

Spotlight on Public Safety

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



Staff Sgt. Scott MacDonald HRM's Public Safety Officer



Summer is often associated with holidays and vacations. And while this summer coincided with a break from regular monthly Public Safety Office updates, there was no shortage of summer public safety efforts and accomplishments.

July brought an organizational realignment within Halifax Regional Police (HRP) which saw a number of sections returning to the Public Safety Office. The office is now comprised of the Community Relations/Crime Prevention Section (CRCP), Community Response Team, Volunteer Services and Victim Services, as well as the City Watch system.

Over the summer, CRCP staff were kept busy with the week-long Camp Courage program hosted by Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, which encourages girls to consider a career in emergency services. They also took the lead in coordinating police involvement with Pride Week and the Natal Day Parade and related events. Victim Services was recognized for assisting with a provincial bullying conference, while Community Response Team members coordinated another successful SportsPals event in conjunction with Dalhousie Varsity Athletics.

HRP Community Response Officers were also busy helping to support community garden projects, neighbourhood beautification events, and several bike safety rodeos.

As you'll notice throughout this month's update, great things can happen when different groups and organizations work collaboratively. Bringing available resources together remains a priority of the Public Safety Office.

Diversity

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

- This fall, RCMP will be launching the Youth Intervention and Diversion Model, a new program aimed at intervening with youth at the earliest opportunity in order to dissuade them from engaging in criminal behaviour. Using a collaborative approach involving several other partners, the program will focus on youth who have become involved in minor criminal activity, and strive to provide them with the guidance and resources they need to make positive life choices.

Sustainability Initiatives

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

- HRM Community Response Team members have assisted HRM planning staff on 30 different planning projects, making this their most demanding year to date. In addition to co-facilitating another Crime Free Multi Housing workshop later this month, the team will also be conducting a three-day Level 1 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design course for HRM staff.

Police Community Response

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

- The HRM Public Safety Office, in partnership with Halifax District RCMP, Halifax Regional School Board, HRM Community and Recreation Services and Halifax Military Police, hosted the 10th Annual Cops 'n Kids Camp at the Tim Horton Children's Camp in Tatamagouche on September 26-27.

Terrific weather added to a memorable weekend for the 60 young campers from across HRM who have just begun grade seven. The adult counselors were further assisted by 16 junior leader volunteers; high school students who successfully applied to become mentors for the younger students.

This camp was the kickoff to a series of events planned throughout the school year. Both the camp and subsequent events help to foster positive relationships between police and our youth.



Junior leaders take a well deserved break from the action at the 10 Annual Cops 'n Kids Camp.

Community Engagement

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

- On September 27, Staff Sgt. Scott MacDonald, HRM's Public Safety Officer, joined Cst. Geoff Stark, East Division Community Response Officer, at the Imperial Oil Refinery in Dartmouth to accept another generous donation of Esso fuel cards for the HRP Citizens on Patrol (COP) Program. COP volunteers provide much appreciated extra eyes and ears for the police, donating not only hours of their personal time but also miles on their personal vehicles. The donated fuel cards will help to offset these vehicle expenses.

Partnerships

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

- This fall marked the 10th year for HRP's Operation Fall-Back, a campaign designed to reduce noise complaints, property damage and public intoxication in the residential areas surrounding our universities. The campaign, which commenced the evening of August 31 and ran throughout the month of September, featured increased high-visibility patrols and directed enforcement in known complaint areas. HRP will continue to work closely with community groups, university officials and student representatives on issuing impacting safety and quality-of-life in our university neighbourhoods.
- Cst. Marilyn Campbell, Halifax District RCMP School Liaison Officer, has been invited to participate in a conscious raising project with students and staff at Cole Harbor High. "Pause Before You Post" is designed to raise awareness about maintaining a clean digital reputation and encourages students to think before they post anything online.

14th Annual Walk Against Violence Wednesday, October 16, 2013

6:30 p.m. at the Dartmouth Boys and Girls Club
60 Farrell Street, Dartmouth

You're invited to join concerned residents, community leaders, members of the Dartmouth Boys and Girls Club and a contingent of Halifax Regional Police officers as they march in a stirring show of solidarity against crime and violence.

People in the neighbourhood who can't attend the march are asked to leave their porch lights on in a show of support for the marchers.

Communications Corner

Communication underpins the success of the HRM Public Safety Strategy. Below is an overview of communication activities for September:

HRP

Media relations

- Issued 50 media releases, 38 were about crimes/crime trends and public safety issues, and 12 were proactive/educational.
- Responded to 323 media requests.

Social media

- The HRP Twitter account has 14,240 followers and 8,300 people like HRP on Facebook.
- The HRP YouTube channel has garnered 150,090 views.
- The HRP Traffic Cop Twitter account has 804 followers and 981 people like HRP Traffic Cop on Facebook.

Community outreach/education

- Produced a community newspaper column on bullying awareness.

RCMP

Media relations

- Issued 19 media releases, 12 were about crimes/crime trends and public safety issues, and seven were proactive/educational.
- Responded to 105 media requests.

Community outreach/education

- Produced two community newspaper columns, one on school bus safety and the other featuring six questions with Chief Superintendent Roland Wells.

Social media

- There are 9,775 people who like RCMP on the English-language Facebook page and 64 on the French-language Facebook page. The RCMP Twitter account currently has 10,058 followers in English and 467 in French.