

Police recruits settle in Cobourg

BETH HAY'S GRANDDAUGHTER

College attracts 41 students to first police foundations course

BY JEANNE BENETEAU
STAFF WRITER

COBOURG - The first crop of police foundation students from the local Sir Sandford Fleming campus will provide area police services with a top-notch pick of recruits, says the local Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment inspector.

"It's a win-win situation for all of us... for the OPP, the Cobourg and Port Hope Police Services, for the community and for the students themselves," says Northumberland's OPP Inspector, Mike Johnston.

Yesterday marked the arrival of 41 police foundation students from across Canada who will receive their schooling at Sir Sandford Fleming's Lakeshore campus in Cobourg. The students, who will spend the next two years training for a career in law enforcement, represent the cream-of-the-crop, says Campus Operations Leader, Brenda Liston-Hanley. With over 170 hopefuls vying for a spot in the new program, the selection was based on academic standings.

One of the new recruits is Tracy Qaqqasiq, a 23-year-old single mother of two who has made the trek from Arctic Bay, Nunavut to become part of the first class.

While she had the option to attend a Royal Canadian Mounted Police course in Regina, she chose Sir Sandford Fleming.

"I did my research and Sir Sandford Fleming is the best," says Ms. Qaqqasiq.

She was born and raised in Arctic Bay, population 800. It's no easy decision to pack up two children and with a nanny (her cousin) in tow, move to Southern Ontario. But she says she is bound and determined to finish the course, "no matter what." It is her short-term goal to return

home to help the youth of Nunavut, "there is a high percentage of youth suicide," and eventually move on to a policing position in Newfoundland.

"Cornerbrook, Nfld. is the place I want to eventually settle and raise my family," she adds.

Yesterday's warm weather was a perfect setting for an orientation barbecue for the incoming students, hosted by the college. The sunny skies and mild temperature was a pleasant surprise, added Ms. Qaqqasiq. She and her family boarded the plane bound for Ottawa and 16 C is considered a hot summer day in Canada's far north.

While far from home, the Arctic Bay transplant has local connections with a grandmother in Colborne and other relatives in the Peterborough area. She says she is fortunate to have a family who is so supportive. But she adds her driving force is her children, who are the light of her life.

"I will succeed not only for me but for them," she concluded.

The police foundation program was established at the college's Peterborough campus in 1984, says Ms. Liston-Hanley. This September marks the first time the program will be offered

in Cobourg.

The small classes, combined with community policing and field placement opportunities with the three local police services, offers the students in-depth, hands-on experience in their pursuit of a policing career, she added.

Both Port Hope Police Chief Ron Hoath and Cobourg Deputy Police Chief Kyle Foster sing the praises of the high quality potential police recruits produced through the program.

"Their basic skills are sound," says Chief Hoath. "The program prepares them for the practical training they receive when they attend police college in Aylmer."

Cobourg Mayor Peter Delanty was also on-hand to welcome the students to the area.

"Thank you for coming here," says Mayor Delanty. "It's exciting for the first time to have young people coming to the area to train for their career in policing."

He also extended an open invitation to the inaugural class to be part of the annual dragon boat races in support of the Northumberland United Way campaign.

"You're young, strong and odds-on favourites to win the race," he concluded.



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Tracy Qaqqasiq cooks up some burgers for local police officials, left to right, OPP Superintendent Mike Johnston, Port Hope Police Chief Ron Hoath and Cobourg Deputy Police Chief Kyle Foster. Ms. Qaqqasiq is one of the first 41 students to take the police foundations course at Sir Sandford Fleming College.

Ramble a hit

Thousands come from near and far
to glimpse rural life

By Valerie MacDonald
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There were so many people visiting the Strehl's bison ranch last Saturday no one had time to count them, says one of the owners.

That was the day half the skittish buffalo herd broke out of the field closest to the barn yard.

By the next day, however, they had settled down. Another 202 people went through that day, says Inga Strehl.

Sunday was a slow day by comparison, added the woman who helped prepare bison burgers and sausages for her guests during the annual Rural Ramble, sponsored by the Northumberland Federation of Agriculture (NFA).

The bison ranch was one of about 30 agricultural and rural stops across Northumberland's countryside attracting 3,000 to 4,000 people throughout the weekend, estimates NFA event co-ordinator Cathy McCann. Ticket pickups from 48 sales locations weren't completed so a final figure was not available at press time.

The visitors who came the farthest were two from Australia, she said. There were also travellers from California and Holland.

"We had a lot of people from Toronto this year," Mrs. McCann continued. "I think the word's getting out!"

Farm and business hosts who were part of the tour this year as well as last year said they were "swamped," especially on Saturday, she added.

Among those stops getting the most visits were the dairy and beef operations in both the west and east ends of Northumberland, the Castleton-area alpaca and Roseneath-area bison ranches, and Campbell's Honey House near Dartford.

Of surprise to the organizers were the numbers of people who visited Red Cloud Cemetery to see prairie grass and the nearby Ryken Woodlot operation between Morganston and Burnley.

"It attracted the same kind of people," Mrs. McCann said. "It worked."

Sale of the NFA's Rural Ramble CD *Out on a Rural Ramble* — songs composed and performed by James Gordon about special people, places and things in Northumberland — helped raise funds for the event.