

Speech to the National Police Foundation (NPF) Family Services

Hello, my name is Bev Busson and I am thrilled and honoured to be asked to say a few words to you today as we recognize 2021 as the Year of the RCMP Family.

Looking back on the year that was, I find myself thankful that 2020 is over and the promise of a much more positive 2021 is in front of us all! I will not dwell on the last year except to say that it offers us all a perspective on our blessings, including our health, our family and our future. To say that it was an unforgettable year, that no one wants to remember is an understatement ... so let's look forward to 2021.

The NPF Family Services organization has set very ambitious goals to offer support to the RCMP membership and their families that will, in the end, benefit everyone in society. In these times, our connection with family has been very important in getting us through some difficult moments. For those who serve in the very challenging field of policing, this support is paramount...and sometimes taken for granted by the larger community. I want to take a moment to celebrate the contribution of families in creating a safe and supportive environment for those who wear the uniform of the best police force in the world.

RCMP families resonate with me on a number of levels. First of all, having been a member of the Force for 33 years, I sensed that from the moment I signed up, I was joining a special group that would be my family forever. I was told this early in training and it has been my experience throughout my career. But more than that, as I moved through the ranks, I felt the support from those I worked with and the sense of responsibility of being in a special family, and a part of feeling the need to live up to the expectations of those who shared my commitment to service and excellence. I then experienced being a member of the RCMP family in a different way.

I became the spouse of an RCMP member and began to understand the next level of dedication and sacrifice. I was now the primary support pillar for another member, with the added responsibility of be there for them as well ... to be a source of encouragement during those tough assignments or just as a sounding board. With this special and personal relationship, as you all know, there is the inevitable experience of missed birthdays, anniversaries and social occasions, caused by the call to duty. I came to understand first hand, the frustration of the spouses of members I had worked with in the past, and their sacrifices, that had often seemed to go unnoticed and unappreciated.

Within my own family, my children too learned early, and the hard way, that although they were OUR priority, the responsibility of the policing profession we had chosen often called on them as well, to postpone their birthday celebrations, to learn that Christmas did not always come Christmas Day, that someone else could cheer, (maybe not as loud) at their sports events, and that having their parents around when they needed them was sometimes a luxury.

When I became the Commissioner of the RCMP, an even more profound realization occurred. As I looked back, I realized that I could not have accomplished ANY of my career goals without the love of MY family,

and the unflinching support that gave my career meaning and purpose. What must be remembered, however, and I hope you all know, that it is the entire family, that is contributing to the greater good... and that together everyone has helped to make a difference and contributed to a safer community.

I now have a daughter and son-in-law who are members, so the RCMP family now extends to her, her husband and my grandchildren, so you see I have a vested interest in the incredible contribution you are making to offer support and recognition to those who serve and those who love them.

I had an opportunity recently to speak to Commissioner Brenda Lucki and she wanted me to communicate to you, her profound respect for RCMP families as key contributors to operational goals and objectives of the Force, and to wish everyone associated with NPF Family Services, the best, as you undertake this incredibly important initiative to support the families of the members who work so hard for all of us.

I think you may know that I am also a Senator in the Senate of Canada. (not the hockey team). When I started my presentation today, I mentioned that the RCMP family is a forever family. In closing, I will reinforce that thought by telling you

that I accepted that honour in large part because I wanted to make sure that my extended family - the members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police - had a voice in Parliament. I will continue to endeavor to communicate the amazing work you do every day, and to reinforce that there are unsung heroes bravely serving their country, going above and beyond the call of duty, along with their families, who contribute behind the scenes to maintain the peace and uphold the values of our society and to stand between good and evil.