

The Good Guy

There are transcendent concepts and notions that connect all people and times, regardless of geographical or geopolitical locations, races, religions, creeds or situations. Though the terms, sounds and symbols we use over time to relay these concepts to each other change over time, the root meaning of the notion is consistent. These notions are inherent, they're eternal.

For instance, if you were to go back in time more than 500 years ago and found yourself wandering around what is now called Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario Canada, you might hear the term "Oshkabaywis." Though you likely would have no idea as to the meaning of that word, you would almost certainly notice that it appeared to be relayed with a high regard and admiration. This is a term used by the Anishinaabe or First People of the area now known as Sault Ste. Marie. We know them as the Ojibwe or Chippewa peoples, native to North America. "Oshkabaywis" is their ancient word which best translates as "Helper" or "Helpful Person". What today, you or I might call a "Good Guy," someone with integrity, compassion and who is willing to sacrifice for others, selfless in nature and driven to help the common good.

If you were to visit that same Canadian town today, you'd find yourself in the hometown of just such a person, Madison's own Precinct Community Affairs Sergeant, Henry Particelli. Born in Canada, with a love for the outdoors, a passion for music, an entrepreneurial spirit and of course an undying thirst for hockey, Henry was what many might expect to see when they hear the term "Canadian".

As children everywhere often do, Henry had childhood dreams of being a Peace Officer, but at that time to do so in Canada, he had to have uncorrected 20/20 vision and he wasn't so lucky. So, like many of us, he moved on to other aspirations and interests in life, sampling various avenues and professions, while consistently writing and performing his music. Henry loved music; it was always inside him. Music was his constant and in 1994 after around 29 hours (give or take a few) on a Greyhound bus, with his guitar case in one hand and bag of clothes in the other, he stepped out onto the pavement of the bus station in Nashville, Tennessee to greet his new home and get his music out there in the town where many before and after him go to get such a thing done. Henry did just that. With varying levels of success, Henry wrote and performed his music over the next several years in Music City. But there were two things that kept eating at him that he couldn't seem to shake. One, was how difficult it is to fully support yourself as a musician in Nashville, as many find out, and second was the inner calling to serve others, to be a helper, an "Oshkabaywis."

After much thought and introspection he came to a conclusion that there was a way to serve both needs. He could fulfill his desire to serve others and make a living at the same time. The only possible downside at risk would be the time he would have left to dedicate to music. So in 2010, at the age of 40, Henry decided to become a member of the Metro Nashville Police Department. Henry entered the Police academy and focused his efforts on becoming a police officer. While in the academy, he was called to the office of the command staff. Hesitant and nervous, not sure what he had or hadn't done, he stood before the Sergeant and training

Officer. Apparently whilst going through the training academy fellow recruits and their superiors had gotten wind that ole' Henry was a musician. They suggested it might be nice if recruit Particelli would write a song for their class graduation. At that graduation, he debuted his song "We are the Good Guys."

Henry spent the next few years advancing through the Metro Nashville Police ranks and finally found himself as the Madison Precinct Community Affairs Sgt. In this role, Henry could truly be an "Oshkabaywis." His charge was to build positive community involvement and cooperation with law enforcement in forming neighborhood watch groups, and in doing crime and safety community meetings and presentations to promote good will between the community and the police. He and his team tirelessly engage in community outreach and cooperation on too many levels to list.

In 2019, Henry was asked to perform at the funeral for fallen Officer John Anderson, whose watch was ended on July 4, 2019 in an automobile accident while on duty. Having always felt a deep respect for those injured or killed in the line of duty, Henry accepted the honor and played the song he'd written so long ago in the academy for his fallen comrade. On that somber and difficult July day, two things happened that would change the course of Henry's life. When Henry sang, "We are the Good Guys" for Officer Anderson, Juanita Copeland heard it. At that moment magic happened.

Juanita, you see, was not only a listener during Henry's performance, she was the President of Nashville's renowned Sound Emporium Studio which has recorded the likes of Kenny Chesney, Al Green, Johnny, Dolly, Willie and a whole list of the who's who in Nashville music history. Henry's song moved her. Together they came up with a plan: they would record and release Henry's song, and use that money to help support and benefit families of the fallen. Not some of that money, not most of that money, but all of it. Over the next few weeks they got together and Henry, Juanita and a host of musicians, engineers, producers and everyone in-between recorded that song in a top-tier Nashville studio with all the fixings.

Henry's song had been the catalyst for the two of them forming "The Good Guys Foundation," a true 100% non-profit benefiting the families of those lost in the line of duty. "We are the Good Guys" has become somewhat of an anthem in law enforcement circles, with thousands of plays and downloads on most of today's listening formats.

Henry did it again after the recent killing of George Floyd with his heartfelt and raw anthem "Your Name," a truly beautiful and relevant song that addresses, head-on, the deeply widening relations between the police and many communities across America.

With every play or download of his heartfelt real world songs, Henry not only gets to have all the things he had strived for -- making a living, serving others and writing and playing music - - but every time his songs are played he, Juanita and all of the folks who volunteer at the Good Guy Foundation make just a little bit more money for families of those who have served and fallen. Through the Good Guy's Foundation, with every click of one of his songs, he makes another "Helper," another "Good Guy," and another "Oshkabaywis."

<https://www.thegoodguysfoundation.org/mission-story>

<https://www.facebook.com/thegoodguysfoundation>