

'CARE, AS A DUTY'

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS BY REAL PEOPLE

Globally, Canadians have earned a reputation as devoted humanitarians. As one of the most secure countries in the world, Canada, for the most part, enjoys sufficient flows of capital, labour, goods and services. The evolution of 'Human Security' practices is directly related to the values of democracy, tolerance, dignity, and respect. As Canadians, we willingly take on the responsibility to protect people – doing so with 'Care as a Duty.'

The past two decades have seen rapid population growth in Canada, particularly in the four major cities of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary. Such growth brings security challenges and increased demands on public safety officials.

Fulfilling the duty of care imposed by common law and legislation has become imperative. Breaching this duty may give rise

to actions for negligence or even criminal prosecutions of individuals and agencies.

Despite differing viewpoints surrounding 'Care as a Duty,' there are general principles that must be adhered to. Combating opposing perspectives requires mutual understanding and collaborative discussion of ideas and views, irrespective of their source. What is paramount, is that we acknowledge and provide the fundamental protections and services deserved by our fellow human beings.

In Canada, members of the armed forces, fire fighters, paramedics and law enforcement officials, including police and peace officers, are all considered responsible practitioners of public safety. For the record, a peace officer has a limited enforcement authority as compared to a police officer, however, there are vital commonalities.

All practitioners of public safety are morally and legally mandated to recognize 'Care as a Duty'. They must ensure the protection of the most vulnerable individuals in society from risk of harm and abuse. There should be a sense of ownership of and commitment to this principle, which includes taking primary responsibility, coordinating efforts, and making conscientious decisions: in short, "doing the right thing."

In the western province of Alberta, the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Public Security has successfully put into place measures and directives to improve public safety. There are over 3000 peace officers working with many agencies throughout the province. The Calgary Police Service (CPS) is the police agency of that jurisdiction. Working cooperatively, Calgary Transit Peace Officers (CTPO) have

been assigned policing responsibilities on or in relation to transit assets, infrastructure and service.

In the execution of duties and responsibilities relating to transit properties, CTPOs are mandated to respond to every call concerning an individual's welfare. These calls must be attended by a CTPO who assesses the situation and follows through by ensuring the supervision and care of the person or people involved. CTPOs have the authority to override individuals' decisions to care for themselves, especially in cases where people might do harm to themselves or are unable to make rational decisions to care for themselves.

A career in public safety comes with risks and inconveniences and responsibility. One recent example was an individual who had been the victim of an assault. This person was intoxicated to the point where he failed to realize he had a deep laceration on his cheek, from which the bone protruded, and which caused a blood trail for about five hundred meters as he kept walking away. The severity of the injury and the inability to make a rational decision by the individual allowed CTPOs to override his choice not to seek assistance. The CTPOs had a duty to recognize this individual was in dire need, and so requested Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to be present, thus facilitating prompt medical assistance. One thing is certain – individuals requiring such assistance and direction are those most vulnerable in society.

Protecting lives and securing the safety of fellow humans is part of the job. In doing so, one is serving one's community. It is a selfless profession, one that makes a difference in the quality of life and the community one serves. One of the key features of the profession is a public affirmation of an oath identifying the high ethical standards to be applied in a consistent manner throughout an organization. Police and peace officers believe and practice this oath in their day-to-day duties.

There are approximately one hundred thousand law enforcement professionals in Canada, many of whom are involved in proactive work addressing the complex issues encountered on the job. Training and mediation for citizens and communities are intended to promote awareness, social stability, and peace.

A fitting example would be RCMP Chief Superintendent Doug Coates who,

with his colleague Sergeant Mark Gallagher, were among 82 Canadian police officers assigned to the RCMP's International Peace Operations Branch for the United Nations Stabilization mission, and had been deployed to Haiti to help train local law enforcement officers. They readily chose to leave the safety and security of Canada and serve the needs of the less fortunate in the challenging and developing regions of the world and, during the earthquakes of 2010, made the ultimate sacrifice. They, along with many others, are indeed real people making significant contributions to 'Care as a Duty.' ¹

Vikram (Vik) Kulkarni is a Peace Officer Sergeant with the Public Safety and Enforcement section of Calgary Transit. He holds a Masters degree in Human Security and Peacebuilding from Royal Roads University and can be reached at Vikram.Kulkarni@calgary.ca



Protecting lives and securing the safety of fellow humans is part of the job. In doing so, one is serving one's community. It is a selfless profession, one that makes a difference in the quality of life and the community that one serves.

All practitioners of public safety are morally and legally mandated to recognize 'Care as a Duty'. They must ensure the protection of the most vulnerable individuals in society from risk of harm and abuse.



POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Sign up today...

Be an active participant on FrontLine's new comment forum. Join our community of people and organizations dedicated to improving to safety and security through resilience and cooperation. <http://security.frontline.online>