

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

- INFORMATION -

DATE: 2019 April 11
REPORT TO: Chair and Members
Hamilton Police Services Board
FROM: Eric Girt
Chief of Police
SUBJECT: *Year-End Report: Victim Services Branch – 2018*
PSB 19-022

BACKGROUND

The Hamilton Police Service Victim Services Branch was established in 1992. There are four (4) full time 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 2018, outlining the quality service provided to the residents of the City of Hamilton.



Eric Girt
Chief of Police

EG/G. Huss

Attachment: *2018 Annual Report – Victim Services Branch*

cc: Frank Bergen, Deputy Chief – Support
Greg Huss, Superintendent – Community Mobilization Division

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH
155 KING WILLIAM STREET, BOX 1060, LCD1, HAMILTON, ON L8N 4C1
T 905 546-4904 ■ F 905 546-4914 ■ WWW.HAMILTONPOLICE.ON.CA



VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT

2018

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its 24th 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 2018 in this Annual Report. We assisted 2,265 new victims and had a total of 5,742 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 Exercise to role play a large scale disaster/emergency in the city; participated in the creation of City of Hamilton Emergency Planning Training Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBM7T2V48pQ>
- 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.
- HPS VSB was invited by Toronto Victim Services to help provide support to their team in processing VQRP claims for the victims of the Danforth shooting.
- Victim Services Branch participated in the Sexual Assault Review of Unfounded cases in partnership with the Sexual Assault Unit, the Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Care Centre, the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton, the Native Women's Centre, and the Regional Crown Attorney's Office.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Victims and Survivors of Crime Week (VSCW) is an annual outreach initiative of the Justice Canada Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI). 2018 was the 9th year that the Victim Services Branch received funding from the Department of Justice Canada; promoted Victim Services on bus/transit ads during VSCW.
- Collaborated with Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition (HAHTC) to host two conferences in March and June focusing on human trafficking in Hamilton and unveiled the Community Guide for professionals working with trafficked persons.
- Assisted in planning and delivery of International Women’s Day event featuring keynote speaker HPS Inspector Treena MacSween.



Deputy Chief Bergen and Victim Services Branch Volunteers at HPS “Police in the Park” during Police Week in Ontario.

- Eight HPS Cadets completed the Victim Service Branch volunteer training program as part of their Cadet program.
- Participated in the following community events: Domestic Violence Awareness Rally, Urban Core Street Fair, World Elder Abuse Day, PRIDE Flag Raising, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre Open House, Indigenous Victim Services Open House, Aboriginal Sunrise Ceremony, Sisters In Spirit Flag Raising, McMaster Community Engagement & Volunteer Fair, Women of Colour Sexual Health Event, December 6 “Remembering Victims of the Montreal Massacre: Commemorating the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women”.
- The Victim Services Branch participated in the Trivia Night at the HPS Association to raise funds in support of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board’s Rainbow Prom. Rainbow Prom is an important event for many students who do not attend their own school prom because of feelings of anxiety, discomfort or exclusion.

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)

COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

Victim Services Branch presented to:

- Citizens Police College
- Mohawk College
- Indigenous Victim Services
- WAWG Court Committee
- Human Trafficking Conference
- CCAS
- Women's Weekly
- Hatts Off

“

A volunteer's actions and efforts are valued at the centre of a neighbourhood's development.

”

Chief Eric Girt

VICTIM ASSISTANCE & METHODS OF CONTACT

In 2018, the Victim Services Branch assisted 2,265 new victims and had 5,742 total contacts with victims (includes new and existing clients). Responses to a stressful situation vary greatly from person-to-person and not all people will experience the same reaction at the same level of intensity nor for the same length of time. However, it is important to recognize that whatever the reaction is, it is often a normal human response to a stressful situation. For many victims, they are able to empower themselves with self-supporting options and do not require further assistance after initial contact with Victim Services. Other victims may determine that continued resources/interaction with Victim Services is required for their resiliency. Victimization may have occurred recently or historically. Not all victims request or need on-scene crisis intervention.

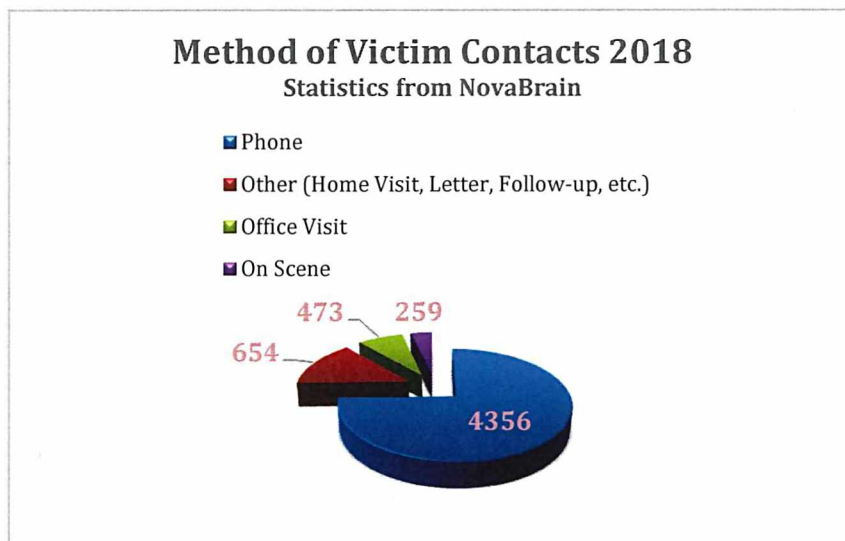


“Imagine being a kid out grocery shopping with your mom midday and witnessing a traumatic attack in person. Hamilton Police gave her a ‘trauma bear’ to help get her mind off what she just saw. Look how tightly she’s holding it! Gestures like that go a long way.”

CHCH Hamilton Reporter/Anchor
 [Screenshot CHCH Twitter Account]

There were 554 claims processed through the Victim Quick Response Program in 2018 e.g. door repairs, cell phone replacement, accommodation, transportation, crime scene clean up, counselling, homicide funerals, etc.

The Victim Services Branch administers the Trauma Bear Program by ensuring all Hamilton Police Service vehicles contain Trauma Bears. Police Officers give Trauma Bears to children at scenes to provide some comfort during the aftermath of crime and trauma.



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: Provides training to 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. Utilizing existing Victim Services Branch staff members, a newly created pilot, Sexual Assault Support Program (SASP) was developed in 2018 to provide pre-interview

appointments to all victims of sexual assault. These appointments are designed to provide victims a comforting atmosphere, while discussing counselling options, next steps and offering accompaniment during the video interview with their assigned detective.

Training Branch: Domestic Violence Officer, Recruit, Major Case Management. 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.

“We very much want to follow the victim's wishes. We will do anything we can to be supportive.”

- Deputy Chief Dan Kinsella

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Victim Service Services Branch Award of Distinction presented to PC Michael Ebert. PC Ebert has been with the Hamilton Police Service since 2008 and has worked in Divisions 2 and 3 both on Patrol and in the Criminal Investigations Division (CID). The Award was created in 2011 and recognizes HPS sworn and civilian members whose efforts support victims of crime and trauma.



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, 25 milestone years of service: Barb Henderson (25 years); Gillian Schaible and Shereen Mala (10 years), Jennifer Johnston, Jennifer Fazzari, John Stanley, Stephanie Pascoal and Theresa Murphy (5 years).

Sandra Gehlert received the Honouring Indigenous Women's Award in the health category presented by the Native Women's Centre (NWC) Hamilton Chapter on October 14. This award celebrates significant contributions of women in our community who are leaders in several different areas and who demonstrate their gifts by helping others as part of the "We Share, We Are" NWC motto.

The Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction for Province of Ontario was presented to HPS VSB Volunteer, Gaye Yachetti. This Award acknowledges the important services and supports that dedicated organizations and individuals provide to victims of crime.



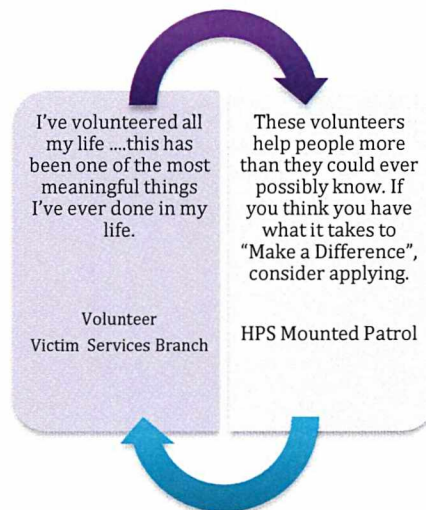
GOAL 1.1 IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR THE HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE TO RESPOND TO CRIME, SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

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

- 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.

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; 1,425 hours of victim crisis intervention in 2018.
- “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 quarterly Professional Development for all volunteers featuring calls presented by their colleagues and guest presenters on community resources; a 13 session training program to 22 new volunteer recruits from January to April.



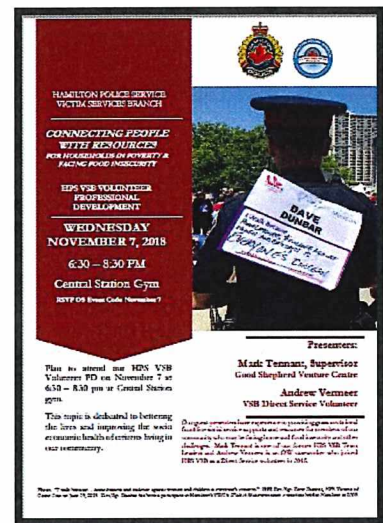
GOAL 3.4 INCREASE TRAINING TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION BY SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES IN OUR COMMUNITIES, FREEING UP TIME FOR TRAINING AND EXPANDING THE TRAINING BUDGET

Victim Services, in partnership with the Sexual Assault Unit, continued to present 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.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- “Let’s Talk” - Indigenous Human Trafficking Training
- National Parole Board Training
- NOVA, Florida (National Organization of Victim Assistance)
- Indigenous Blanket Exercise
- HPS Block Training
- Understanding the Neurobiological Consequences of Trauma in Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence
- Emergency Management (Las Vegas & UK incidents)
- Regional Human Trafficking Forum
- Level 1 Trauma Counselling for Front Line Workers
- Human Trafficking Conference
- Trauma Informed Care
- Trauma Informed Counselling Workshop
- Indigenous Cultural Competency Training
- VSB Direct Service Volunteer, Andrew Vermeer and Mark Tennant, VSB TL [retired] were presenters at the VSB Volunteer Professional Development training in November. The discussion was about connecting people with resources for households in poverty and facing food insecurities. An important message conveyed by Andrew and Mark when supporting someone was “hear their story” before taking any next steps.



I walk because....homelessness and violence against women and children is everyone’s concern.

HPS Det/Sgt. Dave Dunbar
 HPS Victims of Crime Unit, June 19, 2018

“ I appreciated her professionalism, patience and understanding. ”
 Client Feedback

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.



“

....two compassionate and good-hearted volunteers of yours attended the scene promptly. Both of them knew what they were doing. They exuded nothing but compassion and confidence. I felt obliged to let you know of how good of a job they did. I am sure they get lots of thanks from the people on scenes but I wanted their excellent work not to go unnoticed within your department.

”

HPS Officer Division 20 Patrol



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.