

Building A Safer and Healthier Public Safety Personnel Community

South Stormont invites first responders and spouses to an evening of lived experience, awareness and discussion.

Rob Leathen (bio on next page),

Laura Kloosterman (bio on next page),

Syd Gravel (bio on next page),

share their knowledge and insight to help build a safer healthier first responder community.



LEATHEN
Educational Services



Please join us on
01 June 2023, 6:30 - 09:00pm at the
South Stormont Hall, 2 Mille Roches Rd,
Long Sault for what will be a very educational
and thought provoking evening for all.

For more information please contact
Charlene Davidson at
Charlene.Davidson@opp.ca

Refreshments courtesy of M&L Supply



Building A Safer and Healthier Public Safety Personnel Community

Speaker Profile Rob Leathen

Peer Support Specialist, Mental Health Educator, Advocate and Speaker,
Podcast Guest, Panelist, Author and Digital Artist



Rob Leathen is a recently retired 30 year veteran of the Ontario Fire Service. In 2019 he was diagnosed with severe PTSD/Depression and like some, his journey also included a very close call with suicide. He openly and very publicly shares his lived experience to help chip away at the stigma that still exists surrounding 1st responder mental health and suicide.

He is also very driven and passionate about educating those who's organizational roles involve mental health support, from the perspective of a person with lived experience. He does this through his mental health education and advocacy efforts, mental health related digital artwork, and peer support with various 1st responder peer support organizations.

"Silence does nothing but strengthen stigma and when we recover loudly, we keep others from dying quietly so speak up, speak out and speak loudly when it comes to 1st responder mental health!"

So not only does he talk the talk but he also walks the walk. His efforts to educate and advocate lead to the creation of his company Leathen Educational Services.



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Speaker Profile

Laura Kloosterman

Executive Director, Badge of Life Canada



Laura Kloosterman is a retired Ontario Provincial Police Constable with 32 years of experience. She has worked with several specialized units including Surveillance, Missing and Exploited Persons, Witness Protection, Recruitment, Dignitary Protection and retired from the Professional Standards Branch.

Before retiring, Laura created an Education Based Resolution for Officers named in Public and Internal Complaints through the Office of the Independent Police Review Director. (OIPRD) This program was approved by the Director of OIPRD as well as the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police. The Ontario Provincial Police Association also supported the Program because of the proactive approach through education in meeting the requests of the Complainant and Respondent Officer, in a non-adversarial and pre-emptive manner.

She has trained with the Northern Virginia Criminal Justice Academy in topics involving The Dynamics of Human Behaviour as well as various subjects around Criminal Behavioral characteristics with the U.S. Marshalls. She has received training throughout Canada, United Kingdom as well as Australia on human connection and mental well-being in Public Safety Personnel.

Laura has been a strong advocate for mental wellbeing and acknowledging everyone's own personal resilience. Her journey has taught her sustainable growth equals sustainable happiness.

Her road to Executive Director of Badge of Life Canada began several years ago while in the OPP. She began by attending Peer Support meetings and later, became a peer supporter herself. Prior to her retirement from the OPP, she joined the Board of Directors of Badge of Life Canada, subsequently became the Executive Director in October 2021.

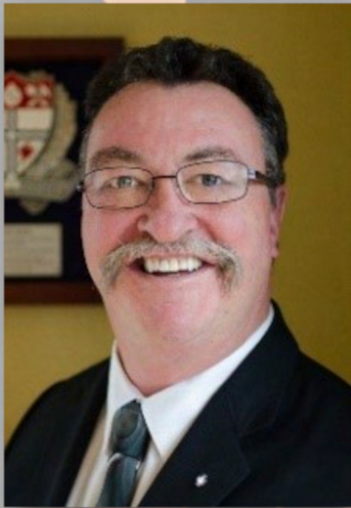
Laura believes in promoting healthy living through knowledge and education while creating a strong sense of community.



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Speaker Profile

Syd Gravel, M.O.M., O.O.O.
STAFF SERGEANT (RET'D.)



Syd Gravel, with thirty-one years of experience with the Ottawa Police Service is a founding father of Robin's Blue Circle established in 1988, co-founder of Badge of Life Canada, and First Canadian Director of the Global Mental Health Peer Network, and now sits as a senior mentor with each of these groups.

He is the founder of the Peer and Trauma Support Systems with the Mood Disorders Society of Canada and presently co-leads and co-facilitates their work.

Syd was inducted as a Member of the Order of Merit in Canada, and was also awarded the Exemplary Medal and Bar and the Order of Ottawa.

He has been consulted on peer support systems not only in Canada, but the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Zimbabwe and the Cameroon. He also co-developed a variety of training curriculum not only in Canada but the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland.

He has authored "56 Seconds" and "How to Survive PTSD and Build Peer Support." and co-authored "Walk the Talk" and "Slay the Toxic Dragon – Police Leadership Impacting Member Wellness". Syd presently sits additionally on the Board of Community Living Renfrew, Ontario and as a volunteer retired peer with the OPS.

Syd is an open heart surgery survivor (2019) and is still a competitive powerlifter. In 2022 took the Gold Medal at the Police-Fire Can-Am Games. He performs strongman events for fundraising for hospitals with his spouse Judy, who holds several National and Provincial Powerlifting records. He is married for over 46 years and has three grandchildren.

