

Spotlight on Public Safety

Monthly report to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners - February 2013



Sgt. Scott MacDonald

HRM's Interim Public Safety Officer

The 2008 Mayor's Roundtable Report set the objectives for the HRM Public Safety Office. In late January, I was fortunate enough to spend a couple of hours with the primary author of that report, Dr. Don Clairmont.



Dr. Clairmont's comprehensive report included 64 recommendations for curbing violence and improving safety in HRM. Since taking on my new role, I have repeatedly heard, "That's pretty much finished isn't it, what's left on the list of recommendations to complete?"

While some items are easy to check off, such as creation of my position, many of the items require an ongoing effort. For example, I recently attended my first Schools Plus and Child and Youth Strategy meetings in the ongoing effort to help to ensure the education system is responsive to all youth.

Other items such as bringing a drug treatment court to HRM are beyond the scope of HRM to implement. I've quickly learned that collaboration with different organizations and levels of government are essential to success. Public safety isn't accomplished with a simple checklist, it's an ongoing effort and every one of us really does play a role!

Public safety by the numbers:

Of the 64 recommendations: 13 were one-time only recommendations and are completed; 43 are completed but need to continue to evolve; seven are on-going; and one is on hold, pending a Supreme Court decision.

Community Engagement

Engage citizens and community groups in playing an active role in public safety in HRM.

- HRM is accepting applications for the 2013-2014 Community Grants Program until March 31. The program provides annual cash grants to registered non-profit organizations/charities throughout HRM. More information is available at halifax.ca/boardscom/bccgrants/CommunityGrantsProgram.html.

Diversity

Strengthen HRM's connection with our diverse communities while at the same time addressing quality-of-life issues within those communities.

- Cst. Shaun Carvery was appointed HRP's Diversity Equity Officer on January 14. Cst. Carvery has been a police officer for 11 years, working first on patrol and more recently as a school officer. He hopes his new role will enable him to serve as a liaison between HRM's diverse communities and the police service. Cst. Carvery encourages people to contact him with ideas around diversity and equity. He can be reached at 430-4782 or carvers@halifax.ca.
- Members of Halifax District RCMP Community Policing took part in an education workshop hosted by the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgender and Queer community youth project on January 29. During this two-hour presentation, presenters answered questions and provided clarity on issues and concerns which are central to creating a sense of understanding for everyone.
- On January 30, the HRM Partners in Policing Cultural Diversity Committee held its monthly meeting within the Sikh community as guests of The Maritime Sikh Society. This meeting was an amazing opportunity for all involved to learn more about the customs and traditions of the Sikh community in HRM, which dates back to 1978.

Partnerships

Align with all levels of government, social agencies and community partners to realize efficiencies and improve public safety programs and services in HRM.

- Representatives from Halifax Regional Police met with the Community Justice Society to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between both agencies and optimize use of the restorative justice process by officers.

Public Safety is everyone's responsibility. WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY?

Police Community Response

Halifax Regional Police (HRP) and Halifax District RCMP must continue to implement policing strategies which reduce crime and enhance public safety.

- Halifax District RCMP has its first active participant in the Crime Free Multi-Housing initiative. Community Policing Officer Cst. Bart Leppan has been meeting with and educating Sackville-area building owners and landlords about this internationally-recognized program and its benefits to crime prevention. The initial response has been very positive.
- HRP, in cooperation with the African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia, the Centre for Entrepreneurial and Education Development (CEED), Metroworks, Leave Out Violence, local clergy, community groups, community leaders and service providers, launched the Uptown Drug Market Intervention (DMI), a pilot project intended to address the ongoing issue of open market drug dealing in Uniacke Square. As part of the project, four men facing drug trafficking charges have committed to turning their lives around and have entered an employment/skills development program in exchange for having their charges stayed. If they successfully complete the program, their charges will be dropped. The Uptown DMI is based on an award-winning program from High Point, North Carolina. More information can be found at halifax.ca/Police/UptownDrugMarketIntervention.html

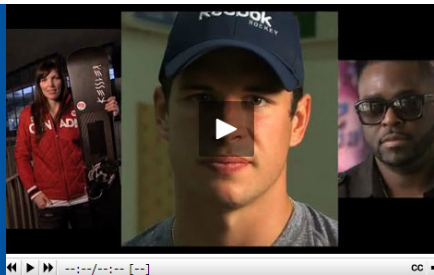
Sustainability Initiatives

HRM as an organization must undertake a variety of initiatives to improve public safety.

- The HRM Community Response Team reviewed six sets of plans for new developments, applying Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) principles to identify potential areas for improvement and continued to work on seven issues which were negatively impacting various communities in HRM.

Canadian Champions

RCMP is holding a contest, calling for the submission of videos made by teens for teens that promote a drug-free lifestyle. The winning videos will be shown in schools as part of the new RCMP Canadian Champions youth engagement initiative. The contest is open to anyone in Grades 7 to 12 across Canada. Winning videographers will receive a prize pack including a Canadian Olympic hockey jersey signed by Sidney Crosby, a Toronto Blue Jays T-shirt signed by Brett Lawrie and Adam Loewen and an iPod Touch. For more information, visit <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cc/index-eng.htm>



Communications Corner

Communication underpins the success of the HRM Public Safety Strategy. Below is an overview of major communication initiatives from January:

HRP

Media relations

- Issued 40 media releases, 26 were about crimes/crime trends and public safety issues, and 14 were proactive/educational.
- Responded to 315 media requests.

Social media

- The HRP Twitter account has 9,645 followers and 6,340 people like HRP on Facebook.
- The HRP YouTube channel was viewed by 510 people in January, bringing our total views to 139,817.

Community outreach/education

- Produced two community newspaper columns - one on New Year's crime prevention resolutions and the other on the Uptown Drug Market Intervention Pilot Project.

RCMP

Media relations

- Issued 15 media releases, 14 were about crimes/crime trends and public safety issues, and one was proactive/educational.
- Responded to 160 media requests.

Community outreach/education

- Produced two community newspaper columns – one on off-road vehicle responsibility, and the other on international travel tips.

Social media

- There are 7,261 people who like RCMP on the English-language Facebook page and 38 on the French-language Facebook page. The RCMP Twitter account currently has 6,742 followers in English and 411 in French.