



COPKA

Citizens for Respectful Policing

*Newsletter #17
Winter 2015/16*

COPKA MOURNS



COPKA mourns the sudden and tragic loss of Nathalie Warmerdam, who died September 22, 2015. Nathalie has been a volunteer with us for six years, working in research, writing articles and organizational development. She was elected to the Board this April and her clear vision and optimism helped guide COPKA through a difficult time. Nathalie's dedication to helping people harmed by police actions and to speaking truth to power inspired everyone who worked with her at COPKA. Nathalie is sorely missed, but she will not be forgotten. As COPKA begins to move forward, we carry Nathalie's strength, integrity and love of community with us.

DIRECTOR SEARCH

As you know, Nathalie's death leaves COPKA with a board of two, which is not enough to maintain our corporate status. We have until January 2016 to find a new director. Thanks to all who shared the job posting with your networks. We are holding interviews in December and will introduce our new interim director in your next newsletter.

NEW POLICY MANUAL: After the general meeting in April, the new board took several months to complete a full policy review. Rather than re-invent the wheel, they based their work on the excellent policy and procedures manual of the Community Justice Project, who generously agreed to let COPKA use their materials. The board focused especially on creating a positive, creative and respectful organization, both in our relations with police and also in our internal relationships. Once the draft manual is finalized, it will be a great asset to all COPKA volunteers.



NOTE: COPKA members are always welcome to give input on policy, or anything else. This is your COPKA.

QUESTION FOR YOU: What do you think is the best structure for COPKA? Right now we are a corporation, but there are costs as well as benefits to this. Do you have a better idea? Get in touch and let us know what you think. You will see more opportunities to explore this question in the coming months.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT:

COPKA community support worker Genevieve Way continues to help people who report being harmed by police actions. Several calls this year came from other Ontario communities where police are abusing their power. Genevieve gave support and shared COPKA processes and publications, including our brochures. COPKA encourages other communities to develop their own groups to address police abuses.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

COPKA is looking for people to attend CPAC meetings, which happen 4 or 5 times per year. These are public meetings where local politicians and police administration discuss policing issues in our communities. COPKA's presence at CPAC can provide a voice for the community on policing issues that matter to us. Contact the office to find out how you can help.

HAVE YOU HEARD? "KILLALOE DOESN'T LIKE POLICE." Is this rumour true? It is a fact that local people who have been harmed by police quickly lose respect for them. How can people like the police when they can no longer trust them? This loss of faith in police happens all over the world, wherever the police ignore or reject community complaints.

COPKA was born out of a care for our whole community. We care about people getting hurt by police actions. We also care that so many people no longer trust the police here, making police work more difficult and dangerous. We care that one officer's bad behaviour reflects on the whole force. We care that officers are rarely supported to take responsibility for their own mistakes and make amends to the people they harm.

Killaloe *is* different than many communities, not because we dislike the police, but because we have community volunteers willing to address policing issues. COPKA supports people harmed, speaks up about policing problems, asks for positive changes, and tries to do all of this with respect and integrity. COPKA is not perfect, but we are open to improving, and that is what we ask of our police as well.

OUR COMMUNITIES COULD LOOK LIKE THIS:

- people know their rights when interacting with police;
- people harmed by police actions are treated with respect and fairness;
- police who do harm take responsibility and make amends;
- police and communities work together to solve problems;
- our communities are once again proud and supportive of our police force.



***HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE,
AND ALL THE BEST IN 2016!***