



YOUTH JUSTICE

MINISTER OF JUSTICE
NATIONAL YOUTH
JUSTICE POLICING
AWARD 2009

Message from the Minister



As Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, I would like to offer my congratulations to Constable Andria Cowan, the recipient of the tenth annual *Minister of Justice National Youth Justice Policing Award*.

This award recognizes police officers who display excellence and innovation in dealing with youth who come into conflict with the law. Constable Cowan has demonstrated a commitment and enthusiasm that can serve as an example to us all as we develop new ways to support youth justice.

Police officers across this country play a pivotal role as they guide our youth to make smart choices and choose the right path. Our communities continue to benefit from their unique experiences, their innovation in policing and their extensive expertise.

The Government of Canada is committed to investing in measures to address the most serious, chronic and violent youth offenders, as well as the root causes of youth crime. We continue to respond to youth crime, using fair and appropriate measures to hold young people accountable when they break the law, and are committed to strengthening the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA).

On behalf of all Canadians, I wish to thank Constable Cowan, along with each and every police officer, for their commitment, dedication and sacrifices in keeping our communities safe.

The Honourable Rob Nicholson
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

Minister of Justice National Youth Justice Policing Award

The Minister of Justice National Youth Justice Policing Award was established in 2000 in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP). The award recognizes police officers who, individually or as a team, develop approaches for dealing with youth in conflict with the law that go beyond the formal court system. It celebrates innovative policing and serves to inform the police and wider community about creative responses to youth crime.

Specifically, the award recognizes individuals or teams who draw upon the programs and approaches outlined in the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA), including:

- The use of extrajudicial measures described under Part I of the YCJA (e.g. using warnings, cautions, referrals to community agencies, or not taking any further action as an alternative to the formal court system);
- Providing advice to decision makers about the youth justice process through conferencing; or
- Contributing to the rehabilitation and reintegration of youth who have been found guilty.

To be considered for the award, it will have been demonstrated that nominees have met the criteria and show that they are committed to helping young people understand the impact of their actions and encourage the involvement of parents, families and communities in the justice system.

Winner



CONSTABLE ANDRIA COWAN #4818
Toronto Police Service

Constable Andria Cowan of the Toronto Police Service is the recipient of the 2009 Minister of Justice National Youth Justice Policing Award for her work with the Argos Foundation Youth Mentorship Program.

Andria Cowan is a police constable in the Major Crime Unit of the Toronto Police Service. Constable Cowan has worked with the Toronto Police Service since 2000, and is currently working with 41 Division in the Community Response Unit.

In 2005, Constable Cowan joined the Argos Foundation's *Stop the Violence* initiative. The Argos Foundation is the charitable arm of the Toronto Argonauts Football Club. Its *Stop the Violence* initiative is committed to reducing gun violence in Toronto, empowering youth through mentorship, educating youth about the perils of gun and gang involvement, and supporting youth-led violence prevention and intervention initiatives.

Constable Cowan has been responsible for running the *Stop the Violence* program and is Vice Chair of the Argos Foundation. It is Constable Cowan's goal to see the program expand to other CFL teams in the country.

Through the initiative's Youth Mentorship Program, Toronto Argonaut players visit and mentor youth inside a full-custody youth centre. This effort began as a pilot project in 2006 with a start-up grant from the Department of Justice through the Youth Justice Renewal Fund. The program is now in its fourth year at Sprucedale Youth Detention Centre in Simcoe and will transition into the Roy McMurtry Centre in Brampton as part of the core programming for male youthful offenders.

In addition to her work with the Argos Foundation, Constable Cowan is an active community volunteer serving as member at large with the Board of Directors for East Metro Youth Services, as Secretary for the Gray-Hadden Family Foundation, as a lecturer for Crisis Call, and as Chair for the Bond Academy School Council.