

Media Release

Constable Sarah Bamford and Sergeant Peter Leon Honoured with the Catherine Martin Award of Excellence in Media Relations

For Immediate Release: June 11, 2018

(Toronto, ON) – Ontario’s police leaders are proud to announce that Constable Sarah Bamford of the Barrie Police Service and Sergeant Peter Leon of the Ontario Provincial Police are this year’s recipients of the Catherine Martin Award of Excellence in Media Relations. The awards will be presented at the OACP’s 2018 Annual Meeting taking place June 10-13 in Huntsville, ON.

This Award recognizes a sworn or civilian member (or team) who has demonstrated consistent dedication and professionalism in the strategic use of media and/or social media – either individually or as part of a campaign – to educate and showcase the profession of policing in the community, supporting public safety or advancing investigations in the Province of Ontario.

Constable Bamford and Sergeant Leon are being honoured for their work on the *Simcoe County Case Files*. Influenced by a concept developed by West Yorkshire Police in England, Simcoe County Case Files was launched in May, 2017. This initiative utilizes social media platforms, video vignettes, and cube vans adorned with large posters to assist local police in solving historical, cold case files.

The initiative was launched by profiling the death and/or disappearance of five people between 1991 and 2005. With the approval of the affected family members Constable Bamford and Sergeant Leon co-hosted and narrated video vignettes, meticulously presenting the facts of each case. These videos have been posted on all major social media platforms, including YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The goal behind using social media was not only to reach a large audience, but also to encourage people who may have information involving these cases to feel more confident in coming forward on-line as opposed to more traditional reporting methods.

To date, the video vignettes have been viewed more than 205,000 around the world. Investigators have received new leads and tips pertaining to the cases. In April 2018, more than 26 years after two individuals were reported missing, two people were charged in connection with the murder of those individuals profiled. The solving of the cold case files has been credited to the efforts of Simcoe County Case Files.

“Innovative use of traditional media, social media, and other forms of communications to solve crimes and promote community safety is vitally important today. We are proud to honour Constable Bamford and Sergeant Leon for their tremendous work on this initiative.” said OACP President Chief Bryan Larkin.

These annual awards are made possible by the generous support of McMaster University.

The OACP’s annual awards will be presented on June 12. For more information on all our award winners, please visit the OACP website at www.oacp.ca.



Ontario Association of Chiefs
of Police

40 College Street
Suite 605
Toronto, ON
M5G 2J3

**For more information,
contact:**

Joe Couto
Director of Government
Relations & Communications
T. (416) 926-0424, ext. 22
C. (416) 919-9798
E. media@oacp.ca
Web: www.oacp.ca
Twitter: @OACPOfficial
Instagram: OACPOfficial
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/OACP
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