

SWORN MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Answering the Call

Judith Solomon,
Peel Police Service

By Lauren Alpern

Peel Police Constable Judith Solomon was just about to bite into her burrito when the call came in that threw her into the spotlight.

It was 2:00 am on February 7, 2022, and the 911 call said there was a stabbing at the Shoppers Drug Mart at Kennedy and Queen in Brampton. With less than two years on the job but without hesitation, the 25-year-old constable went to the call on her own. She found the victim on the floor with a stab wound in her neck, screaming family members all around her and the suspect still in the store.

Judith immediately went to work, remembering her training. She directed a nearby family member to apply pressure to the wound in order to slow the bleeding, evacuated the pharmacy and successfully arrested the culprit. Once backup arrived, she turned over the suspect and returned to administer first aid to the victim. Despite raging nerves on the inside, Judith appeared calm and collected. She kept the victim conscious by talking to her and assured her that she would be okay. These actions helped ensure the victim made a full recovery.

A few months later, Judith was awarded the Axon RISE Officer Award in recognition of her courage and heroism, and the Officer of the Year Award by OWLE Canada. The Nigerian-born constable appreciates the accolades, but doesn't understand why she has received so many of them for simply doing her job.

"There are so many people who do this every single day, and they don't get the acknowledgment. I'm really overwhelmed," said Judith, who moved to Canada with her father when she was six. "I got to help someone, and the fact that she survived a really horrible incident is the best reward I could get."

But several traumatic calls, including the infamous one, have taken a toll, and the young officer is now on leave to look after her own mental health.

"It's been a bit of a struggle. I was waking up hourly and having nightmares. We go from call to call without a break, and



Left: Judith and Nadia Alexander with another colleague.

I've barely had enough time to sleep or eat. All of this ended up triggering things from the stabbing call and a difficult shooting call," said Judith. "I want to go back, and will, as soon as I'm feeling better. I was finding myself a little short-tempered and was making little mistakes, and I don't like that. I didn't feel like I was doing my job as best I could."

While on leave, Judith has been getting back to the things

she enjoys, which has helped her to start feeling like her normal self again: training her dog; exercising; watching Netflix; cooking; singing and dancing.

"It's been nice to get out of Brampton to clear my head and do the things that bring me back to the regular me," said Judith, who says her time playing rugby helped prepare her for the job. "It's just good to get away from the envi-

ronment and get your mind refreshed."

With Judith's work ethic of always giving 120 per cent, it's no surprise that burnout has been an issue for her.


"Peel has been insane with really bad crime – it's never ending. Even on your days off, you're so burnt out. You want to help people, so you're always working hard, and I've found it difficult to put boundaries in place. I constantly have to remind myself that not every call requires 120 per cent, but I like to go above and beyond because I genuinely care if it's going to make a difference in people's lives," said Judith. "When you have issues setting boundaries and you want to help people so much, it's hard. Still, as stressful as it is, the job is rewarding and there are a lot of good

people out there."

Judith's best friend Nadia Alexander, who is also a constable with the Peel Police Service, is proud of her for getting help.


"It's very difficult to ask for help. Especially being a female and a female minority, you want to show up and be the best you can be," said Nadia, who went to Ontario Police College with Judith. "When you have a true passion for the job like Judith does, it's so easy to lose sight of your own health. She recognized that if she continued the way she was going, it would have been detrimental to her career."

Nadia is also proud of Judith for the way she conducted herself during that early morning call at Shoppers.



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Left: Judith with her niece and nephew. Bottom left: Judith and a family friend. Below: Judith won the Axon RISE Officer Award in recognition of her courage and heroism.



“As a female, small in stature, with just two years on the job – to be able to handle herself the way she did is incredible. She didn’t only represent herself; she represented the limitless potential that every woman has,” said Nadia. “She

can be, in part, the reason why a growing number of women want to wear the uniform.” Judith, who has always wanted to work with criminals to learn how they tick, says that there are challenges being a female officer.

“Being a female dealing with calls, sometimes you have to be more aware of the words you use and not be offended by the comments you get,” said Judith. “At the same time, some people just stop me and are so excited because they’re never seen a black female officer before and they’ll start crying. People are really grateful and appreciative of it.”

But Judith doesn’t just want to inspire women to put on the uniform – she wants to inspire

everyone to get into policing, regardless of sex or race.

“We need more people who care. I’m always telling people about the good work that we do,” said Judith, who has always wanted to help people. “I want to help change the negative perceptions of police officers, but it’s really hard sometimes because everything you do impacts people’s lives.”

In the meantime, Judith is focusing on herself so she can get back to helping others.

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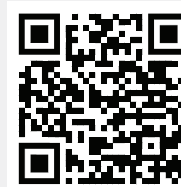
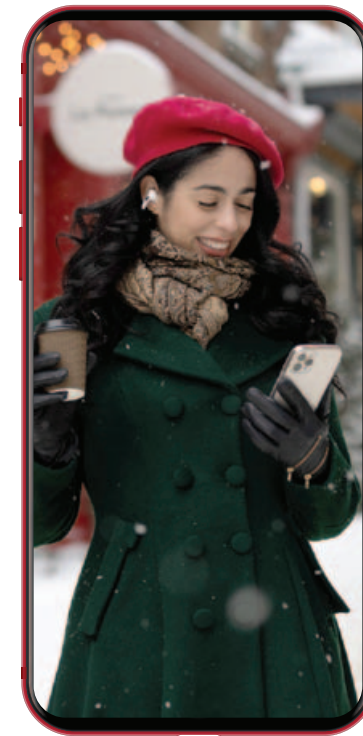
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