

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA**

31 May 2021 / 31 mai 2021

Submitted by / Soumis par:

Chief of Police, Ottawa Police Service / Chef de police, Service de police d'Ottawa

Contact Person / Personne ressource:

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SUBJECT: LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

OBJET: LETTRES DE MENTION ÉLOGIEUSE

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du présent rapport à titre d'information.

BACKGROUND

Attached for the information of the Board are excerpts from letters of appreciation / thanks received from the public since the last regular meeting for services rendered by members of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS).

Date Received: 15 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Damian Gerlich

Excerpt from Letter: Early one morning, two officers were sent to my apartment to follow up on a suicide prevention call. I personally want to commend the two officers who helped get me to a better state of mind especially Constable Damien Gerlich; he was extremely kind and gentle, and as a young black man who is typically fearful of police, I

felt nothing but peace in his presence. Please continue to train your police officers to be as kind and caring as he is.

Date Received: 17 April 2021

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I just wanted to say thank you for your service. With everything going on in the world, and seeing how various police services here in Canada are mistreating people, I am so relieved to be living here in Ottawa. I can't imagine what police officers go through on a daily basis to protect our community. I am grateful that the Ottawa Police Service are being mindful and respectful of your oath and of the people in the community you serve. These are difficult times for everyone and there is so much fear all around; adding the fear of police on top of everything else would just be terrifying. So I just wanted to thank the OPS and all of its officers for your service and your integrity during this time. Thank you.

Date Received: 15 April 2021

From: Member of the public

We received numerous emails and letters from the public relating to the new Provincial Stay at Home Orders. Here are a few samples:

- I am writing to thank you for the sensible and indeed courageous response to the Ontario Government's Emergency Orders! As a law-abiding citizen who has followed and respected all COVID measures, even when I disagreed with them, I was appalled at yesterday's announcement around expanded powers. I am proud of the stand being taken by the leadership and members of the OPS. Thank you for serving our community with integrity and keeping us safe, while respecting our fundamental rights and freedoms.
- Thanks for making me proud to be an Ontarian again by stating you aren't going to stop people without just cause. I believe our police services are made up primarily of good, reasonable people whose only wish is to serve the public. So proud of you. Many thanks!
- I want to thank Police Chief Peter Sloly (and his Provincial peers) for displaying common sense by NOT randomly stopping citizens during this recent lockdown. I think the approach of working with people during this terrible time shows kindness, intelligence and respect to the many law-abiding citizens of our province. I thank you for your support and understanding during this very difficult time. Stay safe out there, you are appreciated.

- I know many of us are concerned with the impacts of COVID-19, and my family and I have been doing everything recommended to stop its spread; however, this fear does not justify turning our great province into a police state, and by rejecting the implementation of these new measures, you've shown that you are more than just the enforcement mechanism for politicians. That you care about the community you serve, and are dedicated to its true protection. When there were calls to "defund the police," I was quick to point out the error in those ideas, and support my local law enforcement. Seeing the Ottawa Police Service stand up for the rights of its community shows me that I was right to support you, and fills me with pride. So I say again, thank you for being a source of reason and common sense, and doing what's best for our city.
- I'm very proud to be in a city where the police department still recognizes that, despite the current pandemic restrictions, its citizens are still entitled to their rights and freedoms! I'm sure I'm not alone when I say that many Ottawans are probably a bit relieved to know that their police department still remains loyal to its community and mindful of the Canadian Charter of Right and Freedoms! Thank-you, Ottawa Police!
- Je tiens à remercier la Police d'Ottawa pour sa décision de ne pas faire de contrôle aléatoire pour vérifier ce que les citoyens font sur la rue, c'est du leadership qui correspond aux valeurs des gens d'ici et de la constitution canadienne. Merci pour votre décision, je suis fier d'être résident d'Ottawa.

Date Received: 18 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Traffic Services team

Excerpt from Letter: A sincere thank you for the traffic blitz in South Keys area; we have noticed the great increase of these disturbing types of drivers. They take away the enjoyment of beautiful days every year and give no thought to what it would be like if everyone ignored speeding, muffler and exhaust laws. You have given my family and many more hope.

Date Received: 18 April 2021

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I just wanted to say thank you for how well the police facilitated many of the protests that I have attended on Parliament Hill, in regards to the masking, lockdowns, and other unjustified/unconstitutional measures of our government. It is so appreciated to have the Ottawa Police supporting the rights of the inhabitants of Ottawa.

Date Received: 18 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Stephanie Perrier and Pierre-Luc Bergeron

Excerpt from Letter: I want to thank Constables Stephanie Perrier and Luc Bergeron for their incredible kindness in the terrible situation that occurred with my daughter. They were able to calm her, despite her high level of distress, and helped her to move out of a toxic situation. Thank you for your all your help, your kind words, and your compassion.

Date Received: 20 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Jimmy Fang and Connor Williams

Excerpt from Letter: I would like to take this opportunity to express my family's sincere thanks to the Ottawa Police Service's Communications Centre and Constables Jimmy Fang and Connor Williams, who aptly handled a disturbing situation involving our 9-year-old son. A person attempted to lure one of our two boys and everyone in OPS with whom we interacted handled this situation with aplomb - from the kind woman on dispatch to Csts. Fang and Williams who located the person of interest and kept us updated throughout the evening. From our observations, and that of neighbours, the officers handled this vulnerable person struggling with mental health issues with respect, professionalism, care and concern. The same is true with how Cst. Williams communicated with us about the situation, including taking a statement about the events from our youngest son. Cst. Fang displayed this same professionalism after returning from accompanying the person back to their shelter of residence, when he tactfully and compassionately apprised us of what had taken place, and the actions taken to get this person the medication and mental health supports they require. At all times, the officers were considerate and attuned to our son's young age and capacity to process what was happening/had happened. On behalf of our family, and all of our neighbours – thank you officers Williams and Fang, and the OPS for all that you do!

Date Received: 22 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Ryan Cuthbert

Excerpt from Letter: Last weekend, someone broke into our shed in Centretown and stole our two commuter bicycles. I posted on Facebook, Kijiji, and filed a police report. Two days later eagle-eyed Constable Ryan Cuthbert returned not just one but both bikes back to us, having spotted them in the market. We were completely speechless. Wow. That's it. Just wow.

Date Received: 22 April 2021

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: Thank you for your common-sense decision to withdraw Ottawa police from setting up a line of officers from interrogating Quebecers entering Ottawa. I appreciate you recognizing the premier's edicts as impracticable and useless for the lockdowns. It makes me appreciate there are men and women in the Ottawa Police Service who possess common sense. You are very much appreciated.

Date Received: 23 April 2021

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I just want to thank the officers who helped my daughter, who was suffering from psychosis, get to a hospital. She is now back at home (with mom) and hopefully I can get her into on track. I just saw a news story in the U.S. where a 16-year-old, wielding a knife, was shot and killed by police and I want to thank the OPS for being way more level-headed and handling what must have been difficult in getting my daughter to go for help. My sincere thanks to you.

Date Received: 24 April 2021

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: I recently received a bulletin from my landlord that asked people of my race to be "vigilant" of police presence during the lockdown; I found this to be extremely offensive! It is wrong to suggest that I should expect less than your best, or worse that I should fear you, irrespective of any and all groupings under the Charter of Human Rights. I categorically denounce the prevailing trend of biased, prejudiced accusations being leveled at you by amorphous groups made up of individuals who do not know how to think beyond their own needs or serve beyond their own interests. I would trust you implicitly as a matter of basic intelligence, and awareness of the fundamental, existential concept you embody in the universe. I will not be swayed by malicious, divisive propaganda that does not even attempt to disguise its villainy. If I felt that there was a way to help you further improve your standards, I would present my ideas respectfully, and acknowledge your efforts. You are my Trusted Partner in Community Safety! No one else! Thank you for all that you do, stay safe.

Date Received: 25 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Traffic Services team

Excerpt from Letter: Thank you to the Ottawa Police Service for addressing the ongoing problem of traffic driving at the speed limit or a little beyond. I've been blown by vehicles doing 20-30/kmh faster who have been weaving in and out of other lanes. They are a

menace to us all and I, for one, really appreciate that you're actively and regularly doing something to address this issue. Big thank you!

Date Received: 28 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Alan Tam

Excerpt from Letter: I am writing to express my appreciation to Constable Alan Tam who helped us with our son when he became suicidal. He suffers from bi-polar disorder, OCD, anxiety and depression. Cst. Tam arrived and was very professional and calm, bringing our son to hospital while my husband and I followed. It was a relief that he was so calm and under control and it was very apparent that Cst. Tam had established a connection with my son after chatting with him about everyday things and sports that they both had mutual interests in. Cst. Tam displayed an empathy that I am truly grateful, and he stayed with us more than six hours while we waited for our son to be admitted. Cst. Tam hit home with my son when he told him that he had taken the biggest step to helping himself by coming to the hospital. When a person is suicidal, they need someone to listen, trust, care and to be completely empathetic; Cst. Tam was this person. He showed my son nothing but respect and considered his dignity the entire time. Cst. Tam's actions and approach in this terrible ordeal gave us all a sense of relief. I hope he knows how impactful his kindness was to our family.

Date Received: 30 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Stephanie Lemieux, Charles Benoit, Devon Archer, Raymond Tucker-Peel, Samson Vo, Shannon Hobbs, Ross Griffith, and David McCulloch

Excerpt from Letter: I am writing with unreserved compliments on the actions and professional attitude demonstrated by the officers of the Ottawa Police Services last Friday in the wake of the two stabbings in Chinatown. I am a resident of Cambridge St. N. and was witness to much of the happenings that day. All officers were friendly, communicative, and entirely professional. All the while, they knew their tasks and set about it in a coordinated and efficient manner. Indeed, officers were still patrolling the street near midnight that night looking for evidence. To ensure the residents knew what they were doing, they knocked on doors and introduced themselves. And further, I witnessed the arrest and take-down of this dangerous suspect. Officers managed to do so without weapons drawn, which was no easy task given the resistance. Well done. Police in North America are under a great deal of scrutiny these days and I know that must be a lot of pressure on the men and women of the Ottawa Police Service. Please

be assured that I was pleased and proud to see OPS active and in force on our street that fatal day. I know others on our street feel the same way.

Date Received: 30 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable David Mcculloch

Excerpt from Letter: I wanted to compliment Constable David Mcculloch for his arrest of the murder suspect in Chinatown. He conducted himself with a high degree of professionalism. He assisted everyone on scene and we all felt secure due to his diligence about what was happening. The event came with a high degree of stress. Cst. Mcculloch maintained his composure and aided everyone to stay calm and informed. Cambridge St North thanks him! We all appreciate his hard work and the efforts of the Ottawa Police Service.

Date Received: 30 April 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Jonathan Nichol

Excerpt from Letter: I had an occurrence with a customer while driving my cab and I was very pleased and impressed by the response time and the swiftness of the officers who attended. Constable Jonathan Nichol, who took the report and assisted me, displayed super professionalism. He is an asset to your organization.

Date Received: 3 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Traffic Services team

Excerpt from Letter: Just wanted to thank you for all your officers' concerted effort in curbing speeding violations. I have noticed a major decrease in driver's speeding compared to earlier months.

Date Received: 3 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Anthony Kiwan, Vince Arlotta and Todd Clark

Excerpt from Letter: I witnessed an OPS officer assist a community member who was clearly in extreme distress. The officer had pulled over and asked the young man what was happening and when the young man responded that he was having a bad day, the officer said the simplest and kindest words: "Tell me what is happening that is making today so bad for you". I stayed to watch (from afar) as the officer called for back up and most importantly for medical care. After the paramedics assessed the young man, the first officer placed the young man in the back of his police vehicle, and they drove off.

These are trying and dangerous times and this officer's level of kindness, professionalism and empathy needs to be commended.

Date Received: 3 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: OPSOC

Excerpt from Letter: I want to thank you for responding to my request for a wellness check on my brother in Ottawa. I am located in the Sault Ste. Marie area and received alarming and unusual communications from his family. I was unable to make contact and was desperate to confirm his safety. It appears that the situation was not as acute as I feared however we remain concerned about his wellness. We are pursuing treatment in hopes of bringing him back to some semblance of health.

Date Received: 3 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Mathew McCarthy and Andrew Barrett

Excerpt from Letter: Good afternoon, I wanted to compliment the police officers and paramedics who attended an incident in my neighbourhood. I saw the situation unfold from my apartment window and was extremely impressed by the way both the police officers and paramedics dealt with the person who appeared to be in distress. From my perspective, they were all professional, respectful and patient.

Date Received: 4 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Corey Bourguignon

Excerpt from Letter: I was assaulted severely, fortunately I walked away scathed but still breathing. Constable Corey Bourguignon responded to my call, and I was overwhelmed by his thoughtfulness and consideration. He's someone that I trust and am able to call just because I need to talk to someone. I have the utmost respect for him and always will. You have an amazing officer and I'm so glad I met him. I am truly blessed and grateful for Cst. Bourguignon's help and it has renewed my views on police.

Date Received: 5 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Jo-Lynn Wellman, Camille Leonard and Matthew Jones

Excerpt from Letter: Two officers responded to a call I made for help with my client. The officers were very kind and helpful with him, despite his vulnerabilities which can make it very difficult to support him. I want to thank both the officers that attended that day.

Date Received: 8 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constables Iain Campbell and Taylor Bronstein

Excerpt from Letter: Two of your officers ended up doing a wellness check on me and, I'd like to thank them for treating me like a human being; especially when the reflection I see in the mirror is that of a monster.

Date Received: 9 May 2021

From: Member of the public

Excerpt from Letter: Many thanks to the police and paramedics who went to my brother's house yesterday. He is in hospital with a fracture of T9 vertebrae which they will do surgery on to stabilize. I thank you all for kind and efficient management.

Date Received: 10 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Cynthia Brennan

Excerpt from Letter: I was trying to apply for a records suspension and having trouble finding accurate information on your website. I reached out by phone and left a voicemail over the weekend. Cynthia Brennan promptly called me on Monday and provided me with all the information I needed to apply. I had follow-up questions and she continued to provide prompt support and answered all my questions.

Date Received: 10 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Sergeant Peter Van Der Zander

Excerpt from Letter: I wanted to take a moment to recognize Sergeant Peter Van Der Zander who took the time to visit with children at the park this past Sunday on Mother's Day. He was very kind, helpful and explained the good things he does to help our community and his fellow officers. He went above and beyond to make the children feel listened to, encouraged, and most importantly, safe. Thank you for all that you do. It is greatly appreciated.

Date Received: 12 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Andrew Worth

Excerpt from Letter: I would like to commend Constable Andrew Worth who attended my home during an episode when my 10-year-old son was in crisis. A week or two later, Cst Worth unexpectedly came to my door to follow up and check on my son and the rest of the family. Cst Worth generously gifted our family a gift certificate at a local restaurant. This unexpected kindness and attention were very much appreciated by a single mother of four children. Please extend my warmest thanks to Cst Worth.

Date Received: 13 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Jason Killeen

Excerpt from Letter: I had an encounter with Constable Jason Killeen after I was stopped for speeding. I would like to just let the officer know that the experience was 110% beautiful! Cst. Killeen treated me with respect and was kind. I didn't know I was speeding until I saw his car in the distance and thought "oh how fast am I going" and was like "ah snap." Yes, I got a ticket, but he did his job as he ought to in order to uphold the law – while being polite and respectful throughout.

Date Received: 14 May 2021

From: Member of the public

OPS member: Constable Andrew Worth

Excerpt from Letter: Yesterday I was out on a walk in my neighbourhood when I saw one of your officers helping an elderly woman do yard work. I stopped and watched for a bit, the two were just chatting about life, kids and work, like they were life-long friends. I spoke briefly to Constable Andrew Worth and asked him if she was a relative. He said no, he just saw her struggling with her dandelions, so he stopped. It was one of the nicest things I have ever seen.