

Constable Jody Dugas, Halton Regional Police Service 2015 Bud Knight Award Recipient

Constable Jody Dugas is a member of the Halton regional Police Service.

Constable Dugas oversees a program called Police Ethnic and Cultural Education Youth Leadership Program (PEACE). It is presented over the course of 12 weeks and runs twice a year. When Constable Dugas came to the program she questioned why enrollment was so low. She took it upon herself to promote the program through High School guidance counselors and school liaison officers, as well as, setting up information booths herself at the schools to connect first hand with the students. These efforts have been so successful that each of the PEACE sessions no runs at its maximum capacity and there are waiting lists for successive sessions.

One of the outcomes of the success of the PEACE program was graduates were asking for other volunteer opportunities with the service, however none existed. This led Constable Dugas to develop and implement the Teen Random Acts of Kindness Team (TRACK). Constable Dugas finds opportunities in the various communities throughout Halton to perform the acts of kindness, such as cleaning garbage from green space adjacent to a local Mosque or preparing, cooking, and serving a meal to residents of an assisted living facility. After a successful pilot project in 2014, the TRACK team became a permanent program sanctioned by Halton Police. TRACK completes an act of kindness on the first Saturday of each month, alternating between the three municipalities of the Region.

Constable Dugas has been instrumental in the Toys for Tots campaign, which she has lead since 2011. Constable Dugas recognized when she was leading the campaign that they were only reaching families who were receiving assistance from Salvation Army, and felt their were many more families in need in the Halton area. She reached out to school boards and gained approval to deal with individual schools directly. She worked with 36 schools throughout the Region, thereby giving 84 more families the gift of a wonderful Christmas morning.

Constable Dugas went on to form new partnerships with community organizations in order to reach as many families in need as possible; Children's Aid Society, Halton Woman's Place, Big Brothers/ Sisters, and many more. Under Constable Dugas' direction, the volunteers came into personal contact with the people they were helping, and enjoyed an elevated experience and a deeper sense of connection to the spirit of community.

Constable Dugas introduced a diversity initiative by including religious groups. She also joined forces with Oakville Autism Society and Community Living Burlington to reach special needs children. This year she garnered extensive media coverage for the campaign kickoff by partnering with Tiger Jeet Singh, a world renowned wrestling personality and prominent member of the local Sikh community. She harnessed the natural competitive nature of most police officers by issuing a gift card challenge, to see which platoon could raise the most in gift cards, raising nearly \$3000.00. She also enlisted the help of over 20 third year Police Foundations students from Mohawk College who volunteered 155 hours of their time packing toys for families. In the four years since Constable Dugas has taken over the Toys for Tots program they have raised and distributed \$1,167,995.00 worth of toys, cash, gift cards and food, which is more than double the amount raised in the previous 11 years combined. Over 4000 families in Halton Region directly benefitted from the past year's campaign.

As a direct result of the Toys for Tots program, Constable Dugas identified that the women's shelter in Burlington was in need of a teen room. She enlisted the help of family and friends to clean out the identified space, paint it and decorate it with furnishings which she solicited from local businesses. She did all of this on her own time and completed it within a couple of weeks. The following year Jody volunteered her family's services again to create a similar teen room at the Milton location. As she was doing this she realized that the outdoor play equipment was in disrepair and was closed by the Region; however the shelter lacked the resources to replace it. After securing funds she was able to acquire a new playground and free labour by family, leading to the construction of a new playground.

There is not enough room on this page to detail the many ways that Constable Jody Dugas has consistently presented herself as a dedicated professional, whose leadership is truly making a substantial difference in her community. For these reasons and more, she is very deserving of the 2015 Bud Knight Award.

Congratulations Constable Dugas!!!!