



## 5th Annual PAO Police Services Hero of the Year Awards Winners Announced

### 2020 Awards Process Changed to Reflect COVID-19 Pandemic

Toronto / August 11, 2020 – Over the past five years, the Police Association of Ontario (PAO) has encouraged Ontarians to nominate local uniform and civilian police personnel for one of three annual Police Services Hero of the Year awards.

The stories that were shared during the 2020 awards submission period in February and March included compelling details about how local police heroes have gone above and beyond while on duty or within their communities.

The PAO is pleased to announce the recipients of its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Police Services Hero of the Year Awards.

#### **Congratulations to the 2020 award winners:**

- On-Duty Difference Maker – Uniform/Sworn Police Officer: Cst. Fil Wisniak, Kingston Police Service  
*For his courageous and live-saving efforts to stop a random, violent attack that occurred in September 2019 in downtown Kingston*
- On-Duty Difference Maker – Civilian Police Service Employee: Michael Bednarek & Susanne Kelly, Special Constables, Ottawa Police Service  
*For their quick-thinking and creative actions that helped save the life of a suicidal individual on an Ottawa bridge in June 2019*
- Community Role Model: Cst. Evan Harrison, London Police Service  
*For his positive impact as a School Resource Officer and his volunteer work with kids in the London community, notably at The Children's Hospital and as a non-parent coach in a local minor hockey league*

The PAO's Awards Committee (comprised of members-at-large, the President, the Board Chair, and civilian association staff) had the challenging task of narrowing down more than 300 worthy, emotional, and often personal nominations to a shortlist of three finalists per award category.

#### **This year's award finalists also included:**

- Sgt. Richard Dorling, Waterloo Regional Police Service – On-Duty Difference Maker, Uniform Officer
- Cst. Scott Tinsley, Belleville Police Service – On-Duty Difference Maker, Uniform Officer



- Cheryl Eastman, Victim Services, Windsor Police Service – On-Duty Difference Maker, Civilian Police Service Employee
- Jennifer Piasecka, Dispatcher, Windsor Police Service – On-Duty Difference Maker, Civilian Police Service Employee
- Kristine Herfst, Canadian Police Information Centre Unit, Chatham-Kent Police Service – Community Role Model
- Cst. Mike Stratford, Kawartha Lakes Police Service – Community Role Model

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAO was unable to hold its annual awards ceremony this year. Instead, winners and finalists will be visited over the next few weeks by PAO President Bruce Chapman at their local police association for a physically distanced award presentation. Local media are welcome to attend, and details will be provided to outlets in advance. Additionally, all winners and finalists will be invited to the PAO's 2021 Awards Ceremony next May to be honoured together.

"Every single day, local police officers and civilian police services employees across Ontario, the latter of which include 9-1-1 dispatchers, victim services teams, special constables and many more, go above and beyond their call of duty to positively impact their communities in various ways," said PAO President, Bruce Chapman. "The PAO is proud to facilitate the Police Services Hero of the Year awards program and it is our honour to recognize members who have clearly made a difference in someone's life."

The stories of the 2020 Police Services Hero of the Year awards winners and of all nominees can be viewed online at [www.policehero.ca](http://www.policehero.ca).

**About the Police Association of Ontario (PAO):**

Founded in 1933, the Police Association of Ontario (PAO) is the official provincial representative body for 18,000 sworn and civilian police personnel from 47 police associations across Ontario. A unifying voice for advocacy in policing, the PAO provides its member associations with representation, resource, and support.

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