we’re here for you from a policing standpoint,” says Statham. “We want you to report these incidents so we can track them and investigate them.”

According to a recent Statistics Canada report, while police-reported hate crimes decreased in Canada from 2013 to 2015, hate crimes against Muslim Canadians more than tripled during the same period, going from 45 to 159.

Statham believes there are even more incidents that have gone unreported.

This crime trend prompted the team to launch an initiative to attend mosques and Muslim prayer centres across B.C. and let the community know that police can help.

“They need outreach from the police and they’re coming from places where police aren’t necessarily trusted,” says Statham. “It’s our obligation to make an effort to get out and have contact with the community to tell them about hate crimes, the police and to be that positive presence.”

A COMPLICATED CRIME

The Hate Crime Team is the only one of its kind within the RCMP.

The two full-time police officers on the team investigate hate crimes as well as assist police officers in B.C. and across the country on cases where it’s believed hate, prejudice or bias is a motivating factor in a criminal incident.

“Hate crime is not an area that’s very well known,” says Blount. “I think there’s no such thing as a typical hate crime because of the complex effect they have on both the individual and the community.”

In Canada, there are criminal incidents that may be motivated by hate. In these cases, people are charged with a specific crime, like



The B.C. Hate Crime Team has been speaking at mosques and prayer centres across the province about the importance of reporting these crimes.

assault or uttering threats. However, Crown Counsel can ask to have a hate crime designation applied to the case, which can result in a stiffer sentence.

Then there are the separate sections in the *Criminal Code of Canada* that are deemed hate crimes in their own right: hate propaganda, public incitement of hatred and mischief relating to religious property.

“We’re seeing hate propaganda a lot online now,” says Blount. “This typically involves putting forth views that vilify an identifiable group or individuals from a group based on their religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or other unique factors.”

But in addition to investigating hate crimes, the team is focused on outreach.

Since the team first started this initiative during Ramadan in 2017 (May 27 to June 25), they’ve already spoken to more than 2,500 people across the province. Speaking engagements have often been delivered in conjunction with Metro Vancouver Transit Police, a key partner in hate crime awareness.

In order to reach the community, police have partnered with Islam Unravelling — an educational project that presents a positive and accurate image of Islamic beliefs — to help connect them with mosques

and prayers centres.

Building relationships with the Muslim community is key to increase reporting since members of the community tend to be wary of police, says Tariq Tyab, from Islam Unravelling.

“Often in the Muslim community, people are reluctant to engage police in their home countries because it could cause them more problems than it could solve,” says Tyab.

He says the outreach initiative is changing people’s perception of police in Canada.

“People are paying attention because they’re worried about their families,” says Tyab. “They’re being put at ease by meeting the police and realize they need to report a hate crime, even something they feel is small, and can do so without fear.”

There are always a number of people who approach Blount and Statham after the presentation to chat, share their experience, shake their hands and thank them.

“There really is no substitute for getting out and talking to people,” says Blount. “We have the opportunity to do that — talk to people face to face — and deliver a positive message: together we can make a difference.” ■

Tariq Tyab, Islam Unravelling

MAKING A MARK ON GRAFFITI

OFFICER STOPS PROLIFIC MONCTON VANDALS

By Amelia Thatcher

In summer 2014, a surge in graffiti vandalism left downtown Moncton spattered with tags. The spray-painted letters coated underpasses, bus shelters, buildings and fences, defacing private and public property.

"I was noticing graffiti in busy areas, 30 to 40 tags a night from one end of the street to another, and I just thought, 'How are people doing this and we aren't catching them?'" says Cst. Chris Fader, a patrol officer at the Codiac Regional RCMP detachment in Moncton, N.B.

When he noticed that the same few tags — monikers or nicknames written in a unique style — were appearing night after night, he made it his mission to track down and find the vandals.

Since first becoming interested in graffiti crimes in 2012, Fader has turned into Moncton's go-to graffiti guy. He works closely with the city to meticulously document each instance of graffiti, adding the cases to his self-created database. For each file, he adds photos and follows up with complainants.

That's one thing his mentor, Halifax Regional Police officer Cst. Gerry Murney, drilled into him about solving graffiti cases: "Record everything. Report, record, remove."

Murney is part of Halifax police's community response team, and handles most of the city's graffiti cases. He says proactive policing is vital for these types of crimes.

"Many residents don't realize how important reporting can be," he says. "Police need to get out there and talk to business associations, property owners, community groups — just get out there and educate them."

Following Murney's advice, Fader has fostered relationships with Downtown Moncton Centreville, the local business improvement association. They spend anywhere from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year on removing graffiti from public spaces downtown.

"It's a big priority, we don't want our downtown to start feeling derelict or uninviting," says Anne Poirier-Basque, director of Downtown Moncton Centreville.

FOLLOW THE PAINT

After becoming frustrated with the amount of graffiti on the streets of Moncton, Fader noticed two tags in particular were repeated the most: "Nax" and "Four."

"Writers stick around where they live, where they work and where they play," says Fader.

With this knowledge in hand, he was able to see a pattern in the tags. They followed a trail from Moncton to a town across the river called Riverview, where the suspects likely lived. Through surveillance footage at one of the graffiti sites, Fader was able to tell that the vandals were young adults.

Being a school liaison officer for the Codiac detachment, Fader approached the schools in Riverview. Through the surveillance footage, they made a tentative identification of "Four" and "Nax." They told Fader that if "Nax" was who they thought, he was now attending Sheridan College in Oakville. But that information wasn't enough to make an arrest. So Fader kept investigating and building evidence.

BUILDING A CASE

With 15 minutes to spare at the end of a shift, Fader sat down at his desk and did an internet search for "Oakville graffiti." Within a few minutes he spotted a match. In a photo on a local blog, Fader noticed the unmistakable "Nax" tag written on an Oakville bus shelter. It was the same tag that was splattered all over Moncton.

"Once I had that last piece of the puzzle, I decided to dedicate my time to deal with all the prolific writers," he says.

Fader was able to arrest "Nax" and tracked down "Four" after he was able to match his shoe prints to the scene of a huge tag on an underpass. Through police interviews, "Four" admitted to his involvement and identified three other writers in the local graffiti subculture.

"Four" was charged for 64 counts of mischief. He subsequently pled guilty and was placed on probation, ordered to perform community service and pay restitution. "Nax" and the other writers faced similar charges.

Fader encourages other officers to take the time to work on graffiti cases in their communities.

"These are solvable crimes," he says. "I've successfully prosecuted graffiti writers without ever seeing them do a tag. It can be done, you just have to put the work in." ■



RCMP Cst. Chris Fader says graffiti disrupts the trust residents have in communities and can make people feel unsafe.

Cst. Chris Fader, RCMP

COVER

SIMPLY GREAT POLICE WORK



Personal qualities such as teamwork and good communication are strong predictors of outstanding police work.

WHAT QUALITIES LEAD TO GREAT POLICE WORK?

THE PANELLISTS

- Cpl. Jon Tamlin, Depot facilitator, Simulator Training Unit, Regina, Sask.
- Cpl. Andy Wetzstein, proactive recruiter supervisor, K Division Recruiting, Alberta
- Cpl. Adam Von Niessen, operations supervisor, Hudson Bay/Porcupine Plain detachment, Saskatchewan
- Supt. René Bernard, RCMP officer in charge Relocation Policy Centre, Corporate Management and Controllershship, Ottawa, Ont.

Great police work can mean different things to different people. Bravery, heroism and selflessness usually come to mind. But in reality, some of the more everyday qualities — such as attention to detail and persistence — get the job done, and done well. We asked RCMP employees in a wide range of fields to identify what qualities they associate with outstanding results.

CPL. JON TAMLIN

I have to step back from this question in my current role as a Depot (RCMP training academy) facilitator and think about what building blocks now will someday lead to this cadet doing great police work. Great

police work will be demonstrated to the cadet through a variety of sources over the next months and years. The quality I want to most emphasize and demonstrate to the cadet is this: be honest. It will serve you throughout your career and you will build your reputation on this quality.

Honesty isn't just about not stealing exhibits or batteries from the storeroom. How about a next-of-kin (NOK) notification? I need to think about how I'm going to be honest if the family asks for details. These are the questions that cadets ask, and they are hard questions to answer. So the idea of honesty is much easier than the practice of actually being honest.

Being a member of the RCMP, and being honest, is not as easy as it sounds. Right now the RCMP is emphasizing a workplace that is free of harassment. This training begins at Depot, where cadets are expected to both demonstrate this behaviour and to verbally identify when they feel that they have been subjected to harassing behaviour by others. The latter is difficult. It requires one person to honestly and professionally address another person about their behaviour.

Being honest becomes much more challenging when I have to initiate a conversation with another person about behaviour that concerns me. Would this be easier if I were confident that the person I was talking



to would, in turn, be honest with me and my concerns? Am I being honest if, when I am asked “what is bothering you?” I reply “nothing”?

Another initiative by the RCMP is the R2MR (Road to Mental Readiness). What does honesty look like in this context? As a facilitator at Depot, how can I honestly engage with the cadets about their mental health and their future mental health, and talk about my own experiences in this context? Is my relationship with cadets that much different than a supervisor on detachment or the manager of a unit? I’m uncomfortable writing about this as I am sure many are uncomfortable reading about this topic. This topic to me is harder than the NOK or harassment topics because it requires that I be first honest with myself. I thought being honest with others was uncomfortable, and then I had to tackle this!

Will honesty promote great police work?

I think it will. I believe that approaching the difficult issues and conversations honestly inside “our house” can only benefit the police work being done out in the field. Our clients deserve our honesty, our sisters and brothers deserve the same. Be good to each other, be honest with each other and be careful out there.

CPL. ANDY WETZSTEIN

My team and I are in constant communication with the public outlining the RCMP’s desirable qualities sought for prospective police officers. It’s one of the most important duties that we perform as proactive recruiters with the RCMP. Clearly outlining the RCMP’s desired values and personal qualities to applicants helps to ensure that we are seeking out and providing Depot (the RCMP training academy) with Canada’s finest.

So what are these values and personal qualities? Successful applicants embody and score highly in the RCMP’s six core values: honesty, integrity, professionalism, compassion, accountability and respect. Successful applicants and eventual regular members (police officers) tend to demonstrate these values naturally and without compromise.

I often tell applicants that perfect people don’t exist. In life and in policing, people make mistakes while they experience

life’s ups and downs. We want people who can take ownership of those mistakes and, more importantly, learn and develop from those mistakes to improve, both personally and professionally. As an applicant or cadet, holding true to these core values during times of stress is often a solid indicator that they will carry this forward in their career as an officer to perform great police work.

In addition to solid core values, I have found that motivation is an important personal quality to successful performance and outcomes. Highly motivated applicants and cadets tend to perform well as police officers. There will be times in the field where call volume is high and our officers need to stay motivated in order to do their best. But we also need them to stay highly motivated when the call volume is low. Remaining proactive and self-generating during low call-volume periods due to personal intrinsic motivation often leads to outstanding police work.

“I often tell applicants that perfect people don’t exist. In life and in policing, people make mistakes. We want people who can learn and develop from those mistakes to improve.”

Our applicants and future members need to be strong individual performers without question. However, we also need them to be strong team players because in policing, people’s lives are at risk. Failing to work together effectively can have dire consequences. From day one of training, it’s about we, not me. Using one another’s strengths to help make up for individual weaknesses when accomplishing a goal is a wonderful thing. Therefore, teamwork is an imperative quality to successful police work.

Leadership and maturity are two other qualities that should garner honourable mentions because our members are executing their duties in a public domain. Leading by example in a mature manner both on and off duty often leads to successful police outcomes. For the RCMP, our best members are stewards within their communities. As a result of those solid foundational relationships within the community, they tend to have a positive impact on crime reduction and clearance rates.

But in my opinion, the most important

quality our applicants and future members need to perform solid police work is what recruiting units call “diverse life experience.” Everyone’s individual portfolio is different based on their familial background, employment, education, volunteer work, travel experience and so on. We want our applicants to expand their life experience as much as possible. Not only will diverse life experience help members relate to and understand our clients, but they’ll hopefully be more capable of managing and understanding how to deal with the unpredictable and demanding police work environment.

CPL. ADAM VON NIESSEN

My experience in field coaching has been entirely in the northwest region. I’ve had the opportunity to coach numerous new members (police officers) both to successful completion of the field coaching program

or to be let go from the RCMP. Further to this, I’ve been instructing the field coaching course for approximately eight years.

In my opinion, starting your policing career on the right foot is critical to the ultimate success of the individual and the RCMP as a whole. The differing and dynamic environments faced by new members across the country create a challenge. These challenges must be met with enthusiasm and an open mind by the new member as well as the field coach.

When analyzing what new members must “bring” as opposed to “learn” in their new career, it’s as simple as looking at organizational competencies versus functional competencies.

We can teach you functional competencies, such as how to present testimony in court and how to properly conduct an investigation, as long as you are willing to learn.

But in my experience, the organizational competencies, which are personal characteristics, are ingrained in a person through their personal experience. This speaks to life experience and upbringing. This is HIPCAR: honesty, integrity, professionalism, compassion, accountability and respect.



The two competencies, or personal qualities, that I have found most important in my experience are flexibility and communication. I find these to be the easiest competencies to model as a field coach, while being the most difficult to teach.

I don't need to lecture the membership on the importance of flexibility in the RCMP. The broad range of daily requirements of a general duty member coupled with the diverse environments that we apply to our trade, make it critical for new members to come with the ability to "roll with the punches" and adapt quickly to new and differing situations.

Secondly, I feel that I can't stress enough the importance of communication. In my experience, communication can be the number one item in a new member's tool box. Whether it's verbal de-escalation in an IMIM (Incident Management Intervention Model) situation or ensuring that clients receive and understand the message. There really is no more important skill that an investigator can possess. It can be the difference between success and failure.

It's incumbent upon detachment commanders to choose field coaches who possess and in turn model these qualities on a daily basis to ensure that the new member can succeed in their new career and benefit the organization as a whole.

SUPT. RENÉ BERNARD

Great police work results in protecting life and property. Start by being courageous to try new things even if it looks hard. Learn from your experiences. For example, the first interviews you conduct of suspects will feel awkward and intimidating, but it can be exciting when we ask the right question that causes the suspect to pause and consider how to respond. Getting a confession and solving a crime are successes that lead to great police work.

Be proactive by looking for opportunities when they present themselves. For example, recognizing a burnt tail light or a rolling stop are opportunities to stop a vehicle and potentially stop an impaired driver or other crime. Similarly, take advantage of your Sunday evening shifts because you will find most people are home. This is a great time to find difficult-to-locate witnesses and suspects.

It helps to remember why you chose police work, such as wanting to help people. Success occurs when we are fully engaged while on shift and looking for opportunities to connect with the people we encounter during our investigations. Taken a step further, when you recognize there's a problem, find a way reduce or address this problem. After investigating fatal car crashes, I became more focused on traffic

enforcement to promote road safety.

For senior members, field coaches and supervisors, developing good interpersonal skills will greatly help you lead your team. Connecting with your team and colleagues helps create a collaborative environment. Checking in with our colleagues by asking how they are doing, demonstrates support and care for their well-being.

Don't be afraid of conflict and seek clarity. When someone says something to you or does something odd or negative, it's a normal reaction to assume we did something wrong. This leads to uncomfortable feelings and is frequent when we are supervisors.

When this happens, remember to not take it personally and do not assume anything. Rather, seek clarity by asking this simple question: What do you mean? Conflict between people often results from misunderstandings. Asking "what do you mean" will provide the person an opportunity to restate and clarify what they said.

There are plenty of traffic infractions and crimes to investigate. Each one presents potential opportunities for police officers to investigate and it's our duty to do something about it. Never stop learning, use your skills and develop new ones — and you will likely be doing great police work that you can feel good about. ■



Honesty and compassion have a positive impact when dealing with colleagues and members of the public.

LOST AND FOUND

SEARCHING FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

By Amelia Thatcher

When the RCMP is called to find a missing person, it becomes an all-hands-on-deck situation very quickly. The response is further amplified when that missing person is distraught, suffering from mental health issues, or has a developmental disorder such as autism.

People on the autism spectrum often have a hard time communicating and interacting with other people, requiring a different approach from police. Perseverance, patience and understanding are key for front-line officers responding to these unique, time-sensitive calls.

A FRANTIC SEARCH

In most missing persons cases, the RCMP's Police Dog Services (PDS) are the first to respond.

"It's our specialty to deal with a lot of different people," says Sgt. Michel Litalien, co-ordinator of New Brunswick's PDS. "You get some people who don't want to be found, some who will be crying and some who won't respond to you. But they can't hide from a dog."

Last summer, Litalien and his police dog Tech were called out around 10 p.m. one rainy night to search for a missing 19-year-old non-verbal woman with autism in a rural area near Fredericton, N.B. She had gone out to play on her family's trampoline, but when her parents called for her, she was gone.

The woman's father frantically searched neighbouring properties. By the time Litalien arrived on scene, his police dog had trouble picking up the scent of the missing woman because the father's scent was everywhere. To try to find a lead, he decided to walk through the woods while his dog searched off-leash.

"Finally we picked up her scent on an overgrown trail," says Litalien. "I hooked up my dog to a 20-foot tracking line, almost like a fishing line, and we started tracking."

First they found one of her shoes, then another. They made their way across a beaver dam and finally, just after 1:30 a.m., Litalien spotted her through the trees, clutching a blanket.

"My dog was very excited to find her, he



The RCMP's Police Dog Services are often called out to missing persons cases, especially when it involves a child or adult on the autism spectrum.

kept trying to take her blanket," says Litalien. "It was a challenge, but I had to stay calm so I wouldn't alarm the girl."

Litalien began walking carefully backwards, holding his dog while coaxing the girl back over the slippery beaver dam. Then, he radioed other officers who met them halfway in the woods.

"I just held her hand, that's all I did, and walked back," he says. "To work four to five hours on a call and have it pay off — it's a good feeling. We got her back to her parents safe and sound."

THROUGH THE SWAMP

That same summer a few hours away in Riverview, N.B., Cst. Chris Plomp and police dog handler Cst. Marc-André Alain were called out to a similar case. A non-verbal nine-year-old girl with autism had gone missing.

The girl's family had been gardening on their rural property when she disappeared with her butterfly net. When Plomp and Alain arrived on scene, Alain's police dog, Cash, immediately picked up the scent and led the officers into the forest.

"It was thick bush," says Alain. "Normally people follow trails or animal tracks, but she was breaking through untouched

bush. She didn't stop when most people would have."

They continued, following the police dog as it took them deeper and deeper into the woods. Finally, after walking almost five kilometres, they heard a noise.

"Close to the water, we heard squealing and crying," says Alain. "I started walking through this swamp area with water up to my shoulders. I don't know how she made it through, but she did."

Then, they spotted her standing on a beaver dam. She was soaked from head to toe.

"I knew she was non-verbal so I just said, 'hey, we're here to help you, come towards me,'" says Alain. "She came closer and I was able to grab her, put her over my shoulders and introduce her to my dog."

Plomp radioed other RCMP officers and carried the girl back out of the woods with Alain and his dog. They met up with officers at a maple sugar shack nearby, and got a ride back to the girl's home.

"I talked to her on the way out and kept the tone light, like how I would talk to my own kids," says Plomp. "I didn't want to make her feel bad. You want to make sure all kids keep a positive association with the police." ■

Courtesy of Sgt. Michel Litalien, RCMP

COVER

SIMPLY GREAT POLICE WORK



WINTER WARMTH

OFFICER'S CARE PACKAGES PROVIDE COMFORT FOR HOMELESS

By Sgt. Peter DeVries, North Vancouver detachment, RCMP

The peaks of the North Shore Mountains — giant stone pillars that shield British Columbia's Lower Mainland from the unbound wilderness that lies beyond their slopes — rise like fence posts around an outdoor enthusiast's playground. But each day, when the sun sinks into the Pacific Ocean behind Vancouver Island and the shadows steadily creep over the city, the temperatures in North Vancouver rapidly fall.

Cpl. Randy Wong knows very well how sharp the biting cold can be on the North Shore, particularly for those without the warm comfort of their own home. Over the past few years, while walking the streets of North Vancouver on shift, Wong noticed a marked increase in the homeless population in this otherwise-affluent community. In fact, recent community safety concerns and crime associated with homelessness has compelled the detachment's senior management

to direct resources to address the issue.

In his efforts outside of work to help address this growing problem, Wong goes above and beyond. Each fall for the past three years, he and his partner Sahar have cobbled together a supply of care packages for the men and women who Wong encounters during his shifts. Ziplock bags containing warm mitts, toques, socks, disposable rain ponchos, energy bars and other essential supplies are handed out to those whose lives are spent largely without shelter. The couple has also spearheaded a successful detachment campaign seeking donations from other RCMP members to help buy the supplies.

Wong often heads out on his own time to hand out the kits, sometimes climbing up and down the city's streets even after a long night shift. He and Sahar have donated hundreds of volunteer hours and a good deal of their own money in the hopes of inspiring others in the detachment to donate funds for more supplies. Wong is now also running a

website, called warmingthehomeless, to raise awareness and build momentum.

He also ensures that a good supply of the kits are available for members to take on the road during their shifts. He encourages his colleagues to deliver them to those in need. Consequently the kits do more than just stave off frostbite, hunger and loneliness. "They are helpful in getting officers out of their police cars and engaging with people on their beat," says Wong.

Detachment members often attend the local homeless shelter to learn from outreach workers where some of their clients might be "denned up." They can then check on them to make sure they are faring adequately, or to offer a hot chocolate or two.

"A few weeks ago, we provided one of these packages to a homeless man living on the streets," says Wong. "His name is Al, he hangs out at the bottle depot, and he's in a wheelchair. When he discovered there were socks in the package, he almost cried out of gratitude."

"Another woman from Vancouver's Downtown East Side was trying to get away from her ex-boyfriend who has a court order to stay away from her. She, too, lives on the streets and was overcome with emotion when she realized someone actually cared."

Each year, when the leaves begin to turn and once again the cold comes creeping down the mountainside, Wong sends a message to detachment members. It's a simple, honest message with a compelling clarity of purpose: "Grab a package and put it in your car. Hand out a package to someone who is homeless. Please help us give them a chance to survive the elements this fall and winter season. No matter the reason, they found themselves living outside. The least we can do is provide some comfort and warmth. Find it in your heart to help. Donate what you can afford. Hand out what you can."

Wong's work is inspiring others in the community to contribute as well, and he hopes to capitalize on the interest he's generated to drive his work forward. His work serves as a credit not only to his character and dedication, but also to the detachment and the RCMP as a whole. ■



Cpl. Randy Wong gives out a care package to Lane Johnson, one of many who is living homeless in North Vancouver.

Courtesy Cpl. Randy Wong, RCMP



COMBATTING COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY

TEAM TAKES DOWN FAKE MONEY RING



RCMP

Police seized this bag containing 2,250 sheets each printed with two counterfeit \$20 Canadian bills. More than \$500,000 in phoney bank notes were seized during this single search in 2014.

By Sgt. Marco Roy, RCMP Commercial Crime Section, Montreal, Quebec

From 2014 to 2016, the Integrated Counterfeit Enforcement Team (ICET) in Quebec identified a counterfeiting network that was making and uttering bogus \$100 banknotes from the *Birds of Canada* and *Scenes of Canada* series.

The ring was operating in the Montreal, Laval, Longueuil, Quebec City and Lévis areas, but the bills made it as far as Beauce, Mauricie, Estrie and Montérégie. Circulation of the counterfeit notes hurt small and medium enterprises in the targeted areas, and was also a hard hit to the Canadian economy.

This ICET operation, called Project Coupon, was a joint venture with the Sûreté du Québec, the police services of Terrebonne, Laval, Montreal, Longueuil, Lévis and Quebec City, the U.S. Secret Service, the National Anti-Counterfeiting Bureau (NACB) and the Bank of Canada.

In early 2014, police were seizing a growing number of phoney \$100 bills. Short staffed, ICET was already involved in two major investigations. But the impact on the economy was such that stopping the counterfeiters became a priority.

Despite the team's limited human resources, the counterfeiting ring was taken down thanks to the co-operation and sharing of information between the RCMP, the Bank of Canada and most notably the police services in Quebec. Three individuals were charged with making, possessing and uttering counterfeit money, and four labs were dismantled.

The NACB announced in March 2017 that 9,689 counterfeit banknotes related to the investigation had been passed, representing a face value of nearly \$1 million, and that 4,198 bills had been seized, totaling \$419,800. The grand total was close to \$1.4 million.

According to statistics, only 1,220 counterfeit *Birds of Canada* banknotes were passed in 2016, compared to 9,555 in 2014. From January to May 2016, a total of 1,154 fake *Scenes of Canada* banknotes were passed, compared to a mere 207 during the rest of the year, following the arrests in June 2016.

The Bank of Canada explained that a single counterfeit \$100 bill can affect a day's profits or lead to increased prices that are eventually passed on to the consumer.

The investigation protected one of the very foundations of Canada's economy — its currency — against further loss at the hands of these counterfeiters. Thanks to the hard work and actions of investigators and their partners, this counterfeiting ring was completely dismantled.

It was also an opportunity for the RCMP and Bank of Canada to educate and raise awareness among merchants and the general population about these two series of banknotes, through kiosks, training and door-to-door canvassing.

The outcome of this investigation is a step in the right direction towards combating counterfeiters and protecting banking institutions, the Canadian economy and citizens nationwide. ■

TENACIOUS TEAMWORK

OFFICER AND SERVICE DOG SNAG SUSPECTS

By Cst. Clay Wurzinger, RCMP Police Dog Services, Nanaimo, B.C.

On Sept. 1, 2017, at 3:30 a.m., Nanaimo RCMP received a call from the security unit of a local mill site reporting that they saw two people in the building in the process of stealing copper wire. There had been several previous break-and-enters at this location where the suspects fled on foot and escaped.

Officers from Nanaimo General Duty and Police Dog Services (PDS) responded. The officers went inside while members of the PDS waited nearby in the shadows, but no suspects emerged.

After waiting for a long time and making repeated calls alerting the intruders that police were present, Cst. Josh Grafton of Nanaimo PDS asked the general duty officers to enter the expansive industrial building and conduct a search for the suspects. After another long period of time, the officers emerged unable to find any suspects due to the sheer size of the building.

Believing the suspects had likely fled prior to their arrival, the officers made the decision to leave. Cst. Grafton, however, was not content with leaving the scene and sought out the security guard to assist him in identifying the exact location the suspects were last seen. Along with his service dog Jager, Cst. Grafton went inside the mill and searched tirelessly throughout for two hours. Just as he was about to stop, Jager began indicating in a general area by attempting to stand on his hind legs and look towards the ceiling.

Grafton scaled a large conveyer directly above them and found the two suspects lying face down in a trough. Both were arrested. One of the two had been located during a prior search of the mill site for a break and enter; the other was recently released from jail.

Grafton's hunch to not leave the scene and his tireless search efforts, even after other officers had cleared, shows his strong dedication. He is a great member and a great co-worker. ■



RIVER RESCUE

POLICE ACT FAST TO SAVE WOMAN FROM DROWNING

By Amelia Thatcher

When Cst. Mitchell Coffin heard the dispatch room at the Fort Saskatchewan RCMP detachment get quiet, he knew something was amiss. The silence was unusual for the bustling detachment, which sits just north of Edmonton, Alta.

"When I looked at the operator, she was focused," he says. "I figured something big was coming in, so I stood by and listened."

Coffin heard there was a woman in distress — possibly suicidal — who was about to jump into the Fort Saskatchewan River. As soon as the call for service came through the radio, Coffin hopped in a police car and made his way to the river.

Cst. Jared Winslow, the watch commander in charge that night, immediately took control of the situation. He worked with dispatchers to get as much information as possible from the woman's family who called in the emergency.

"My job was to quarterback the call from the office for as long as I could," he says. "We needed someone looking at a map to determine where the access points to the river were."

Winslow relayed information about the woman to the officers in the field. Then, he heard over the radio that one of his men was in the water.

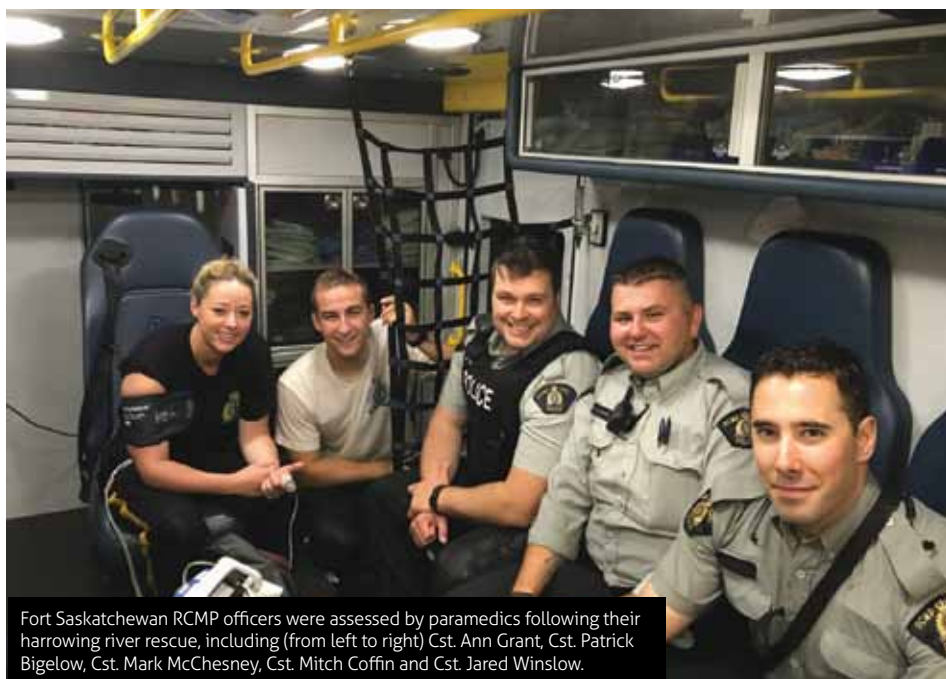
"At that point I decided I wasn't doing any good in the office — I needed to get out there."

A STRONG CURRENT

When Cst. Mark McChesney heard a call on the radio for a suicidal woman near the river, he knew just the place to start looking. A nearby park was a popular spot for many residents to walk, but the river was located down a precarious slope.

Upon arriving, he spotted another RCMP officer who had come in from the neighbouring Redwater detachment. The officer shouted and pointed towards the river — the woman was there. Without thinking twice, McChesney slid down the treacherously steep embankment to reach the woman.

McChesney had radioed the other



Fort Saskatchewan RCMP officers were assessed by paramedics following their harrowing river rescue, including (from left to right) Cst. Ann Grant, Cst. Patrick Bigelow, Cst. Mark McChesney, Cst. Mitch Coffin and Cst. Jared Winslow.

officers, warning them that the woman was coming downstream, but once in the deep ravine, his radio signal was obstructed.

By the time he reached the shore, the woman was already halfway into the river. He jumped in the water but the current was moving too swiftly for him to keep up. He saw her lean backwards until she was floating and watched the current carry her away.

"I tried to navigate and keep eyes on her, I left the water and started jogging down the shoreline," says McChesney. "She was angry at a certain person and kept yelling his name."

After hearing McChesney had located the woman but was now unaccounted for, Coffin rushed to the park where he was last seen. He and another officer, Cst. Ann Grant, stripped off their heavy equipment and headed down the embankment.

"Our job is to be first responders and preserve life, but it really hits home when you don't know the status of one of your team members," says Coffin.

After several stressful minutes, they found McChesney running parallel to the woman on shore. The three officers worked together to keep eyes on the woman who was now struggling to keep her head above water.

With everyone accounted for, Coffin climbed back up the slope until his radio could transmit. He confirmed McChesney was safe and relayed the location of the woman to the other officers downstream. This vital communication allowed Winslow and another officer, Cst. Patrick Bigelow, to get ahead of the woman.

SAVING A LIFE

By now, every available police officer from the detachment was at the river. Winslow and Bigelow called out to the woman, who was crying for help and saying she couldn't swim back to shore.

"What went through my mind was, 'this is my job, and this is what needs to get done,'" says Winslow, who has lifeguard training. "So I jumped in the water. She was very out of breath when we brought her back to shore."

At this point, emergency services had arrived. They assessed the woman and took her to a nearby hospital — she was safe and would recover. Then paramedics also made sure each of the eight officers involved in the rescue were OK.

"Without every single member doing what they did, we wouldn't have had the same outcome," says Winslow. "Everyone played a part and it saved a life." ■

A SPECK ON THE HORIZON

POLICE ALERTNESS SAVES STRANDED BOATERS

By Amelia Thatcher

Cpl. Stacy Morton and Cst. Jeff Prevett were wrapping up a long day patrolling the Canada-United States border when they spotted something unusual.

"We were cruising along when I saw a speck out of the corner of my eye," says Prevett, an officer at the Thunder Bay RCMP detachment. "We slowed down, got out the binoculars and still couldn't figure out what it was. So we decided to go into shore to check it out."

The pair had spent the week enforcing customs, immigration and boat safety regulations with the U.S. Coast Guard on lakes that straddle the border between Ontario and Minnesota. Their last day — a sunny August afternoon last summer — had them winding through the remote island-speckled waters of Lake of the Woods, near Kenora, Ont., northwest of Thunder Bay.

There are no cottages and very few boats in this area, so seeing something that wasn't a tree or rock surprised the RCMP officers. As they approached the island, they realized the speck was an overturned boat washed up on a sandy beach. As they got closer, they saw

two men frantically waving.

"The first thing I said was, 'are you guys OK?'" says Morton, who's also an officer at the Thunder Bay RCMP detachment. "They said yes, and told us they'd been stranded for three days. They said 40 boats had gone by and we were the first ones to stop."

STRANDED

Three days prior, Bob Brott and his cousin Gary Soucie were out on a walleye fishing trip on Lake of the Woods. They were making their way back to Long Point, Minn., when disaster struck.

As they steered their 17-foot fishing boat through choppy waters with waves three to four feet high, Soucie noticed the vessel was taking on water. He checked the bilge pump, which removes water from the bottom of the boat, and noticed it was plugged. The boat was filling up fast.

"I grabbed bucket and started bailing, but I couldn't keep up," says Brott. "The waves were crashing over the sides of the boat."

Soucie tried calling 911, but couldn't get his cellphone to work. They both managed to put lifejackets on before the boat capsized.

The two men clung to the side of the overturned boat as it drifted towards the Ontario border. Six hours later, long after the sun had set, they washed up on the sandy shore of an island.

The next day, they scrounged for food and found an old pop can to boil water in. Brott had a lighter in his pocket, which they used to start a fire to keep warm and signal a rescue. They also built a "help" sign out of branches on the beach, hoping one of the passing boats would see it.

After spending a second night on the island, Brott and Soucie were getting desperate. Many boats had passed on the U.S. side of the border, but they were all too far to flag down. They decided to build a makeshift raft to get closer to the shipping lanes.

RESCUE

Before Brott and Soucie had a chance to put their raft to the test, the RCMP officers made the rescue.

"I've never been so happy to see another human being," says Brott.

Morton and Prevett say the overturned boat was the only thing that saved the stranded men.

"When people are on shore, they have an expectation that they're visible," says Prevett. "But we couldn't see people, the help sign or the fire. What we did see was the sun reflecting off the bottom of the boat that was painted bright green."

Even though the men had been gone more than three days, there were no missing persons reports filed. That's why Morton always reminds boaters of one thing: let someone know where you're going and when you'll be home.

"If it had been another day, it could've turned from a rescue into a recovery mission," says Morton. "The stars really aligned for them."

As for other officers, Morton and Prevett encourage police to stay vigilant when patrolling.

"Look for things that are out of the norm," says Morton. "Pay attention to everything, and take the time to follow-up because you never know what you're going to come across." ■



RCMP Cpl. Stacy Morton and Cst. Jeff Prevett rescued two fishermen who had been stranded on an island in northern Ontario for three days.

Cpl. Stacy Morton, RCMP

ONE HOUSE AT A TIME

PROGRAM HELPS VICTIMS FEEL SAFE AGAIN

Since graduating from the RCMP's Auxiliary Program in 2014, Michael Dally leaves a lasting impression wherever he goes. He won a police officer of the year award for saving the life of a suicidal man in Richmond, B.C., and recently created the Secure-Us Program. Deidre Seiden spoke to Dally about how this program is improving community safety in Oceanside, B.C.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE SECURE-US PROGRAM?

When I transferred to the RCMP's Oceanside detachment in B.C., from Richmond detachment, I wanted to start a program that would connect with the public. I started off trying to find things that Auxiliaries could do that would be positive and get them out in the communities.

Oceanside has an older demographic and things like break and enters get a lot press coverage. I think the public believes, based on what they read in the papers, that they live in a

community riddled by crime. But in Oceanside, that's simply not the case. And this is not a criticism of police officers by any means, but generally, when a member goes out to a break and enter, they'll do a general investigation, they'll leave a card with a file number and then they go to the next call.

I think if you spoke with the general public, they would feel underwhelmed by that response because it's a massive thing to them. I wanted to bridge that gap. I wanted to create a program that I'm going to call a bit of handholding, if nothing else. With the support of the detachment commander, S/Sgt. Mark Pelletier, I was able to do that. We sit with old people, disabled people and vulnerable people. We give them back their confidence and that feeling of being safe.

WHAT IS IT?

There's life before someone is burgled and life after they are burgled. Burglaries change people. When you've been burgled and

someone has been all through your home; that's trauma.

What I do is I go out after a person has been the victim of a break and enter. And I'm CPTED trained — that's crime prevention through environmental design. I'm trained in knowing how to make your house safe going forward. Secure-Us is a play on words. We don't only help hard target and secure your home and give you advice to do that, we also give you the emotional security to be strong and make sure this action isn't going to change you.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

I made a checklist of the house from the outside in, covering off the whole house. I go out and I spend a few hours with people, going through their house with the checklist and just give them really good solid advice about how to ensure that going forward, their home is secure.

Since we started this program several months ago, we've done about 100 of these surveys. A lot of people are now contacting us who haven't even been victims because they've heard about it and want to have one done.

WHAT SHOULD POLICE OFFICERS KNOW ABOUT IT?

The program does three things. It engages the RCMP officers with the auxiliaries. It gives them another reason to be working together in partnership with a common goal. And it's auxiliary-led. It doesn't have to be a burden to the member. All the member has to do is refer it to the Auxiliary Program. I think that gives our regular members the confidence to move on to the next file because they've done something positive.

COULD OTHER DETACHMENTS BENEFIT FROM THIS PROGRAM?

I'd like to see every detachment across Canada have this program. I think it would bring enormous value to communities. I really do. We make a difference in people's lives once they have been a victim of a break and enter. And we go into their house and give them solid, practical advice about protecting themselves in the future and that makes a big difference in people's lives. ■



Aux. Michael Dally, left, meets with homeowners who are the victims of property crime, often accompanied by RCMP police officers, such as Cst. Ali Dakhallallah.

just THE FACTS

IMPAIRED DRIVING



Driving impaired greatly increases the risk of a serious accident. It's why driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada. Each and every time a person chooses to get behind the wheel while impaired, they're not only risking their own life, but the lives of others.

According to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Canada, an average of four people are killed each day in crashes involving alcohol and/or drugs. In fact, crashes involving impaired driving are the leading criminal cause of death in Canada.

In the United States, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention says that 28 people die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver every day in the U.S. This works out to one death every 51 minutes.

BAC, or Blood Alcohol Concentration, is the amount of alcohol in your blood. If your BAC is 0.05 per cent, that means you have 50 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood. Each drink consumed within a certain time frame increases your BAC.

In Canada, the *Criminal Code* BAC limit is 0.08 per cent. At this level, *Criminal Code* impaired driving charges can be laid. But just about every province and territory

in Canada has administrative laws for drivers whose BACs are 0.05 per cent and over.

According to author Christine Van Tuyl in the book *Drunk Driving*, it takes approximately six hours after drinking for the body to completely eliminate alcohol from its system with a BAC level of 0.08 per cent.

In addition to possible injury or loss of life, the consequences of impaired driving includes loss of licence, mandatory education, hefty fines, jail time and/or a criminal record.

The RCMP has made impaired driving an operational priority. Through a series of nationally co-ordinated impaired driving enforcement days, awareness campaigns and partner engagement, the RCMP continues to work to stop alcohol- and drug- impaired drivers.

Many factors can affect your blood alcohol level: how fast you drink, whether you're male or female, your body weight and/or the amount of food in your stomach.

Statistics Canada reports the impaired driving rate in 2015 was 65 per cent lower than the rate 1986 (577 incidents per 100,000 population) and four per cent lower than the rate observed in

2014 (210 per 100,000 population).

In contrast to alcohol-impaired driving, the number of drug-impaired driving incidents has been rising since 2009. Drug-impaired driving rose from two per cent of all impaired driving incidents in 2009 to four per cent in 2015.

According to the RCMP, driving after using drugs, including prescription drugs, is just as dangerous as drinking and driving. Drug Recognition Experts can determine if a person is under the influence of a drug and can charge that person with drug-impaired driving.

Among the police-reported impaired driving incidents in 2015, nearly 3,000 involved drug-impaired driving, including seven incidents causing death and 19 causing bodily harm.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation advises asking a doctor or a pharmacist about the side effects related to driving when using prescription medication. As well, ask a doctor or pharmacist about how a prescription drug might react when mixed with alcohol.

Although there has consistently been a lower rate of impaired driving among women compared to men, impaired-driving incidents among women have increased in the past two decades, says the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF). In 2015, women accounted for one in five reported incidents of impaired driving whereas in 1986, they represented just one in 13.

A major research study prepared by TIRF observed that young people, especially those aged 20 to 34, show up most frequently in the statistics. According to the study, 16- to 19-year-olds account for 23 per cent of fatalities, 18 per cent of injuries and 11 per cent of those arrested for alcohol-related driving offences.

— Compiled by Deidre Seiden



ADD UP THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

STRATEGY ENCOURAGES EMPLOYEES TO GET MOVING

By Deidre Seiden

Growing up, Cst. Kevin Barata was always active and fit. When he joined the RCMP, he came out of Depot, the RCMP's training academy, at the peak of his fitness. But with the start of a new job, moving to a new province and a new marriage, Barata let exercise fall to the bottom of his priorities.

While on a call, Barata saw the RCMP's Vancouver Island Emergency Response Team (ERT) in action. It changed the course of his career.

"When I joined the RCMP, I didn't even know what ERT was," says Barata. "After seeing ERT come out, I thought, 'Man, that looks like something I want to do.'"

Barata realized he wasn't in the physical shape he needed to be to join the elite team. But instead of giving up, he started running.

"At first, I would run around my house, three kilometres at a time," says Barata. "It was a sense of accomplishment because I wasn't really a runner before."

MOTIVATED TO MOVE

Before long, Barata was doing 10-kilometre races. It was around this time that he started part-time at the ERT, and when he trans-

ferred to the Lower Mainland, he joined the Lower Mainland ERT full-time.

"I was surrounded by these guys who are all super fit and very healthy," says Barata. "It's very motivating to be in that environment."

He signed up for a half marathon and just kept running. Barata is now an ultra-marathon runner, with several long-distance races under his belt, including one just shy of 200 kilometres.

For the RCMP and other police agencies, physical fitness is a priority, especially for police officers who have fitness-for-duty requirements.

In 2017, the RCMP launched a three-year National Fitness Strategy. Gaëtan Girard, the national program manager for the RCMP's Organizational Health and Well-being Directorate, along with fitness advisors, are implementing the strategy with the message, "Exercise more, eat better and sleep well."

The main objective is to support police officer fitness for duty and employee well-being.

"Many of the jobs we have, whether it's police officers, civilian members or public service employees, involves a lot of sitting," says Girard. "Prolonged periods of sitting

during the day — more than five or six hours — is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. So we're trying to get people moving throughout the day and to exercise on a regular basis."

Girard says the best way to be successful and stick to a fitness regimen is to enjoy what you're doing.

"If you like running, run," says Girard. "But if you don't, please find something else that will get you out there and will keep you healthy and prepared for the demands of your job."

THE FITNESS ADVANTAGE

The RCMP holds an annual fitness challenge, which supports and encourages employees to become more active. Participant feedback has confirmed that the challenge helped them be more active, lose weight, improve their sleep and contributed to their mental health.

"Fitness has been shown to also help reduce risk of injuries, and when injuries occur, to speed up recovery," says Girard. "Physical activity comes with a proven guarantee: add up the minutes and you'll be adding up the benefits."

Terri Germaine, a security analyst with the RCMP, has credited exercise with improving her life.

For years, Germaine smoked and had poor eating and drinking habits. The physical and mental effects of those behaviours started to take root and she became depressed. She avoided going out in public while she was pregnant for fear of being judged and still looks back at herself on her wedding day with a critical eye.

But since becoming a mother, she made some changes in her life. One of them was exercise. When she started to work for the RCMP, she took advantage of the gym and fitness classes at Depot.

"It changed my life," says Germaine. "What I've found by getting into fitness is that it helps in so many areas of life. If you're feeling down or not sleeping well, fitness helps."

Now stronger and more confident, Germaine encourages others to make the change. "I wish I had known that exercise has so many benefits years and years ago," says Germaine. ■



Cst. Kevin Barata, an ultra-marathoner, started running to get back into shape and achieve his career goals.



GETTING A GRIP ON BIKE THEFT

POLICE, ONLINE APP AIM TO REDUCE LOSSES

By Deidre Seiden

For the first time in a decade, bike theft in Richmond, B.C., is on the decline.

The 30-per cent reduction comes after Richmond RCMP partnered with an online bicycle registration and recovery service called 529 Garage.

“If we’re having that significant a reduction in one year, you have to attribute it to something,” says RCMP Cpl. Kevin Krygier, the non-commissioned officer in charge of crime prevention in Richmond. “I think it’s fair to attribute it to 529 Garage because we were out working incredibly hard, hosting events across the city to register as many cyclists as we could and educating them about how to protect and secure their bikes to prevent theft.”

REPORT AND RECOVER

Bicycles are typically one of the only modes of transportation that people don’t register or insure, says Krygier. And stolen bikes are one of the most underreported crimes. When they are reported, bike theft victims often don’t have the serial number or adequate detail to identify the bike successfully.

“Chances are when a bad guy steals a bike, it’s untraceable,” says Krygier. “When they feel like that bike is going to be reported stolen, they dump it and steal another one.”

Bike theft is a major issue for police, says Cst. Robynn Watts, Surrey RCMP, who brought 529 Garage to Surrey, B.C., to tackle the problem.

“Criminals are stealing bikes to commit secondary crimes, like break and enters and theft from vehicles,” says Watts. “We were finding discarded bikes all the time and had no way of returning them to their owners.”

The partnership between police and the service hopes to change that. It’s a simple but comprehensive way to register, report and recover stolen bikes across North America.

Anyone can sign up to the service either online or with a mobile application. They can upload as much information about their bike as they want, including the serial number, make, model, colour and even photos.

Owners can also protect their bike with a 529 Shield, a tamper-proof sticker with a



Cpl. Kevin Krygier attaches a tamper-proof sticker to a bicycle at a 529 Garage registration event in Richmond, B.C.

Courtesy of Cpl. Kevin Krygier, RCMP

unique seven-digit code they can enter in the system.

“If the crooks see the shield, they know the bike is registered,” says Cst. Rob Brunt, Vancouver Police Department (VPD). “These shields are really tough to pick off. They come off in a million pieces, kind of like nail polish.”

Should a registered bike go missing, the user can issue a notification that gets sent to all 529 Garage users in the area alerting them to be on the lookout.

UNITED FRONT

529 Garage harnesses the power of the community to protect and recover stolen bikes.

“We call it the community effect,” says J Allard, the developer behind the registry. “529 Garage unites everyone involved — law enforcement, universities, bike shops, advocates and cyclists — through a single platform to fight bike theft as a unified force.”

Allard developed 529 Garage after his own bike was stolen out of a secure parking garage in Seattle, Wash. He reached out to his mountain bike community for help. Thirty days later, he got a tip his bike was for sale online. He was able to get it back with the help of the Seattle Police Department.

The project was first brought to Canada when Brunt teamed up with Allard.

Brunt was searching for a solution to the bike theft issue in Vancouver, B.C. He wanted to adopt and adapt an existing program for VPD, but couldn’t find anything.

“I was beginning to think I was going to have to invent the wheel,” says Brunt. “I’m a beat cop, not a computer programmer, so I was so happy when I heard about 529 Garage.”

Since the VPD and RCMP in Richmond and Surrey detachments partnered with Project 529 two years ago, it has spread across the province. About 600,000 bikes are now registered on the database across North America, 60,000 of which are in British Columbia.

In Vancouver, Brunt had hoped to have 10,000 bikes registered by the end of three years. But after just two years, he says they’ve already registered 20,000 and bike theft is down by 30 per cent.

In Richmond, Krygier developed police officer and volunteer training on how to register and use the website. After several registration blitzes and initiatives, they have more than 2,000 bikes registered and are reaping the benefits of the community-driven system.

“We’ve recovered stolen bikes using it and we can return bikes frequently to their owners because of it,” says Krygier. “It works.” ■



A SECOND CHANCE FOR ADULTS

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE EXPANDS IN NOVA SCOTIA

By Amelia Thatcher

One night after drinking too much, two young adults stole a Canadian flag hanging outside the Royal Canadian Legion in Colchester County, N.S. Their foolish stunt was short-lived as local police caught the pair soon after.

But instead of charging the offenders, police referred them to the province's Restorative Justice Program, which recently expanded to include adults.

"We look for people who are co-operative, who deserve a chance to avoid a criminal record," says Cst. Lori Thorne, court liaison officer at the Colchester County RCMP detachment. "It's not for your hardened criminals, it's just people who made bad decisions and want to fix the harm."

OUT OF COURT

The Restorative Justice Program has traditionally been reserved for youth offenders under the age of 18. That changed in November 2016, following several successful pilots that offered the program to adults. The program is now available to people of all ages, province-wide.

"The ultimate goal is to hold people accountable," says Grace Campbell, manager of the program at the Department of Justice. "It's about doing justice differently and looking at the wider context to provide a more preventa-

tive and proactive approach to crime."

Although the program has expanded its clientele, the goals remain the same: reduce repeat offenders, increase victim satisfaction, strengthen communities and increase public confidence in the criminal justice system.

The program takes on offences such as property crimes, mischief, assaults, fraud and break and enters. Impaired driving, sexual assault and domestic violence cases are not eligible. Offenders can be referred to the program by police pre-charge, by crown attorneys post-charge, by judges post-conviction, or by corrections and victim services after they've served their sentence.

When a case is referred to the program, correctional services or restorative justice agencies such as the Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network or John Howard Society take the case. Police agencies like the RCMP are involved in follow-up meetings with offenders, victims and members of the community.

"We talk to the accused about things they may not have considered," says Thorne. "How crime impacts the community, themselves, their families, police services and what the outcome could have been if they were convicted in court."

Thorne says sometimes it's just a matter of giving offenders resources like mental health or addictions support, helping them search for employment, or educating them about the justice system.

"It's about fulfilling people's needs to try to keep it from happening again," says Thorne.

FAIR RESOLUTION

Restorative justice requires offenders to take responsibility for their actions, holding them accountable to victims in face-to-face meetings. The John Howard Society facilitates many of these meetings, working with all parties involved to come to a fair resolution.

"From our experience, victims who are involved in the program are more satisfied and in a better place than before," says Chris King, director of the central region John Howard Society of Nova Scotia. "They get to see the person who harmed them, which can lessen the fear because it humanizes them. It also validates the victim by giving them a chance to say 'this is how you hurt me.'"

When the case of the flag thieves was referred to the Restorative Justice Program, the John Howard Society and local police met with the offenders, a community representative and a member of the Legion.

King says the Legion member was a veteran who showed up decorated in uniform and talked about his time serving in the war and the significance of the flag. Both offenders became very emotional — the woman started crying and the young man hung his head in shame.

"The veteran got to see that these were two young adults who made a foolish decision," says King. "And it wasn't easy for them to face this man either, they had disrespected him personally."

After a lengthy discussion, they agreed on a resolution: the offenders would replace the flag, write an essay describing what they did and why, and write a letter of apology to be read at the Legion's next general meeting.

"This program is providing an opportunity for offenders to learn from their mistakes and understand how crime impacts the community in a broader sense," says King. "It's not about punishment — it's about repairing harm, and giving victims and the community a voice." ■



At restorative justice meetings in Colchester County, N.S., RCMP Cst. Lori Thorne sits down with offenders, victims and the John Howard Society to discuss out-of-court resolution.



HOW LISTENING SAVES LIVES

DEFUSING CRITICAL INCIDENTS AS A CRISIS NEGOTIATOR

When a supervisor took note of Sgt. Donovan Tait's calming influence and superior listening skills, he encouraged him to pursue a specialized career in crisis negotiation. Now, 10 years later, Tait is a seasoned negotiator in Nanaimo, B.C., with nearly 100 critical incident calls under his belt. Amelia Thatcher spoke with Tait to see how he handles charged crisis situations.

WHAT DOES A CRISIS NEGOTIATOR DO?

In the most highly charged and dangerous events, there's an expectation that we [the police] are going to try to speak to subjects first. So that's where trained negotiators come in. We work as part of the Critical Incident Program, under an incident commander and alongside the Emergency Response Team (ERT), which is the tactical side. We attend everything — calls for suicidal people, hostage taking, kidnaps, barricaded persons and emotionally distraught individuals. Most calls are for people who are in crisis where they've lost the ability to cope. For example, they've lost their job, lost their spouse, lost kids in a court case, are going through financial troubles, or suffering from post-traumatic stress.

WHAT'S THE FIRST THING YOU DO?

When we're driving to a call, we're trying to get as much information as possible from all sources. What's caused this today? What's their history? Is there a mental health component? As a best practice, we'll consult mental health practitioners to get their advice. Sometimes we'll try to get in touch with relatives or friends. If the person loves hockey, that piece of info could be used by a negotiator to start a conversation.

ARE THERE STEPS YOU FOLLOW TO BUILD A RAPPORT?

The first thing you do is introduce yourself. Some people respond better to a show of force, some people might respond better to saying, "Hey this is Donovan and I work for the police." That introduction takes the word "officer" out of it, and personalizes it. You always want to say, "I'm here to help" and reassure them. You also want to get information: Are they okay? Are there weapons? Are there other people? Is anyone hurt?



RCMP Sgt. Donovan Tait says attentive listening and building rapport are essential skills when responding to someone in crisis.

After you've gathered the basics, open-ended questions work best. You want to do some rapport building — you'll never be able to influence or change behaviour unless you've gathered a measure of trust.

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES?

Technology and social media have changed how we control an incident and how we keep a subject focused. If someone posts on Facebook, you get media coming to the scene and people trying to get in contact with them. We want to shut down live videos, lock down their social media feeds and block all calls going to their phone except ours. We get help from service providers to do this. We try to control the technology and the subject's access to the outside world so that the focus is on the negotiators.

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU SUCCESSFUL?

A lot of cases end successfully without any harm to the public or police, but it's a team effort with the ERT and incident commanders. But despite our successes, there are some people who are goal-oriented and no matter what we do or how good we are, they had already made

up their mind to do what they planned.

WHAT'S THE MOST VALUABLE SKILL FOR A NEGOTIATOR?

It's about active listening. If we do all the talking, we're not going to change anything. The most valuable skill is being able to listen to the person and digest what their problem is and then craft strategic responses to influence their behaviour. In any crisis event, buying time is the goal. Time tends to make everything better, because they can start looking beyond the present situation.

WHY DO YOU KEEP NEGOTIATING?

I love the teamwork, the challenge and helping people. I'd say most cases are good people who are having a bad day or who had something bad happen to them. Their ability to cope has been overwhelmed and they're reacting badly and they need help to be brought back into reality. If you can get them through a crisis without hurting themselves or someone else or doing something irreparable, then that's great. It's very rewarding to hear a person say, "I was going to kill myself today until you guys came." And it's a team credit. ■

Courtesy of Sgt. Donovan Tait, RCMP



Researchers and the RCMP collaborated in a joint study to learn more about the prevalence and reasons for hitchhiking in northern British Columbia.

HIGHWAY 16

STUDY LOOKS AT WHO HITCHHIKES AND WHY

By Jacqueline Holler, PhD, Department of History, Women's Studies and Gender Studies, University of Northern British Columbia

As autumn tints the trembling aspens outside Prince George, B.C., roadside hitchhikers are a common sight. The 720-kilometre Highway 16 corridor from Prince George to Prince Rupert is a vital link for many small municipalities and more than 20 First Nations communities.

The highway is well known for another reason. Today, most Canadians have heard about the tragic disappearances and murders of girls and women along the "Highway of Tears." Often, these girls and women were hitchhiking when last seen. At the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), we are attempting to understand hitchhiking and its links to victimization in northern B.C.

Murders and disappearances on northern B.C.'s highways have occurred for more than 40 years. But they remained relatively unknown for decades perhaps because the majority of the missing and murdered on northern B.C.'s highways are Indigenous. Communities and family members have repeatedly alleged that police and communities were originally indifferent or inattentive to the cases because most involved First Nations girls and women.

Public concern over the disappearances

culminated in two significant developments. First, in 2005, the RCMP's E-Pana task force was created to investigate whether a serial killer was responsible for disappearances along B.C.'s highways from 1969 to 2006. Second, in 2006, a Highway of Tears Symposium was held in Prince George, resulting in a report that made multiple recommendations.

Because many of the disappearances were linked to hitchhiking, the symposium recommended bus service along Highway 16 and obligatory RCMP assistance to any hitchhiking female fitting the victim profile. Finally, participants in the symposium suggested a potential study of the "hitchhiking season," a poorly understood period between spring and late fall in which hitchhiking seems to peak on northern highways.

In 2012, Insp. Eric Brewer of the RCMP North District Traffic Services approached me and another UNBC faculty member, Roy Rea, to discuss the possibility of a joint research project that would produce a better understanding of hitchhiking. We developed two linked independent studies to examine the prevalence and nature of hitchhiking in northern B.C. These studies were designed to improve understanding and support evidence-based decision making.

HIGHWAY HOT SPOTS

Roy Rea developed an ingenious Geographic Information System console that could be easily installed in commercial vehicles and

used by drivers to identify locations and times when they saw hitchhikers. He was able to produce maps of peak hitchhiking locations and times along Highway 16.

From 2012 to 2015, my research assistants and I worked both with the RCMP and independently to document the reasons for and experiences of hitchhiking.

Our study involved three components.

First, we operated an online survey that asked participants where, when and why they hitchhiked. In addition, the survey solicited information about victimization, substance use and recruitment into criminal activity. More than 170 detailed surveys were completed, generating much rich data.

In the second part of our study, North District RCMP interacted with hitchhikers they encountered on the highways. Hitchhikers were given information packages containing tips for safer hitchhiking, invitations to participate in the online surveys and interviews, and gift cards from a well-known coffee chain. We were able to fund this part of the study with a small grant from UNBC's National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.

According to C/Supt. Lesley Bain, head of North District RCMP, officers who participated in the study were specifically directed by management to consider offering a ride to hitchhikers should they be concerned about the individual's safety. Safety factors that officers considered included weather conditions,



availability of commercial transport, and the mental and physical state of the hitchhiker.

Using the provincial police database, officers recorded hitchhikers' gender and ethnic identities, time and location of the traffic stop and their reasons for hitchhiking. The resulting anonymous data were shared with the research team.

The third component, funded by a Civil Forfeiture grant from the Ministry of Justice, involved in-person interviews with hitchhikers. Our research team travelled all over the province to get a sense of how hitchhiking in the north might be different from hitchhiking in southern B.C.; after all, these two regions are quite different in climate, population and even culture.

We recruited participants through posters placed at truck stops, libraries, friendship centres and shelters across the province. We talked to hitchhikers in these same locations from Haida Gwaii and the northernmost Alaska Highway all the way south to Victoria. In the end, we spoke to a broad cross-section of the population, from well-paid professionals and adventurers to homeless and street-involved people.

PROFILE OF A HITCHHIKER

While we are still analyzing data, several key themes stand out.

First, from the RCMP data we learned quite a bit about the hitchhikers encountered by police on northern highways. Over two-thirds were male, and Indigenous people were greatly overrepresented among them (70 per cent of all stops). Hitchhikers' ages ranged between 16 and 60; the youngest person stopped was an Indigenous youth.

From our survey participants, we learned more about some differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous hitchhikers. A slight majority of our hitchhikers said they didn't have enough money. But our Indigenous participants were much more likely to be poor. Perhaps even more importantly, Indigenous respondents were significantly more likely than non-Indigenous people to have hitchhiked at the age of 16 years or younger. Because youth are so vulnerable to victimization, this is a critical point for policy and policing interventions.

We asked our participants whether they had ever been physically threatened or hurt, sexually threatened or hurt, "come on to" sexually, offered drugs or alcohol, or pressured or forced into a gang or sex work while hitchhiking. Seventy-one percent said "yes" to at least one of these questions. The most common of these was being offered drugs or alcohol during a ride.

Also common were sexual come-ons, which were reported by both men and women. Women, however, were significantly more likely to report being pressured into prostitution while hitchhiking. In addition, women had more experiences of confinement and extreme violence.

In some cases, girls and women who refused offers of money for sex had to jump out of moving cars after drivers refused to release them. Others reported being forcibly confined, sexually assaulted and, in one case, gang-raped and beaten.

"Many people question the sanity of young women in particular who hitchhike. But often, people hitchhike in their teens because they are trying to get away from a bad situation."

Strikingly, very few of our participants said they had reported these incidents to police. Only eight people had ever told the police about anything that happened to them. Asked why, one participant said, "The police are scary too." Hitchhikers' distrust of police emerged in many surveys and interviews, even though we also heard specific stories of police assistance to hitchhikers.

Our in-person interviews reinforced some of the information from our online surveys, but gave us an even more detailed portrait of hitchhiking. One stand-out is why people start hitchhiking. Many people question the sanity of young women in particular who hitchhike. But often, people hitchhike in their teens because they are trying to get away from a bad situation.

One woman said that she had started hitchhiking as a young teenager because she wanted to "sort of feel independent," but also because "I have a pretty, um, bad family history." Another participant reported that her parents' drug use and abusive friends had driven her from the home. Any intervention that tries to prevent teens from hitchhiking

by simply picking them up and dropping them home is missing the stories behind why many teens are on the highway in the first place.

People also have other reasons for hitchhiking that should be taken into consideration. Northern B.C. is much larger than Germany or the United Kingdom. Yet it has only about 250,000 people, and services are concentrated in a few key locations, especially Prince George.

People need to travel northern B.C.'s highways to visit medical professionals, access social services, work and even (increasingly) buy groceries. Northern British Columbians are highly mobile individuals without many transportation options other than private cars. Hitchhiking results.

Today, our research team continues to analyze all of our data and write up results for publication. We have also begun to communicate our results. In June 2017, I gave presentations to six Indigenous communi-

ties in and around Burns Lake, B.C., in partnership with the Burns Lake RCMP detachment.

The same week we were delivering our presentations, the B.C. government

unveiled the long-awaited bus service recommended by the 2006 symposium. As of June, two bus lines service Highway 16 between Prince George and Burns Lake, and between Burns Lake and Smithers.

Many northerners are hoping that the bus service will reduce or end widespread hitchhiking in the north. In partnership with Burns Lake RCMP Traffic Services, my team and I will be studying this question to find out whether the bus service has an impact on hitchhiking throughout the week, and whether the group most vulnerable to victimization — young women — is using the bus.

While our research is ongoing, it demonstrates the importance of understanding hitchhiking instead of simply condemning it. Indeed, any attempt to reduce hitchhiking should begin with an honest appraisal of local and community conditions and transportation options.

Our study also demonstrates, I hope, the strong potential for collaboration among academic researchers, the RCMP and local communities on projects that seek to improve the safety and health of our communities. ■



MOVING YOUTH FORWARD

INDIGENOUS SUMMER CAMP ENCOURAGES GROWTH

By Amelia Thatcher

Each morning before the fun and games begin, youth at Niigan Mosewak summer camp gather in a circle to share their stories. But they aren't your typical campfire tales — the youth attending this camp are here for more than just a summer holiday.

"During the circles I often cry," says Angel Armstrong, one of the youth mentors at the camp. She began attending Niigan Mosewak following the death of her father by suicide 10 years ago.

"It was a huge tragedy, he was so involved in our family," says Armstrong, who is now 18. "It's not always easy, but I'm learning to honour the life he shared with us, and this camp has helped me do that."

Niigan Mosewak, which means "moving forward" in Ojibwe, is a week-long summer camp for at-risk indigenous youth run by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). For the past 10 years, it's provided a safe space for youth to talk about issues like suicide, mental health and substance abuse, while learning about indigenous history and culture through games and activities.

Retired OPP officer Sgt. George Couchie co-created the camp with other members of

the OPP's Indigenous Policing Bureau as a way to help guide youth, while reconnecting them with their cultural identities.

"We looked at some of the problems in indigenous communities — the high drug rate, alcoholism and high suicide rate, and looked at what the residential schools took out — the culture, language and self-esteem," says Couchie, who is from the Nipissing First Nation. "That's what we're trying to re-introduce. It's all about helping kids understand where they come from."

CHANGING LIVES

Niigan Mosewak ran three times last summer in Trout Creek, just south of North Bay, Ont. Teachers and police across Ontario referred about 100 youth between the ages of 13 and 17 to the camp. Those older than 17 can attend the camp as mentors, like Armstrong.

Members of the OPP, RCMP, North Bay Police, Anishinabek Police Service and the United Chief and Council of Manitoulin support the camp, which is mostly funded by Ontario's Ministry of Children and Youth Resources.

Couchie says the police leadership is vital because it provides youth with strong role models and helps foster positive

police relationships.

"We don't often get the chance to sit down and have conversations with troubled struggling youth," he says. "I learn a lot from those kids, you really build empathy by listening to their stories."

Cpl. Carol Clarke, an RCMP officer seconded to the OPP's Indigenous Policing Bureau, works as a facilitator at the camp. As an indigenous police officer, she's an important role model for the girls at the camp. She works with Couchie and other police officers to run the camp's activities, which focus on teaching traditional skills like making medicine pouches and cedar pillows, sweet grass braiding, building sweat lodges and drum building.

POSITIVE MESSAGES

One of Clarke's favourite activities happens near the end of week. Every camper tapes a piece of paper to their back, and the kids have an opportunity to write positive anonymous messages about each other.

"It's fun and everyone is really surprised at the nice things people think and say about them," says Clarke. "We tell them to keep the paper because they can pull it out when they feel sad or low."

She recalls one girl in particular who attended the camp several times. One summer, the young girl confided in Clarke, explaining how the messages from her peers saved her life.

"She told me she was going to commit suicide. She had a plan, no one was home, and she was cleaning up her room before and found those papers and read them. And she's here with us today...all from that piece of paper." Clarke says the camp gives her a sense of pride and of hope for future indigenous generations. "We have to keep this going. It's really changed kids' lives."

As for Armstrong, she says the camp has encouraged her to get involved in her community, take on more leadership roles and connect with her indigenous roots.

"After I attended the camp, I became more aware and interested in the things my people do, and our way of life," she says. "I always share that this camp has forever changed and saved my life." ■



Youth at Niigan Mosewak participate in many outdoor activities and games, while also learning about indigenous culture and history.