

Constable Neal Ridley, Niagara Regional Police Service - 2013 Bud Knight Award Recipient

Constable Neal Ridley is a member of the Niagara Regional Police Service currently assigned to uniform operations in the Niagara Region. He is a School Resource Officer (SRO), responsible for six high schools, in the Cities of Welland and Fonthill.

Constable Ridley makes a positive difference in the community through the development and delivery of programs and leadership for youth. The Restoring Events with Integrity, Negotiation & Dignity (REWIND) program uses a proactive and collaborative approach to addressing harmful incidents in school. It is a restorative justice program made possible through partnerships with the school boards. Constable Ridley is an active participant with this successful program and encouraged members of the SRO program to offer this resource as an alternative to criminal charges. It has been noted that his perseverance influences other SRO members and keeps them engaged and participating with his initiatives.

Constable Ridley recently began an initiative, which is open to all 28 high schools in the Niagara Region, that he calls, Students Unite Anti-Bullying Film Festival. This initiative will include each school competing for a top prize of having their film aired on television. The students will be creating a 30 second public service anti-bullying announcement which promotes a healthy school climate and encourages team spirit. Judges will include television personalities, radio hosts, Police Chief McGuire and the local Mayor.

Constable Ridley's interaction with youth is commendable as he builds lasting, meaningful and productive relationships. In an effort to reward youth for making positive changes, Constable Ridley, in partnership with the John Howard Society, was able to provide 28 selected students with an all-expense paid trip to a retreat in Guilford, Ontario, chaperoned by SRO's. He created an opportunity for youth to build on essential life skills in the first ever SRO camp retreat initiative. It was noted that Constable Ridley's commitment to the success of this retreat helped change the perception between at-risk youth and police.

Constable Ridley mentors and engages youth to help them become stronger citizens. He organizes the attendance of officers at project IMPACT (Intensive Measures Police and Community Together) which allows students to participate in a mentoring program that involves the District School Board of Niagara, Brock University, and the Niagara Regional Police. The goal is to assist youth in making positive choices and decisions by providing activities that include career planning, recreation, and decision

making in a team-style setting.

Constable Ridley consistently demonstrates a commitment to working in partnership with the community. He currently sits on a committee at E.W. Farr Elementary School, where he assists with serving hot lunches to students. He is also a Board member with the John Howard Society of Niagara.

Constable Ridley has been recognized by the community and the Police Services Board for his professionalism, dedication and leadership in making a difference. For these reasons, he is very deserving of this reward.

Congratulations Constable Ridley!