

Spotlight on Public Safety

Monthly report to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners - January 2014



Staff Sgt. Scott MacDonald HRM's Public Safety Officer

The start of a new year often brings with it moments to reflect on the past and plan for the future, and I have found myself engaging in this process. It is hard to believe that over a year has passed since assuming the role of Public Safety Officer (PSO) for HRM!

As PSO I've found myself meeting regularly with various ministers and elected members in all three levels of government to discuss and coordinate a wide variety of crime prevention and public safety initiatives, including potential additions and changes to legislation. I've also had the occasion to make presentations in a wide range of forums, from a cyberbullying symposium to a spiritual diversity conference. And I've helped to carry on with already established items such as the "Don't Be That Guy Campaign" for Sexual Assault Awareness month, lending a voice to traffic related issues, and maintaining a presence on boards and committees involved with offender re-integration, homelessness and healthy youth development in HRM.

But one person can only accomplish so much. A reallocation of resources dedicated to the Public Safety Office occurred during the year and these folks have been equally busy. The Crime-Free-Multi-Housing program received a renewed and expanded commitment from participating partners, the Cops 'n Kids program marked its 10th anniversary, SportsPals celebrated its 4th anniversary, new awareness efforts to combat domestic violence were



SportsPals 2013 participants give a "thumbs up" after a fun filled day honing their soccer skills.



S/Sgt. MacDonald (2nd from right) participates in the Atlantic Region Project Red Ribbon launch on December 9, 2013.

undertaken, and detailed police school emergency plans for all public schools in HRM were completed.

Some of the greatest successes over the past year came from broader partnerships. I was particularly proud to have helped coordinate the first ever prescription drug drop-off for the region, which would not have been possible without the help of local pharmacies and the Capital District Health Authority. Through the ongoing support of HRM Community and Recreation Services and Regional Council, the HRM Youth Advocate Program remains an integral gang and crime prevention effort for our region.

During media interviews I conducted upon assuming the role in late 2012, much discussion revolved around gun violence in HRM. This remains amongst the highest priorities for my office, and this year we will be working closely with community-based groups, government agency and police to help reduce both shootings and violence throughout HRM.

My participation in the National Municipal Network on Crime Prevention will expand as I assume the role of Regional Network Coordinator for the Atlantic Provinces. We are helping to coordinate an academic research initiative this winter involving police officers in HRM.

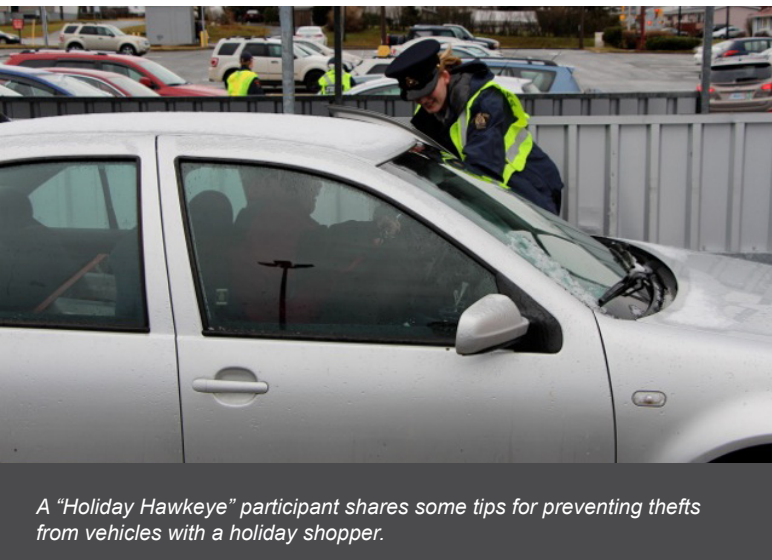
A review of violence and public safety in the region for the Mayor and Regional Council should be delivered soon and will no doubt provide additional direction for the office for the upcoming year.

If you haven't yet made your New Year's resolutions, check out halifax.ca/Police/PublicSafety/CPNewYearsResolutions.html for some great crime prevention resolutions to try out, and may you have a safe and happy New Year!

Police Community Response

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

- **Holiday Hawkeye** - on December 7, 2013, Halifax District RCMP Citizens on Patrol, in conjunction with Auxiliary members and youth from the Stetson & Spurs Program, handed out flyers encouraging citizens to secure their vehicles and valuables prior to entering shopping malls in Cole Harbour, Tantallon and Lower Sackville.



A "Holiday Hawkeye" participant shares some tips for preventing thefts from vehicles with a holiday shopper.

Community Engagement

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

- Over 30 community leaders participated in a 3-hour strategic planning session on December 2, 2013, as part of HRP's REenvision Project. The session provided an opportunity for stakeholders to give their input on what they envision HRP to be today, tomorrow and in the future. The REenvision Project is an initiative designed to help HRP develop its 10-year strategic plan.

Partnerships

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

- For several years, police agencies in Canada have been working on their emergency response plans for worst-case school-based events. The School Action For Emergencies Plan is a computer database program administered nationally by the RCMP intended to facilitate a coordinated and efficient response to a school

emergency. It includes maps and photographs identifying items such as tactical points, roadblocks and staging areas. HRP members have just completed a two-year project preparing plans for all public schools in their jurisdiction and plans for all schools in HRM will now be available to dispatchers, incident commanders and even officers in their patrol vehicles.

Sustainability Initiatives

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

- The HRM Community Response Team continued to worked with various HRM Business Units on 14 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audits. The team maintained its focus on graffiti abatement, acting as a resource for police officers involved in incidents of graffiti, educating HRM staff members and community organizations on graffiti and participating in discussions on establishing national and provincial standards for graffiti enforcement.

Diversity

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

- HRM hosted Mingling Our Voices: Successes and Opportunities at the Black Cultural Centre on December 7, 2013. Over 120 residents of African descent attended the event and learned about the many services HRM offers. The event was also an opportunity to recognize HRM employees of African Nova Scotian descent who have overcome the challenges of systemic barriers and made significant contributions to the municipality. The names and titles of the employees will be stitched onto a quilt which will be hung in the African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office.



Halifax Regional Police Superintendent Don MacLean (third from left) joins fellow HRM employees of Africa Nova Scotian descent at the Mingling Our Voices: Successes and Opportunities event.