

Media Release

Staff Sergeant Sandy Staniforth, Niagara Regional Police Service Honoured with the OACP Excellence in Leadership Award

For Immediate Release: May 11, 2020

(Toronto, ON) – Staff Sergeant Sandy Staniforth of the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) is the recipient of the 2020 Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police’s (OACP) Excellence in Leadership Award, sponsored by the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. This award is presented in recognition of the accomplishments of a member of a police service in Ontario who consistently demonstrates outstanding engagement, achievement and leadership within their organization and community, and Staff Sergeant Staniforth did just that.



Mental health of first responders (in particular Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) has been at the forefront of policing for a number of years. After an extensive examination of programs in place that can provide support to members to prevent occupational stress injuries, NRPS felt more could be done and they created the Member Support Unit (MSU). The goals of the MSU are to provide ongoing support and leadership to the Critical Incident Response Team, develop an internal Peer-to-Peer Support Network, strive to reduce the internal stigma that is often associated with mental health issues, and to introduce continuous improvement within the service.

Under the leadership of Staff Sergeant Staniforth – who believes that an emergency response organization must care for its members, so that they in turn can care for their community – NRPS developed and launched a number of innovative, successful, and well received programs designed to provide a greater level of support to those who may be exposed to risk from vicarious trauma. These programs include:

- A Peer Support Team & Family Support Team;
- A Revitalised Critical Incident Response Team;
- Development of an innovative workplace “Reintegration” program for members who have been out of the workplace for any period of time;
- Introduction of a “Speaker Series” that provides an opportunity for NRPS members on their journey after a critical incident, their experiences, and their recovery; and
- Advocating for and securing resources for the hiring of an in-house psychologist for NRPS.

“Leadership must result in practical and positive change for our police organizations and members. Staff Sergeant Staniforth has been a driving force in her service’s efforts to protect its members when it comes to mental health. We are proud to recognize her passion and dedication to making a difference in the lives of police personnel.” - Chief Paul Pedersen, OACP President.

[2020 OACP Excellence in Leadership Award Video](#)



This annual award is made possible by the generous support from the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.



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