



Rebel With a Cause 2019 RUTH SCHAEFFER

Ruth has been a passionate advocate for over 35 years. Ruth has been employed at the Peterborough Native Friendship Centre, Projects for Change where the collective began the first food cupboard in Peterborough, and Peterborough Poverty Coalition.

She was employed at the Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough from 2003 to 2009, where among other things she forced an Ombudsman investigation into why all the panic buttons in the women's unit had been turned off illegally and got them turned back on! By all descriptions of her, Ruth has been a tireless crusader advocating for the rights of the women, never one to back down from a challenge.

In 2009, Ruth faced one of her greatest personal challenges of her life when her son was killed by the OPP and no charges were laid in his death. After learning that no charges would be laid she also learned that the SIU director could not conclude what exactly happened that day because the two officers involved had consulted a lawyer prior to preparing their notes.

Robbed of the truth about her son's death, and recognizing the implications this has on investigations, Ruth began the fight of her life for police accountability. Along with the family of another person killed by police in a separate 2009 incident, Ruth took the case against the police to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled in 2013 that police officers under SIU investigation cannot consult a lawyer before preparing their notes.

This Supreme Court of Canada ruling had a significant impact concerning procedural requirements involving incidents arising from police misconduct. Ruth continues to educate on Effective Advocacy strategies in our community, and currently offers a two-day workshop on advocacy.