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Region of Peel
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REPORT
General Committee

DATE: April 21, 2009

REPORT TITLE: **CONNECT2ENDVIOLENCE INITIATIVE AND PROCLAMATION**

FROM: Janette Smith, Commissioner of Health Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the connect2ENDviolence strategic community initiative jointly sponsored by The Regional Municipality of Peel, The Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board, Peel Regional Police, The Peel District School Board and The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board be endorsed;

And further, that June 1st to 7th, 2009 be proclaimed connect2ENDviolence Week in the Region of Peel.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2008, the Region of Peel experienced a record number of homicides as well as an alarming increase in other forms of violent crime.
- On October 21st, 2008 Mr. Emil Kolb, Chair, Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board announced a five-point comprehensive plan to combat the increase in serious crime.
- This led to the connect2ENDviolence initiative, with the overall objective of using modern communications ***to connect, people, ideas and our community to combat violence and foster a safe and secure environment in the Region of Peel.***
- The www.connect2ENDviolence.ca website was developed, with the vision that it will be the focal point for an ongoing community discussion on crime and crime prevention.
- While the Police Services Board funded the development of the website, the Region of Peel, Peel Regional Police, the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board have all committed time and staff resources to the project.
- The vision is to make the connect2ENDviolence initiative a success; a success that can ultimately be replicated in communities across the province and the country.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

In 2008, the Region of Peel experienced 27 homicides, its worst year on record and almost doubling the previous highest number. There was a corresponding and alarming increase in other forms of violent crime. In response, on October 21st, 2008, following consultation with Chief of Police Michael Metcalf, Emil Kolb, Chair, Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board, announced a five-point comprehensive plan to combat the increase in serious crime. This was the culmination of an eight-month process. The Plan addresses short and long term measures to combat crime, covering the gamut from enforcement to prevention.

A key component of the Plan, directed towards engaging the entire community was the holding of a Community Summit to seek input, consider alternatives and develop recommendations. It was intended to repeat the success of the initial Community Summit, hosted by the Police Services Board in 1994.

Through discussion, it became apparent that a new, modern approach was required which would directly engage our residents and existing stakeholders. There was a realization that a great deal of study and research had been and was already being done, but what was lacking was a focal point to galvanize and engage our citizens, while at the same time connecting problems to solutions and needs to programs.

The Community Summit concept became the primary driver for the connect2ENDviolence Initiative, with the overall objective of using modern communications ***to connect, people, ideas and our community to combat violence and foster a safe and secure environment in the Region of Peel.***

a) www.connect2ENDviolence.ca Website

The www.connect2ENDviolence.ca website has been designed to be the focal point for the community discussion on crime and crime prevention. It will serve as a vehicle for two-way dialogue on issues and will provide a unique opportunity for Peel residents to directly express their views. It will present examples of on-the-ground solutions, and act as a clearing house for information. It will connect people and it will connect ideas to recommendations to solutions.

The www.connect2ENDviolence.ca website was officially launched on Tuesday, April 14th. The launch was well attended by government representatives as well as stakeholder and community partner groups, and received wide media coverage. A marketing strategy is underway to make individuals aware of this new resource and to encourage their engagement.

The website is interactive, and some of its unique features are a forum for dialogue, a survey component which will poll residents on an ongoing basis as to what they perceive to be the challenges and solutions to those challenges, and a feature that will allow residents to share practical approaches that have worked in their communities to enhance their sense of safety and security.

b) Team Effort

The Peel Police Services Board established the connect2ENDviolence Steering Committee comprised of members from Health Services at the Region of Peel, Peel Regional Police, the Peel District School Board, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, and the Police Services Board. The Steering Committee is co-chaired by Councillor Frank Dale, City of Mississauga and current member of the Peel Police Services Board, and Councillor Gael Miles, City of Brampton and former Vice-Chair, Peel Police Services Board.

While the Police Services Board funded the development of the website, the Region of Peel, Peel Regional Police, the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board have all committed time and staff resources to the project. Leading corporate citizens in Peel have been approached to become involved, as their support will greatly enhance the scope and reach of this project.

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2. Proposed Direction

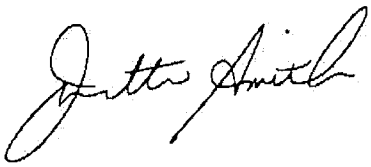
Our goal is to engage all levels of government, the community and corporate leaders in this initiative. It will lead to ongoing and active community involvement in Peel which is essential to maintaining a safe and secure environment.

Our vision is to make the connect2ENDviolence initiative a success; a success that can ultimately be replicated in communities across the province and the country. It is the position of the Peel Police Services Board that once this initiative is up and running, it would be willing to share its experience, and the website, with other, interested jurisdictions, as opposed to having it remain proprietary to the Peel Board. Crime knows no barriers – solutions should be equally accessible and mobile.

CONCLUSION

The connect2ENDviolence initiative is a dynamic project that is utilizing modern communication tools to galvanize and engage our citizens in the fight against violence. The www.connect2ENDviolence.ca website will provide a forum for open dialogue and serve as a clearing house for information. It will allow residents to share ideas on what has worked in their communities to enhance their safety and security. The overall objective of the connect2ENDviolence initiative is ***to connect, people, ideas and our community to combat violence and foster a safe and secure environment in the Region of Peel.***

In order to acknowledge the Region of Peel's continued support of this initiative, it is asked that the week of June 1st to June 7th, 2009 be proclaimed "connect2ENDviolence Week" in the Regional Municipality of Peel.



Janette Smith
Commissioner of Health Services

Approved for Submission:

D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

For further information regarding this report, please contact
Fred Biro, Executive Director, Peel Police Services Board, at 905-458-1340 or via email at fred.biro@peelpoliceboard.ca

c. Legislative Services

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Proclamation

CONNECT2ENDVIOLENCE WEEK

June 1 to 7, 2009

WHEREAS, in 2008 the Region of Peel experienced a record number of homicides as well as an alarming increase in other forms of violent crime;

AND WHEREAS, in October 2008 the Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board announced a five-point comprehensive plan to combat the increase in serious crime;

AND WHEREAS, the five-point plan led to the connect2ENDviolence Initiative, with the overall objective of using modern communications to connect people, ideas and our community to combat violence and foster a safe and secure environment in the Region of Peel;

AND WHEREAS, the www.connect2ENDviolence.ca website has been developed with the vision that it will be the focal point for the community discussion on crime and crime prevention, and will serve as a vehicle for two-way dialogue on issues and provide a unique opportunity for Peel residents to directly express their views on violence within our community;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the week of June 1 to 7, 2009 be proclaimed "CONNECT2ENDVIOLENCE WEEK" in the Regional Municipality of Peel.

Emil Kolb
Regional Chair and
Chair, Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board

Frank Dale
Regional Councillor and
Co-Chair, connect2ENDviolence

Gael Miles
Regional Councillor and
Co-Chair, connect2ENDviolence

Chief of Police H.M. Metcalf

Janette Smith
Commissioner of Health Services