



Community Safety Priorities

Violence Against/Exploitation of Persons

Identified as a community safety priority, officers continued their efforts to reduce and prevent violence against people and the exploitation of our society's most vulnerable members.

In addition to our many youth programs, special attention was placed on elder safety and Internet luring/child pornography issues in 2008. A new Vulnerable Persons Unit was created in 2008 to focus more attention in these growing areas.

Members of the Sexual Assault Unit continued their aggressive fight against Internet luring and the exploitation not only of children but of women. A number of high profile arrests were made in 2008 of men attempting to lure young females to private locations.

In October we held a one-day workshop for French-speaking daycare workers in Durham Region to educate them on recognizing suspected cases of sexual abuse involving children.

Elder abuse is a growing problem in our communities and DRPS is working to eliminate the financial, physical and emotional abuse many older people are facing. A new Senior Support Co-ordinator position was approved in 2008 to further protect the interests of our seniors. Since many elderly citizens are uncomfortable even dealing with police, new outreach approaches are taking place. A room has been set up at the Oshawa Senior Citizen Centre, for example, where statements can be taken in a more comfortable environment.

We continue to be an active member of the Durham Elder Abuse Network (DEAN) and Law Enforcement Agencies Protecting Seniors (LEAPS).

Our new Mental Health Support Unit attended and supported frontline officers at 242 incidents in 2008 and also reviewed 1,715 mental health-related incident reports to assist clients, caregivers, parents and other support persons.



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A new partnership between DRPS, Durham Mental Health Services and Ontario Shores, formerly the Whitby Mental Health Centre, is improving service to those suffering from mental health issues.

With funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through Durham Mental Health Services, a new Mental Health Response Unit (MHSU) was launched in 2008 to assist frontline police officers deal with serious mental health calls.

The MHSU consists of a plain-clothes police officer and a mental health nurse and support crisis staff. They respond to police officers' requests for assistance with situations that require skilled mental health interventions. They work to both resolve the immediate situation, and then make sure the person who is experiencing a mental health challenge is given the help he or she needs. Back-up for the MHSU is provided by Durham Mental Health Crisis Services.

This new partnership links the continuum of mental health care in the community with the crisis response system. The unit is meeting the mental health needs of people who come in contact with the police, and at the same time is significantly reducing the demand on hospital emergency departments. In the past, all police calls dealing with mental health crises would result in trips to local emergency rooms.

Helping Victims of Abuse

Members of Durham Region's Intimate-relationship Violence Empowerment Network (DRIVEN) hosted their third annual forum to highlight "The Domestic Violence Disconnect."

DRIVEN is a community-led initiative to provide victims of intimate-relationship violence with an efficient system of co-located services and collaborating partners to facilitate the individual's access to support and enhance service quality. DRPS is one of DRIVEN's many service partners.

Property Crimes

One of the barriers to preventing property crime is the reluctance of citizens to report incidents. If police are not informed about the nature and scope of the problem in neighbourhoods, we assume there isn't a problem.

In 2008, many neighbourhoods did tell us about property crime and our team of specialized crime analysts put together summaries and trends to help inform frontline patrol.



Although property crimes increased by 2 per cent overall in 2008, there were important reductions in arsons (down 34.2 per cent) motor vehicle thefts (down 9.9 per cent) and mischief incidents (down 4.7 per cent). The main cause of the overall two per cent increase was a significant increase in Frauds, namely sophisticated credit and debit card scams. Our Property Crime Clearance Rate increased from 26 per cent in 2007 to 30 per cent in 2008.

In 2007 we investigated 1,913 incidents of Fraud in Durham Region and that number jumped 21 per cent in 2008 to 2,315. The increase is attributable, in part, to several major investigations involving our Fraud Unit in which multiple arrests were made involving debit and credit card scams.

Project Marathon was launched in June 2008 to further investigate suspects arrested in Pickering who were involved in loan scams. As part of the five-month investigation, several fraudulent websites were found and addresses were raided in Ajax, Toronto and Scarborough. A total of 20 fraudulent companies were uncovered and 20 people were charged. Hundreds of victims across North America were identified and their losses exceeded \$2 million.

In October, two Whitby men were arrested after a lengthy investigation into commercial break-ins. Investigators laid 112 charges against the males, who were responsible for at least 30 break-ins involving businesses across the Region.