

Together. Stronger. Safer.



**HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH  
2020 ANNUAL REPORT • 2019-2021 BUSINESS PLAN**



## VISION • MISSION • OUR VALUES

COMPASSIONATE • DEDICATED • INCLUSIVE • INTEGRITY • INNOVATIVE • PROFESSIONAL • TEAMWORK



Victim Services is a Branch of the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) 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 (VSB) 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. 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.

In 2020, the Victim Services Branch assisted 2,013 new victims and had a total of 5,987 contacts with victims. With 5 full-time staff and over 80 volunteers, the Victim Services Branch is able to provide these services 24/7. The newly created Sexual Assault Support Program (SASP) was operationalized with the hiring of the Coordinator. This program provides trauma informed care and supports to victims and survivors of sexual violence throughout the investigative process in collaboration with the Sexual Assault Unit and Criminal Investigations Division. The program has been well received and Hamilton Police Service is recognized for being one of the leaders in the Province with its implementation.

This year, the VSB approach to service had to adjust to meet provincial and city directives for the pandemic environment to support victims and survivors of crime and/or trauma. For the first time, virtual platforms were used for training, as well as community outreach and engagement. The Victim Services Branch volunteers continued to have a positive impact in supporting victims and survivors in Hamilton and together with our community partners and agencies they are acknowledged with appreciation as they adapted to meet victim and survivor needs.

We continued to develop relationships and create opportunities to be engaged and involved in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders. An important community outreach was the introduction of resources and mindfulness in supporting families with a missing loved one in dealing with ambiguous loss.

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.

# BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS • VICTIM SERVICES BRANCH



The Victim Services Branch is pleased to share our goals, achievements and initiatives for 2020 that have contributed to the outcomes and success of the 2019-2021 Business Plan in this Annual Report. The goals are aligned with the 2019-2021 Business Plan Strategic Directions and Objectives. The Branch's Annual Objectives & Performance follow:



**COMMUNITY SAFETY GOAL F:** Maximize communication with our community as it relates to services and supports, as well as crime prevention, public safety and harm reduction.

•**ACTION:** Enhance communication and options for victims of crime, by collaborating with both internal and external partners to promote supports and crime prevention initiatives in an effort to enhance overall public safety.



**ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS GOAL A:** Collaborate and encourage participation within communities and organizations to help implement solutions and manage public safety.

•**ACTION:** Collaborate with community organizations to implement solutions and support victims of crime.



**ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS GOAL B:** Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities and continue the development of future ambassadors for the Hamilton Police Service.

•**ACTION:** Continue to provide training and professional development opportunities for both volunteers and HPS Cadets to develop future ambassadors for the Hamilton Police Service.



**ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS GOAL C:** Identify funding opportunities available to police services and community groups for the implementation of new programs and the continuation of existing effective programs.

•**ACTION:** Identify funding opportunities available for HPS to support victims of crime.



**PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE GOAL D:** Implement effective delivery of internal and external training.

•**ACTION:** Continue to deliver effective internal and external training to staff, volunteers, and community partners.



**TECHNOLOGY & ASSET MANAGEMENT GOAL E:** Leverage technology to enhance service to the community.

•**ACTION:** Leverage technology to enhance service.

# COMMUNITY SAFETY

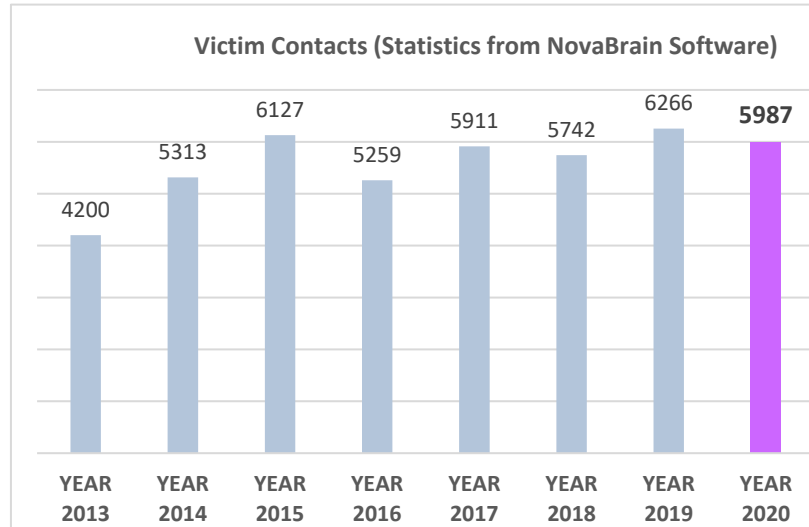
TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITIES THAT WE SERVE



## GOAL F RESULTS

Enhance communication and options for victims of crime, by collaborating with both internal and external partners to promote supports and crime prevention initiatives in an effort to enhance overall public safety.

- 2,013 new victims assisted.
- 5,987 total contacts with victims (includes new and existing clients).
- Continued to work with victims/survivors of crime in providing support, as well as navigating systems and referrals to reduce harm and promote resiliency.



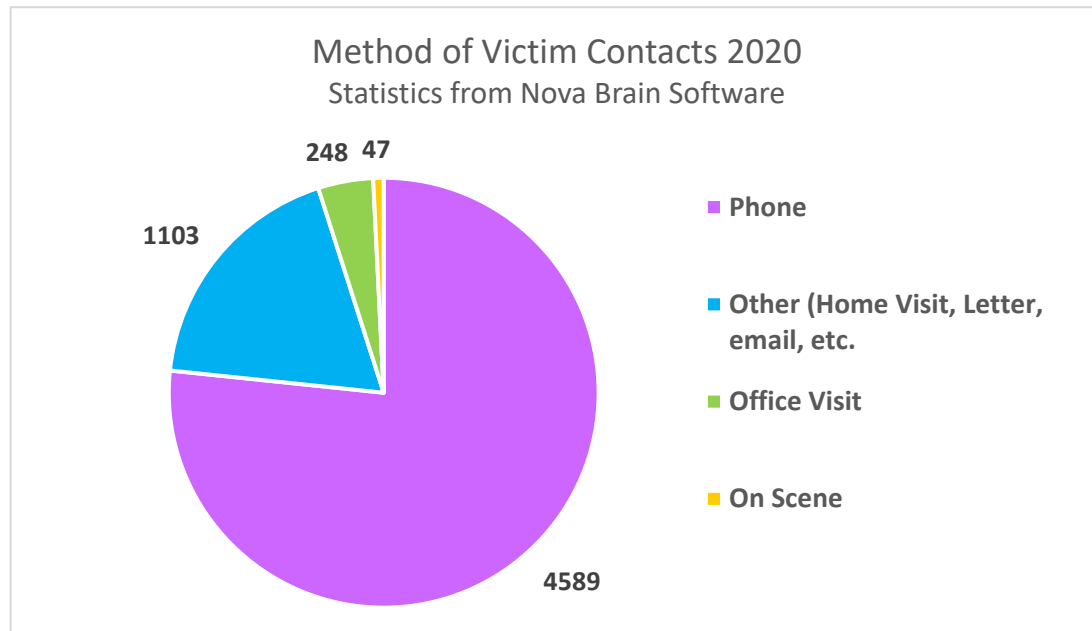
- Rapid Relief Food Boxes initiative launched in collaboration with Office of the Chief and the Rapid Relief Team (Community Partner) with 10 boxes. Boxes are available at all Stations.
- Training provided by staff to organizations in the community to raise awareness about Victim Services and supports available.
- Involved in planning/collaborating with Hamilton and Halton partners to increase community awareness and education on Human Trafficking.
- Overall, 75+ hours of external training was completed by volunteers and 80+ hours by staff to educate on important topics such as: Human Trafficking, Restorative Justice, and Trauma Counselling. In addition, all volunteers completed Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) courses, which included: Workplace Violence, Harassment and Discrimination, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Occupational Health and Safety, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Commission Call it Out Racism, Racial Discrimination and Human Rights course.
- Pamphlets and brochures for victims of crime, as well as the Victim Services Branch section of the Hamilton Police Service website was also updated to reflect current information and resources.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITIES THAT WE SERVE



### GOAL F RESULTS (cont'd)



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 to support their resiliency. Victimization may have occurred recently or historically. Not all victims request or need on-scene crisis intervention.

Please Note: Although public health guidelines altered the way we were able to provide support to those impacted by crime or traumatic events throughout 2020, there was not a significant change in the number of times support was provided when compared to previous years. This demonstrates that Victim Services support has remained imperative throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES



### GOAL A RESULTS

Collaborate with community organizations to implement solutions and support victims of crime.

- Continued to work in collaboration with community organizations to ensure wrap-around supports are available to any victims/survivors supported through the Victim Services Branch.
- Resource Manual was updated regularly to ensure up-to-date community resource options are provided by both staff and volunteer team: 12 new community resources were provided to staff and volunteers throughout 2020 one of which was *Missing Persons - Families with Missing Loved Ones Peer Support Group in Dealing with Ambiguous Grief*.
- In collaboration with the Office of the Chief and the Rapid Relief Team (community partner), the Rapid Relief Food Box program was launched with 10 food boxes which are available at each Station.
- Continued involvement on community committees to enhance collaboration and community based solutions (10+ committees) to support victims of crime.
- Involved in planning/collaborating with Hamilton and Halton partners to increase community awareness and education on Human Trafficking.
- The Victim Services Branch continued to participate as a member of the Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT). The team is comprised of the HPS Sexual Assault Unit (SAU), the Victim Services Branch, the Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Care Centre, the Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton Area (SACHA) and the Native Women's Centre. The vision of the team is "we are all committed to undertaking this review with the end goal of improved service delivery to victims of sexual assault. It is our hope that everyone who experiences sexual assault in Hamilton gets the best possible response, service and care". The newly created Sexual Assault Support Program (SASP) was operationalized with the hiring of the Coordinator. This program provides trauma informed care and supports to victims and survivors of sexual violence throughout the investigative process in collaboration with the Sexual Assault Unit and Criminal Investigations Division. The program has been well received and Hamilton Police Service is recognized for being one of the leaders in the Province with its implementation. Victim Services volunteers received comprehensive training to provide the supports 24/7 when required.
- Administered the Trauma Bear Program in partnership with Shaw Communications Inc. 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. This partnership with Shaw Communications Inc. and their donation of the trauma bears has been in place since 2012.
- Victims and Survivors of Crime Week (VSCW) is an annual outreach initiative of the Justice Canada Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI). The Victim Services Branch observed this week virtually and acknowledged the importance of the 10-year milestone on the unveiling of the plaques on the two benches located at Central Station front courtyard. Each plaque conveys the sentiment

## ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES



### GOAL A RESULTS (cont'd)

of *"Forget Me Not – A Place of Quiet Reflection to Honour all Victims of Crime Because Every Victim Matters"*. This dedication offers Hamilton Police Service an opportunity to honour all victims and survivors of crime. It is an important reminder that the individuals, families and friends affected by crime and trauma are not forgotten and acknowledges our community partners, stakeholders and volunteers for the important work they do. Please take a moment to click on link: <https://youtu.be/BpJJipc6T6k>

### Community Contributions

- **Events:** Ontario Hockey League (OHL) 911 Appreciation Night, Golden Women's Support, International Women's Day, McMaster University Community Engagement & Volunteer Fair (Virtual), Suicide Loss Memorial in partnership with Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice and the Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton (Virtual), and December 6 "Remembering Victims of the Montreal Massacre: Commemorating the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women" (Virtual).
- **Committee & Community Work:** Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee for City of Hamilton; High Risk Domestic Violence Community Advisory Team; Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition (HAHTC) and Steering Committee; International Women's Day Planning Committee; Hamilton Police Women's Services Advisory Committee to the Chief; Emergency Women's Shelters Protocol Committee; Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG); Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT); Safe at Home Hamilton; Domestic Violence Court Advisory Committee; Victim Service Alliance of Ontario.

## ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES



### GOAL B RESULTS

Continue to provide training and professional development opportunities for both volunteers and HPS Cadets to develop future ambassadors for the Hamilton Police Service.

- Volunteers contribute over:
  - 30,000 hours of being available for on-call coverage.
  - 890 hours of direct contact with victims.
  - Fluency in 18 languages other than English.
- Training on new programs and trends integrated Wellness, the Sexual Assault Support Program and CPKN courses for volunteers.
- Trained 33 New Volunteers and 4 HPS Cadets through 36 hours of instruction.
- 3 Professional Development Training Nights (6 hours) provided.
- Transitioned to using Microsoft Teams to facilitate safe on-going engagement. All 3 Professional Development trainings were facilitated virtually.
- Team Leader Meetings also transitioned to a virtual format to promote engagement.
- Volunteer recognition completed throughout the year through individual notes of appreciation, as well as through National Volunteer Week and International Volunteer Day.



# ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

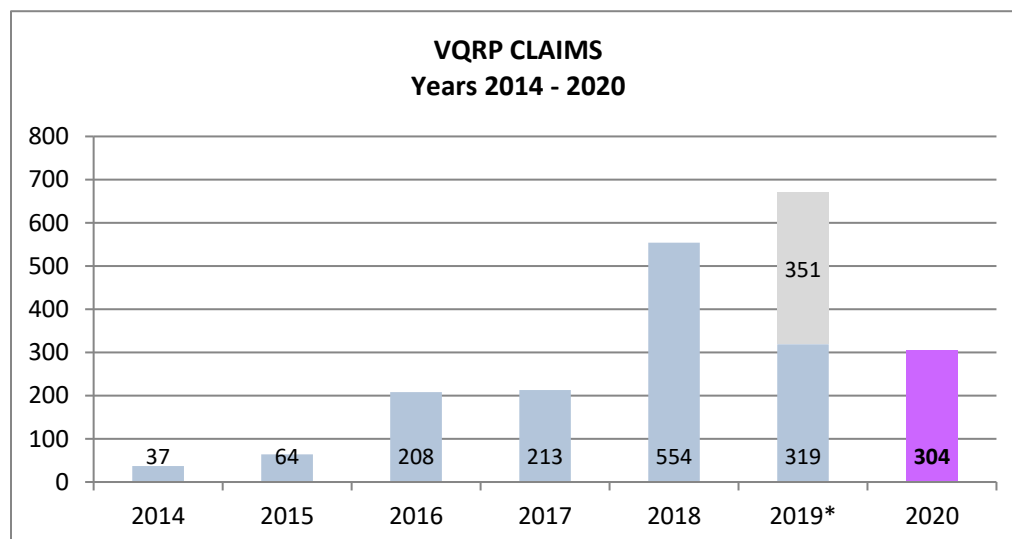
TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES



## GOAL C RESULTS

Identify funding opportunities available for HPS to support victims of crime.

- Grant Ended: Department of Justice Canada Victims Fund – Measures to Address Prostitution (received \$15,000 last 5 years) ended March 31st, 2020.
- The five-year grant (July 2015 – March 2020) was brought to closure. The benefits derived from this grant supported its three pillars: community stakeholder initiatives, education and individuals exiting sex work. Outcomes of the grant reaffirmed the importance of Hamilton Police Victim Services Branch being able to offer supports and resources to Hamilton Police Human Trafficking Unit, Vice and Drug Unit and partner agencies; educational conferences continued to result in newly developed relationships and awareness not only in Hamilton but also neighbouring communities surrounding the GHA.
- Two grants applied for:
  - Public Safety Canada: Human Trafficking Funding Opportunity. Two streams applied for: Community Based Trauma-Informed Empowerment and At-Risk Youth.
  - Civil Remedies Grant: enhance safety planning options for victims of Intimate Partner Violence/Youth.
- Continued to deliver the Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP+) for the City of Hamilton on behalf of the Ministry of the Attorney General (annual contract). There were 304 claims processed through the Victim Quick Response Program in 2020, e.g. door/lock repairs, cell phone replacement, accommodation, transportation, crime scene clean up, counselling, funeral services, etc. The claims totalled over \$175,000 in direct benefit to victims of crime.



\*Human Trafficking Project with RCMP

## PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE

TO INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS BY ATTRACTING,  
DEVELOPING AND RETAINING OUR MEMBERS



### GOAL D RESULTS

Continue to deliver effective internal and external training to staff, volunteers, and community partners.

- Training provided to staff and volunteers to educate on important topics to best support victims of crime and/or trauma such as: Human Trafficking, Restorative Justice, Indigenous supports, Trauma Counselling, CPKN Mandatory Modules. Overall, over 75 hours of external training was completed by Volunteers and over 80 hours by staff.
- Information on new programs and community resources distributed to both staff and volunteers on a regular basis to ensure up-to-date awareness of victim issues and supports: 12 new community resources were provided to staff and volunteers throughout 2020.
- The first virtual professional development for volunteers was held in September followed by the first virtual orientation for the new volunteer training class held at the end of October.
- Provided Victim Services training to new Police recruits Post-OPC, as well as new Communications members.
- Presentations provided to community partners on supports available through the Victim Services Branch.
- In 2020, four HPS Cadets completed Victim Service Branch volunteer training as part of their Cadet program. The Victim Services Branch continues to be an integral component of the continuum of learning for the HPS Cadet residency program since 2014. In addition, another 5 Cadets completed rotational assigned duties working in the VSB office as part of their supervised practicum.

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 and Victims.
- **Bail Support Unit:** Continue to support Ministry of the Attorney General and 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:** Crisis response on-scene; provide HPS Trauma Bear program supported by Shaw Communications Inc.
- **Sexual Assault Unit (SAU):** Continue to support the SAU via the Sexual Assault Support Program (SASP).
- **Criminal Investigations Division:** Continue to provide both crisis response on-scene, as well as follow-up support to calls such as: sudden death investigations, missing persons, as well as through the Sexual Assault Support Program (SASP) for intimate partner violence related sexual assault investigations.

## PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE

TO INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS BY ATTRACTING,  
DEVELOPING AND RETAINING OUR MEMBERS



### GOAL D RESULTS (cont'd)

- **Training Branch: Domestic Violence Officer, Recruit:** 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.

Continued 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.

The *Victim Services Branch Award of Distinction* was presented to Detective Sergeant Steve Bereziuk. The Award was created in 2011 and recognizes HPS Sworn and civilian members whose efforts support victims of crime and trauma.

“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. The *Did You Know* is in its 16<sup>th</sup> year.

## TECHNOLOGY & ASSET MANAGEMENT

TO ENSURE WE HAVE THE NECESSARY PLANS IN PLACE TO ADDRESS  
FACILITIES, FLEET & TECHNOLOGY



### GOAL E RESULTS

Leverage technology to enhance service.

- Microsoft Teams was utilized to reconnect with the Victim Services Branch volunteer team (80+ Volunteers) to continue with engagement opportunities and training. This assisted with retention, as volunteer roles were impacted by the pandemic.
- Virtual platforms were also used to plan for the upcoming Victim Services Volunteer Training commencing in January 2021.
- Social Media was used to raise awareness for Victim Services through:
  1. National Victims and Survivors of Crime Week: YouTube video created to acknowledge victims and survivors of crime and to highlight 10 year milestone of our *Forget Me Not – Every Victim Matters* benches located at Central Station (May and November, 2020). <https://youtu.be/BpJJipc6T6k>
  2. Coffee with a Cop (HPS) – Victim Services Branch highlighted (May, 2020).
  3. Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG) Podcast Series to promote the Victim Services Branch and supports available (March, 2020).
- New training opportunities made available for Victim Services Branch volunteers that were offered through Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN). This platform is used by HPS for all online employee training courses as well.
- Pamphlets and brochures for victims of crime, as well as the Victim Services section of the Hamilton Police Service website was also updated to reflect current information and resources.



*Two benches are located in the courtyard at Hamilton Police Service Central Station. The benches provide a peaceful place for those who wish to pause, rest or reflect. On each bench is a plaque with an inscription: "FORGET ME NOT" ~ A Place of Quiet Reflection to Honour All Victims of Crime Because "Every Victim Matters".*