

2007 Brockville Ambassador for Safety Award

BACKGROUND - BROCKVILLE POLICE SERVICE

As the pilot and first Safe Community, many of the initiatives had to be trail-blazed, for the first time. Brockville Police sought and were successful in having “learn” added to the “Live, learn, work and play” motto as a direct result of the foresight of the Brockville Police Community/School Safety officer wanting Safe Communities material to be more inclusive.

Brockville Police wanted Safe Communities to expand out of the box, by adding more than just Health and Safety promotion to our “tool box”. Injury prevention for all demographics in our community, to cover all aspects such as in the home, the community, during leisure activities and in the workplace became the catalyst that saw increased participation and acceptance.

In recent years, the addition of Crime Prevention and Community Safety through Social Development, saw the inclusion of Substance Abuse Prevention, FAS awareness, CCENDU (Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use) participation in a one year study of 17 Canadian Communities through the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

This led to a number of prevention initiatives such as protection and disposal of “sharpies” (discarded needles) found in parks, school yards etc, the initiation of a needle exchange program in Brockville, Leeds & Grenville as well as the start of a Harm Reduction committee in partnership with the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Health Unit.

Two Emergency Preparedness guidebooks developed by Safe Communities Brockville, Leeds & Grenville after Ice Storm '98 and the aftermath of 9-11, have been requested by a number of other communities and organizations nationally. Canada's RISK WATCH injury prevention program was piloted in Brockville through the Brockville Fire and Police Services.

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Brockville Police have assisted the Safe Communities Foundation with presentations and support to help start Safe Communities Coalitions in Ottawa, Sault Ste Marie, Peterborough, Port Colbourne, and at National Conferences on Recreation, Safe Communities, Victims Services, Thrive Canada and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. Presentations were also made to the Province of Ontario on a meaningful role for Safe Communities with Emergency Planning Ontario. Each of these initiatives were led through the co-operation, partnership, shared resources and leadership of members of the Brockville Police Service, coordinated with other partners.

The City of Brockville, as a result of the activities, programs and initiatives of the Safe Community Coalition of Brockville and District was accredited by the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Community Safety as a “Designated Safe Community”, the first in Ontario and only the second in Canada, 4th in North America and 58th globally. This special World Health designation is an acknowledgment that the Safe Communities of Brockville, Leeds & Grenville meets the 12 international criteria necessary to ensure that Brockville and area indeed exemplify a Safe Community, on a sustaining basis..

The Safe Communities have been successful in initiating change within the community evidenced over the 10 years, by the community partners who believe strongly in a Safe Community concept. By way of example, the new model Safe Schools policy, which was crafted through a partnership of three school boards, eight police services, Family and Children’s services and others in Eastern Ontario, including the Co-chair of our Safe Communities, demonstrates the value of sustaining partnerships based on inclusion.

In evaluating success, it is important to measure the functioning of Safe Communities as a whole, rather than the success of any one event, program or the activities of a single partner. *A survey comparing local citizen’s attitudes between 1996 and 2002 reveals that 97% feel safe in Brockville, including a 12% increase in those persons who feel very safe.*

Brockville Police Service statistics for 2001-2006 reveal significant decreases in most crime categories, attributed to a combination of reasons including a nation-wide trend, supported in large measure by proactive community safety and crime prevention initiative’s, crime prevention through environmental design, community safety and crime prevention seminars, community participation, presentations for small businesses, focused preventative programs for seniors in partnership with the VON- SMART program and the YMCA-YWCA seniors exercise program. Additionally, Asset Building for Positive Youth Development to build resiliency and strengthen children and youth resistance to risky behavior is a factors.

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Although a variety of effective programs are key to impacting within a given community, the true sustainability and success lies in the Safe Communities people, not just the programs. This also, is the ideal formula for success for a safer, healthier and stronger community, as it is for successful problem solving, community policing and effective crime prevention.

The SCIP (Safe Community Incentive Program) in Brockville has been the most successful in Ontario with 157 businesses receiving W.S.I.B. rebates exceeding \$1.2 M over 7 years for reducing work related injuries as the result of attending Safe Communities sponsored training programs. Brockville is also the ONLY community in Ontario to receive rebates for 7 consecutive years. Brockville Police were also participants and rebate recipients.

The Safe Communities of Brockville, Leeds & Grenville strives to satisfy the intrinsic values of individual partners. *This is why tremendous accomplishments have been realized. The YMCA-YWCA 2001 Canada Peace medal, 4 National "Awards of Excellence" from Safe Communities Canada, the Safe Communities Foundation "Founders Award", finalist in the Brockville Chamber of Commerce "Organization of the Year for 2003, the Ontario Crime Commission 2002 Award for Excellence in Crime Prevention and a City of Brockville commendation for community support during Ice Storm '98, are examples of recognition, shared by all members.*

The success achieved by the Safe Communities of Brockville, Leeds & Grenville is directly attributed to the people who repeatedly come to the forefront because they believe in the Power of One and the Safe Community concept. They are equally convinced, that together as partners, we *can* make a difference.

Another new initiative co-founded three years ago involving the YMCA/YWCA, Brockville Police Service, Lanark, Leeds & Grenville Health Unit, Family and Children's Services and the Safe Communities of Brockville, Leeds & Grenville, in partnership with a number of other agencies is a prime example of spin-off community mobilization. It has now expanded and focused on youth to become an exciting community development program entitled: *"Every Kid in Our Communities"* with a vision that *"every child and youth, from birth to young adulthood, is a safe, healthy, integral and valued member of the community"*. They focus on Asset Development for youth as an effective tool which has now expanded into a Council of Champions to facilitate its promotion and remove barriers to progress. They are proving that *together*, we can make a difference..

In summary, the acceptance and support of local our MP, MPP, Mayor and Council, industry, small businesses, emergency services, families, youth and health agencies and citizens at large, is a clear demonstration they value being *"Partners for a Safer, Stronger & Healthier Community"*.

