

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

- INFORMATION -

DATE: 2018 February 15
REPORT TO: Chair and Members
Hamilton Police Services Board
FROM: Eric Girt
Chief of Police
SUBJECT: *Year-End Report: Victim Services Branch – 2017*
PSB 18-015

BACKGROUND

The Hamilton Police Service Victim Services Branch was established in 1992. There are four (4) fulltime civilian employees and over 80 volunteers. Victim Services respond to the immediate needs of people who have been victimized by crime and/or trauma, such as homicides, suicides, sudden death, assaults, sexual assaults, motor vehicle and fire fatalities, robberies and harassment.

The Victim Services Branch has been the recipient of several prominent Provincial and International Awards for program delivery to victims of crime and trauma.

The Victim Services Branch has also been recognized as a best practices model and have presented at the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Conference.

Attached is the Victim Services Annual Report for 2017, outlining the quality service provided to the residents of the City of Hamilton.



Eric Girt
Chief of Police

EG/G. Huss

Attachment: *2017 Annual Report – Victim Services Branch*

cc: Dan Kinsella, Deputy Chief – Community Policing
Greg Huss, Superintendent – Community Mobilization Division

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH
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VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT

2017

IN PURSUIT OF OUR MISSION WE BELIEVE IN
SENSITIVITY TO VICTIMS OF CRIME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its 23rd year as a Branch within the Hamilton Police Service, Victim Services continues to focus on its core mandate to respond to the immediate needs of victims of crime and trauma.

The Victim Services Branch (VSB) is pleased to share our initiatives for 2017 in this Annual Report. We assisted 2,192 new victims and had a total of 5,911 contacts with victims. We continued to administer existing grants and engage with our community partners. With 4 full-time staff and over 80 volunteers, we are able to provide these services 24/7.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Participant/observer at City of Hamilton Emergency Social Services Exercise at Valley Park Recreation Centre to role play a large scale disaster/emergency in the city.
- Consultation with newly developed community programs: *YMCA Youth in Transition Worker; Indigenous Victim Services.*
- Assisting the *Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN)* - Canada's Leader in Online Learning for Police to develop new video for officers on the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights (CVBR).
- Continue to deliver the Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP) for the City of Hamilton on behalf of the Ministry of the Attorney General (annual contract since 2013).
- Continue to deliver the five-year grant made possible through the Department of Justice Canada Victims Fund for \$15,000/year (2015-2020). The benefits of this grant continue to augment the existing work of community initiatives, enhance education and support individuals exiting sex work.



City of Hamilton “Emergency Social Services” Exercise May 17, 2017. David Mataseje with Red Cross Workers and “Actors”.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Interviewed by “City Matters” on Hamilton’s Cable 14 to provide an opportunity for Hamilton Police Service and Victim Services Branch to engage and recruit new volunteers and also share the 24/7 crisis intervention services offered by HPS to citizens in Hamilton.
- Victims and Survivors of Crime Week (VSCW) is an annual outreach initiative of the Justice Canada Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI). 2017 was the 8th year that the Victim Services Branch received funding from the Department of Justice Canada to host a community ceremony honouring victims of crime; promoted Victim Services on bus/transit ads during VSCW.

- Three BSW students were provided with field placement practicums in the Victim Services Branch: McMaster University; University of Windsor; Wilfrid Laurier University.
- Seven HPS Cadets completed the Victim Service Branch volunteer training program as part of their Cadet program.
- Participated in the following community events: HPS Police in the Park; Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Street Fair; Bridge To Restorative Justice Conference; Sister Circle Canada event; National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada; Sisters in Spirit Vigil and Flag Raising; Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG) Broadening Your Understanding of Colonization & The Medicine Wheel Awareness Event; Native Women's Centre Circles of Care Information Session.

COMMITTEE & COMMUNITY WORK

1. Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee for City of Hamilton
2. High Risk Domestic Violence Community Advisory Team
3. Trauma Informed Care Committee
4. Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition
5. Women's Services Advisory Committee to the Chief
6. Emergency Women's Shelters Protocol Committee
7. Sexual Offences Review Team (SORT)
8. Woman Abuse Working Group and Public Awareness and Education Committees (WAWG)
9. Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT)
10. Presentations to:
 - Redeemer College
 - St. Martin's Manor
 - Women's Weekly
 - Catholic Children's Aid Society
 - Sister Circle Event
 - Citizens Police College
 - Mountainview/Honouring the Circle
 - McMaster University Medical Centre (MUMC) Social Workers
 - Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton & Area) (SACHA)
 - Canadian Hearing Society



Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT)
undertakes review of unfounded sexual assault investigations.

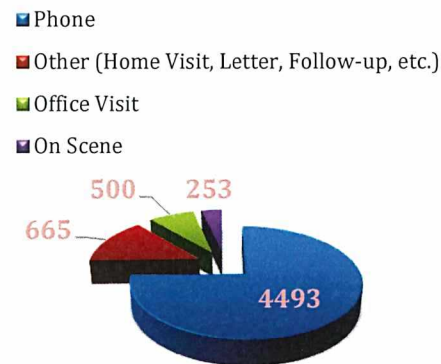
“They responded very quickly to this highly emotional call and were of immense assistance, dealing with numerous family members both at the scene and back at victim services....please thank them for their great work and a job well done. - HPS Officer”

VICTIM ASSISTANCE & METHODS OF CONTACT

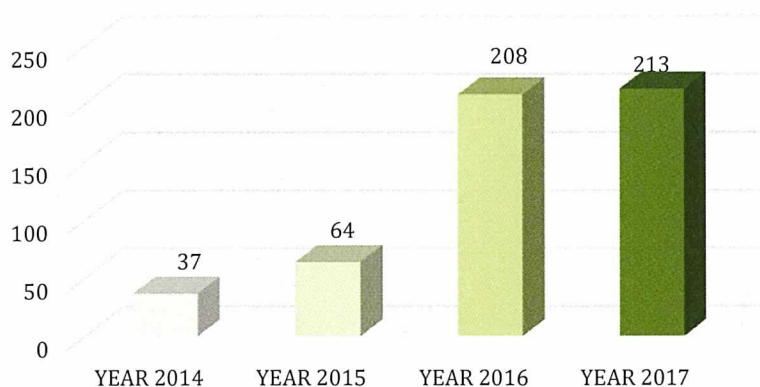
In 2017, the Victim Services Branch assisted 2,192 new victims and had 5,911 total contacts with victims (includes new and existing clients). For many victims, contact is only on one occasion while others may be numerous depending on their needs. Victimization may have occurred recently or historically. Not all victims request or need on-scene crisis intervention.

Method of Victim Contacts 2017

Statistics from NovaBrain



VQRP CLAIMS



Processed 213 claims through the Victim Quick Response Program in 2017 e.g. door repairs, cell phone replacement, accommodation, transportation, crime scene clean up, counselling, homicide funerals, etc.

VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH SUPPORT TO HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE UNITS

The Victim Services Branch strives to support all areas of the Hamilton Police Service. The following are examples:

Communications: Provided training to recently hired Call Takers and Dispatchers on victim services and responding to victims of crime.

Domestic Violence Unit: Ongoing teamwork regarding High Risk Offenders & Victims.

Bail Support Unit: Continue to support Ministry of the Attorney General & Bail Support when Victim Witness Assistance Program is closed (after-hour support).

Homicide Unit: Crisis response to families of homicide and child deaths under five years.

Patrol/CID: Crisis response on-scene; provide HPS Trauma Bear program supported by Shaw Communications Inc.

Sexual Assault Unit: Support to victims in office during interviews and follow-up with victims to ensure appropriate community resources and supports are in place.

Training Branch: Domestic Violence Officer, Recruit, Major Case Management and safeTALK - Provided training to Officers during these courses.

Vice & Drugs Unit: Coordinated response with Vice Unit to assist victims of human trafficking and individuals involved in sex work.

Crime Prevention Branch: Victim Services Branch works collegially with Crime Prevention Branch to access and schedule safety audits (CPTED) for victims of crime/trauma.

HPS Members: Victim Services Branch is designated as LGBTQ Positive Space for HPS members.



RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Victim Service Services Branch Award of Distinction presented to D/Cst. Robert Beck, D/Cst. Hung Pham and D/Cst. Sara Beck of HPS Vice & Drugs for their exceptional service in supporting victims of human trafficking.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- Sexual Violence & Harassment Action Plan (Ontario Police College)
- Trauma Counselling for Front-Line Workers: Level 1
- Sex Work: A Rights Based Approach Workshop
- Crisis Intervention Course
- GoodGrief: Exploring the Personal and Professional Impact of Working with Grief & Loss
- Resilience: A First Nations Perspective & The Neurobiology of Trauma
- Domestic Violence Coordinator Training (Ontario Police College)
- British Columbia: Police-Based Victim Services Provincial Conference
- LGBTQ-2S Genderqueer/Non Binary Workshop
- Bridge to Restorative Justice Conference
- Living with Grief: When Grief is Complicated Seminar
- Screening of the documentary film "A Better Man" hosted by community partners SACHA and Good Shepherd Women's Services. The screening was followed by a panel of local experts discussing how to take action on violence against women in our community.

GOAL 1.1 IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR THE HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE TO RESPOND TO CRIME, SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

Victim Services continues to administer and coordinate the Department of Justice "Victims Fund – Measures to Address Prostitution"

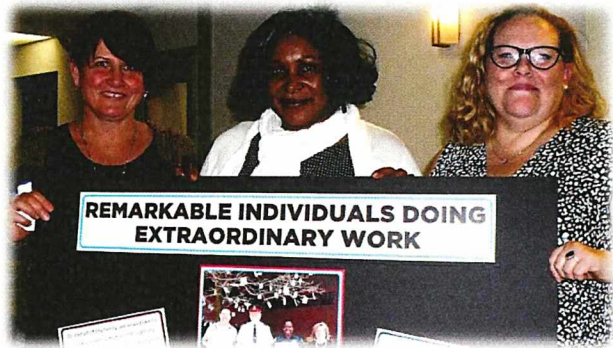
- Hosted a Lunch and Learn "Sex Work: A Rights Based Approach".
- Provided direct benefits to persons seeking supports to exit sex work e.g. assistance with transportation, accommodation, personal needs, etc.
- Implemented a promotional campaign offering supports to persons involved in sex work e.g. bus/transit ads, lip balm, hand sanitizer and posters.

I am strongly satisfied with the service I get. □ Thank you so much for your help. □ Excellent services provided. □ They eased my concern and helped me recognize my options and resources. □ I could not ask for more. □ Most beneficial. □ Extremely helpful. □ Excellent program. □ You walked me through a process I was not familiar with, and gave me great comfort along the way. □ I was very impressed with the dedication the volunteer had to her community. The Hamilton Police should be proud.

- Client Feedback

GOAL 2.3 ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY WITH MEANINGFUL AND VARIED VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Volunteers provided in excess of 30,000 hours of on-call coverage; meaningful work by responding to on-scene requests by Police Officers; 1,243 hours of victim crisis intervention in 2017.
- VSB represented at Citizens Police College and community events: My Time to Give Volunteer Fair at Meadowlands Retirement Community; McMaster University Community Engagement & Volunteer Fair.
- Ontario Volunteer Service Awards presented to Victim Services Branch volunteers at a spring banquet hosted by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; volunteers invited to the Hamilton Police Awards evening at which Victim Service Branch volunteers were recognized for their 5, 10, 15 milestone years of service; “You Make A Difference” recognition, photos and thank you cards presented throughout the year to acknowledge the value of volunteers’ contributions to the Branch and the citizens in our communities; publication of the *Did You Know* volunteer monthly newsletter.
- Training opportunities included: trans-inclusion, elder abuse, and Road to Mental Readiness training; quarterly Professional Development for all volunteers featuring calls presented by their colleagues and guest presenters on community resources; 12 week training program to 42 new volunteer recruits from January to April. Cst. Robert Centurione #454, Cst. Olivia Hutchison #1287 and Cst. Lucas Lubin #1286, former VSB volunteers, attended training for new volunteers and offered an opportunity for the volunteers to hear how their VSB experiences reaffirmed their decision to enter policing as a career; how front-line Officers support victims at a scene by offering VSB services and provided helpful options and approaches for “those first time calls”.



Without the support and compassion provided by the volunteers, the ability of detectives to balance sensitivity while accomplishing the needs of their investigation would have been greatly handicapped.

- HPS Officer

GOAL 3.4 INCREASE TRAINING TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION BY SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES IN OUR COMMUNITIES, FREEING UP TIME FOR TRAINING AND EXPANDING THE TRAINING BUDGET

Victim Services, in partnership with the Sexual Assault Unit, presented at weekly block training on the “Neurobiology of Trauma”; the Victim Services Branch training video was also used.

Victim Services continues to present to internal members of the Hamilton Police Service and external agencies regarding the role of Victim Services and the Victim Quick Response Program to further inform and promote.

All Staff Sergeants have received training on the Victim Quick Response Program to be able to respond to after-hour calls from volunteer Team Leaders with consultation inquiries regarding program eligibility requirements.

Cell phones are in the Staff Sergeants’ offices to allow Patrol access to disburse where appropriate to support victim’s safety.

Developed new volunteer recruiting card and a new HPS brochure for men charged with domestic violence. VSB brochure updated, produced and disseminated.

CONCLUSION

With a shared purpose of responding to the needs of our community, the Victim Services Branch of Hamilton Police Service will continue to:

- focus on its core mandate to respond to the immediate needs of victims of crime and trauma.
- engage with HPS members to develop programs and resources.
- collaborate and foster opportunities for partnerships with community agencies and stakeholders.



VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH

Who We Are • What We Do

Victim Services has been a Branch of the Hamilton Police Service since 1994. It is the only 24-hour on-scene crisis intervention service for victims of crime and trauma in the City of Hamilton. We respond to the immediate needs of people who have been victimized by crime and/or trauma such as homicides, suicides, sudden death, assaults, sexual assaults, domestic violence, motor vehicle and fire fatalities, robberies, and harassment.

Victim Services Branch staff are full-time civilian members of the Hamilton Police Service and along with specially trained volunteers provide practical assistance, emotional support and referrals for additional community resources.

Services: Around-the-Clock
Intervention (24/7)

Individuals, families, businesses and organizations receive critical crisis intervention as well as support, information and referrals necessary to assist victims in dealing with the trauma of the incident. We know that the earlier the intervention is activated for a victim, the faster a person will regain control over their life once an incident has occurred.