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GAZETTE

SERVING THE POLICE COMMUNITY SINCE 1938

VOL.73, NO. 2, 2011

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Vol. 73, No. 2, 2011
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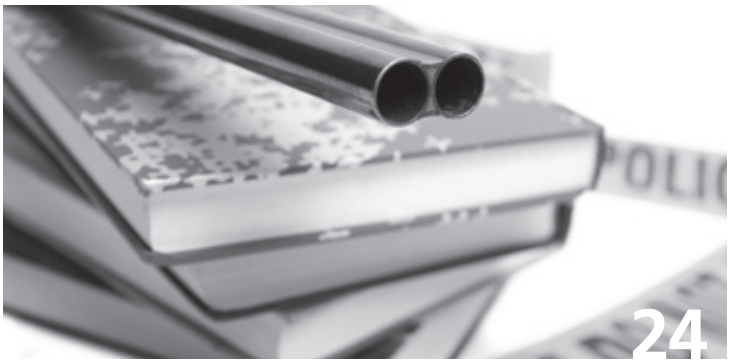
COVER SECTION

DEPARTMENTS



NOT CHILD'S PLAY

While checking my Facebook account earlier this year, I was doubly surprised to receive a friend request from my niece. That's because she's only 12 years old and didn't yet have permission to have access to the social networking site.

My gut reaction was not anger, but fear — not for what she might do, but what others are capable of doing.

In our cover section on youth, we learn that police across Canada are getting standardized training on how to interact with young people like my niece to help them make positive decisions not only about Internet use but other issues as well.

We also highlight the relationships RCMP members are building with youth to pinpoint specific problems in their communities such as drugs and develop solutions.

And we take a look at the Canadian Police Centre for Missing and Exploited Children and the international co-operation that is required to crack down on child sexual exploitation, both online and off.

Two of our articles focus on educating police on mental health disorders. D/Sgt. Glenn Sheil of the Ontario Provincial Police's Threat Assessment Unit outlines the signs that could predict school violence, while registered psychiatric nurse Christina Krack explains how best to approach young people exhibiting symptoms of psychosis.

We also tackle gangs from three very different perspectives.

Former United States ambassador David Shinn discusses the problem of Somali youth radicalization and how it differs from traditional American gang culture, while members of the Surrey Wrap Project in British Columbia describe their efforts to take gang members off the streets and reintegrate them into society.

And former Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire outlines the efforts of his Child Soldier Initiative to prevent the recruitment and use of children in criminal gangs and armed conflict across the globe.

Outside of our cover section, *Gazette* writer Sigrid Forberg speaks with forensic anthropologist and author Kathy Reichs, whose novels have become the basis for the hit television show *Bones*.

Contributing writer Mallory Procunier takes us to the prisons of Kingston, Ontario, where the Pen Squad, a team made up of members from the Ontario Provincial Police, Kingston City Police and the RCMP, is called in to investigate crimes between some of Canada's worst.

We also profile an application launched by the city of Phoenix, Arizona, which allows the public to use their smartphone cameras to report crimes of vandalism with the touch of a button.

And Robert C. Hotston, former criminal investigator with the Special Court for Sierra Leone, chronicles the challenges of investigating crimes against humanity amidst differences in both criminal justice systems and policing approaches. Not unlike many of our youth stories, he argues that stronger partnerships and collaboration are necessary to avoid conflict and ensure success.

As for my niece, her parents and I monitor her online activity and make ourselves available whenever she has questions. After all, it starts with family. But, as the articles in this issue illustrate, there are others in the community, including police, who are there to help if we ever need it. ■

— Richard Vieira

GAZETTE

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DEBATING THE TRUTHS

RCMP

The PEACE and Reid models are the two more common forensic interviewing techniques used by Canadian police.

I'm a police officer with the Greater Sudbury Police Service and one of the co-authors of an article that S/Sgt McLeod talks about in his recent submission to the *Gazette* ("Getting to the truth," Vol. 73, No. 1, pp. 16-17).

Not only is over 20 per cent of McLeod's article word for word from a May 2010 communication written by Joseph Buckley of John E. Reid and Associates (Dear Reid Supporter, May 3, 2010), but McLeod didn't include the credit and permission requirement as stated by the Reid website.

And some of McLeod's "facts" are, in a word, wrong. His assertions that the PEACE model already has its equivalent in the Reid Technique highlight his lack of knowledge of the two investigative interviewing models he says he's comparing. Instead of researching the PEACE model himself, he merely repeated (without a hint of critical thought) what Reid and Associates sent its supporters. It is unfortunate that he used his position at the Canadian Police College to market the Reid Technique in the *Gazette* under the guise of "exploration." His submission added absolutely nothing to the conversation.

Canadian police officers and researchers from different parts of the country — Newfoundland, Alberta, Ontario — at around the same time and who didn't know their provincial counterparts existed, were asking themselves a simple question; is this the best we can do? All of us, with our various backgrounds and experiences, looked at the PEACE model with a critical eye. Does it work and how? Does it meet our evidentiary and case law requirements? Coincidence brought us together. And we talked.

The British didn't come to our shores and lecture us on our rules of admissibility as if we don't know what they are. The British didn't bring their interview model here and tell us this is all we should use because of R v. Oickle. Not once has a British police service or company told us what to do.

Canadians searched for, found and brought home knowledge. Canadians, who know our system, did it. We didn't need to be told what to do or say by a company. When an interview model such as PEACE is considered international best practice, I want to know about it.

I believe our objectives of finding out what happened and who's responsible are the same. However, I see a fear of irrelevancy in what McLeod submitted and neither he nor the polygraph school speak for me.

Cst. Mike Stinson
Greater Sudbury Police Service

Sigrid Forberg

Mitch Torrens, on behalf of the Zero Force cycling team, speaks on Parliament Hill about the use of child soldiers, while Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Roméo Dallaire looks on. *Read Dallaire's article about his Child Soldier Initiative on page 16.*

CORRECTION

In "Getting the dirt: The value of soil in criminal investigations," which appeared in the last issue of the *Gazette* (Vol. 73, No. 1, pp. 22-23), the Centre for Australian Forensic Soil Science was incorrectly referred to as the Centre for Australian Soil Science in author Dr. Rob Fitzpatrick's byline.

We apologize for the error.

CO-OPERATION BRINGS HOME BULGARIAN COINS

Precious treasures come to those who wait. After nearly four years, the Department of Canadian Heritage has returned 21,000 detained cultural artifacts to the Republic of Bulgaria.

The process started in 2007 when the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) intercepted two imports of cultural property that had been mailed from Bulgaria. The items, which had been sold to a buyer in Quebec, ranged from ancient coins and jewelry to other small objects.

CBSA contacted the Movable Cultural Property Directorate (MCP) of the Department of Canadian Heritage, who then requested the RCMP's Customs and Excise Program's assistance in the investigation.

Under the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, Canadian Heritage is responsible for protecting both Canadian and world cultural heritage.

"This recovery is an example of the successful co-operation of government departments and agencies working together to administer and enforce the law and uphold international treaty obligations," says Susan Murdock, acting director of the MCP.

Coinciding with a visit from Bulgarian officials, including the Bulgarian ambassador to Canada, Canadian Heritage held a return ceremony in June. Vezhdi Rashidov, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria, accepted the artifacts on behalf of the eastern European country.

Courtesy Canadian Heritage

Canadian Heritage returned 21,000 detained artifacts including coins, jewelry and various small objects to the Republic of Bulgaria in June.

"I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Department of Canadian Heritage and personally to Minister James Moore, to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to the investigative departments, as well as to all Canadian institutions who contributed to the resolution of this case," says Rashidov.

Although pressing charges was deemed not in the public interest, the investigation of the items was a learning experience for the Customs and Excise Program.

"The experience gained will also help in dealing with future cases of illegal transfer of cultural property," says Cpl. Christine Bélair of the Customs and Excise Program in Quebec.

"It has also created a better appreciation and awareness of this type of illegal activity in both countries, and certainly within the RCMP." ■

— Sigrid Forberg

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROJECT SEES CONVICTIONS RISE

Around 30 per cent of domestic violence victims recant once charges have been laid, but a new approach to these cases in the province of British Columbia has seen a dramatic reduction in these numbers.

In December 2008, RCMP Insp. Richard Konarski and then-B.C. prosecutor Jocelyn Coupal launched a six-month domestic violence pilot project in the city of Langley.

The Langley initiative turned the typical way of dealing with incidents of domestic violence on its head. Police officers, victim services and the Crown prosecutors took an evidence-based, risk-focused approach to the cases. Instead of relying on a victim's testimony, police would build a case that could still move forward without the victim.

Coupal says many partners intimidate or cajole their victims into recanting their statements, often leaving prosecutors with no option but to stay the charges if they have no other evidence.

"You must investigate in a way that will take the power away from the offender," says Coupal. "If you have an investigation that includes things like a 911 call, a neighbour's statement, photographs and a guided conversation with the victim at the time that she is most likely to be co-operative, you then will have an investigation that cannot be overcome by recantation."

In just six months, Langley saw a 50-per-cent increase in convictions, a 50-per-cent decrease in dropped charges and an 80-per-cent drop in victim recantations.

"The feedback I got anecdotally was that the victims had never felt so listened to and so supported through the criminal process," says Konarski. "Because we didn't go in with assumptions about what the person needed, we actually looked at the safety issues and once the person felt safe, that's when we built up the evidentiary things and moved on to the investigation."

Following the project, the province instated mandatory domestic violence training for police based on the approach from the Langley pilot.

The RCMP has since also developed a domestic violence investigations course available through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network, with provincially relevant e-courses for B.C., Manitoba and Alberta with other provinces slated to be added. ■

— Sigrid Forberg

CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

The Sex Offender Information Registration Act (SOIRA) has been amended through Bill S-2: Protecting Victims Against Sex Offenders Act. The changes officially came into effect in April.

The provinces and territories, supported by the RCMP, have long been communicating concerns about the previous legislation to lawmakers. On almost all accounts, the new and improved SOIRA delivers a solution to those concerns.

Coinciding with the new law, the National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) database underwent an overhaul to deliver a more intuitive and comprehensive application for NSOR staff.

The NSOR is used to access current and reliable information about convicted sex offenders. The database includes addresses, telephone numbers, physical descriptors and vehicles. Only law enforcement has access to the registry to investigate cases ranging from indecent exposure to child exploitation to sexual assault and more.

Inclusion in the registry is now mandatory for all offenders convicted of a designated sexual offence. Before this, as little as 50 per cent of offenders were receiving an order to comply. A larger pool of records will improve the odds of generating a suspect list when querying the database.

Many sexual offences are committed using a vehicle and now offenders must register every vehicle they own or regularly access. Often, a victim is only able to provide a license plate or model. Now, the NSOR may assist in such cases.

NSOR centres are often called by foreign law enforcement agencies to identify a convicted sex offender relocating to Canada. With the amendments, police can serve these foreign offenders a notice to report. The NSOR has been reaching out to all United States registries and other international policing agencies to further information sharing in hopes of better crime prevention.

The new legislation also allows access to the database for the purpose of preventing a sexual offence. Until now, a search of the NSOR was only possible after a sexual crime had been committed. Proactive use of the registry will allow law enforcement to intervene before a victim comes into harm's way. ■

— Stephanie Gauthier

CELEBRITY CANADIANS ENCOURAGE CLEAN LIVES

Sgt. Keith MacKinnon is the first to admit that sometimes police presentations for teens can be dry.

And that's why MacKinnon, the RCMP's Drugs and Organized Crime Awareness Service (DOCAS) Co-ordinator for Nova Scotia, decided to make a movie.

Canadian Champions, a 25-minute video featuring famous Canadians from National Hockey League star Sidney Crosby, to world champion diver Alex Despatie, is aimed at kids aged 12 to 17 and encourages them not to let drugs and alcohol stand in the way of their success.

"We didn't set out to make a scared straight, look what meth can do to you production," says MacKinnon. "Instead, it's a look-what-I-can-do kind of video that is upbeat with positive messaging and people who are true role models."

MacKinnon's brother, a professor at Acadia University, helped put together a package for teachers across the country and ensured that the content met national health education curriculum standards.

All of the video's participants contributed their time on a voluntary basis. Originally, when MacKinnon got the idea for the project, he knew he wanted Crosby, a Nova Scotia native, involved. So he tracked down Crosby's father to pitch the idea.

MacKinnon's forward approach worked. With Crosby on board, MacKinnon continued to enlist Canadians celebrated for their specific talents.

"We want kids from all walks of life to look at this video and be able to relate to someone whether they are into sports or the arts," says MacKinnon.

As upbeat as it is, as production progressed, MacKinnon says it became clear that while the point was not to scare kids, the video needed to seriously acknowledge the danger of drugs.

After Hockey Night in Canada host Scott Oake lost his 25-year-old son to a drug overdose, Oake heard about the video initiative and he reached out to get involved. His interview provides a sombre insight into the true cost of addiction.

The video is expected to launch in the fall. It will be available for download online for teachers, RCMP presenters and parents alike through DEAL.org, the RCMP's by-youth, for-youth website.

"Co-ordinating everything has been a logistical challenge to say the least," says MacKinnon.

"But if we can reach these youth any way we can, it's well worth it." ■

— Sigrid Forberg

Sgt. Keith MacKinnon and National Hockey League star Sidney Crosby chat in between takes of shooting Canadian Champions.

RCMP

RCMP

The youth officer training program emphasizes a balanced approach to policing youth through the three modules of prevention, intervention and enforcement.

ENGAGEMENT OVER ENFORCEMENT

TRAINING YOUTH OFFICERS IN TEACHING OVER PREACHING

By Sigrid Forberg

There was a time when being a youth officer meant you just had to organize slideshow presentations or activities for school children.

And while connecting with kids is still an important building block to developing positive relationships with police, the days of simply handing out crayons and colouring books are long gone.

Youth officers also now have to broach topics such as gangs, homicide and drugs in both schools and out in the community.

To prepare officers for these duties, several Canadian provinces are now offering a youth officer training program, the first in the country to offer work credits to its participants. The five-day course was designed by the RCMP's National Crime Prevention Services (NCPS) and its National Youth Services (NYS) branch and can be easily modified to each province's specific needs.

The program emphasizes a balanced approach to policing youth through the three modules of prevention, intervention and enforcement — all of which are equally important.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

It has been just over a decade since the RCMP identified youth as one of their five strategic priorities. In 12 years, the youth officer role has undergone a vast transformation.

In 2003, Cpl. Kurt Neuman was informed that he was the new youth officer for his detachment. Despite Neuman's only qualifications being that he had five sons, he says he took the position and ran with it, making the sky his limit.

Based in Surrey, British Columbia, since 1999, Neuman worked as a school liaison officer for five years before becoming the RCMP's youth co-ordinator for the province. He says schools should be the next safest place for kids after the home environment. And for Neuman, that means taking a balanced approach.

"Under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, one of the steps we can take is to do nothing," says Neuman. "But what good does that do? We have to be able to be a resource within the community and make crucial referrals to social programs."

In one incident, Neuman was dealing with three youths who broke into a friend's home to steal cigarettes. He says the spirit of the YCJA is not to criminalize youth. At their age, not all young people are entrenched in a criminal way of life.

Sometimes, the most helpful choice an officer can make for these youth falls somewhere between incarcerating them and ignoring them. Rather than laying charges, these particular youth were sent to an intervention program, a resolution that suited all parties involved.

"Those are the future leaders, yes, but they could also be the future people that we may have to be dealing with," says Neuman. "If we can intervene at a young enough age, perhaps we can make a difference and change some lives."

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

The need for a training program was identified in 2005 as part of a national strategic plan for the youth priority. Officers going into schools off patrol duty expressed concern that they weren't equipped for the distinctive needs of the job.

Sgt. Corry Pyne is the former national youth officer program co-ordinator for NYS. In 2008, Pyne collaborated with RCMP Learning and Development and, based on feedback and support from the provinces, created the national youth officer training program.

"Even though youth is a strategic priority, not every member is comfortable working with young people," says Pyne. "We set out to ensure that officers would have a good knowledge of the YCJA and be aware of what their resources in the community are so they can communicate with youth effectively."

Feedback from the initial B.C. pilot suggested that the program's scope was too national in its focus. Different regions of the country face different youth-related issues that are not one-size-fits-all. So Pyne went back to the program, reorganizing it so that it was flexible enough to be tailored to local needs.

Provinces can now choose and modify the sessions and modules that are relevant to their region.

Over a five-day period, local subject matter experts are invited to present and lead discussions on topics ranging from mental health issues to interviewing youth and threat assessment.

The course has already been run in B.C., Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. Members of several municipal forces including the Calgary Police Services, Halifax Regional Police, Fredericton Police Force and the New Brunswick's Rothesay Regional Police Force, also took part in the training.

Cst. Mark Young, an officer with Halifax Regional Police on long-term secondment to the Nova Scotia Department of Education, attended the Nova Scotia training session. Part of his job includes advocating for and working with school liaison officers.

With 10 years of part-time and four years of full-time experience working with youth, Young emphasizes the importance of quality and consistent training for youth officers.

He adds that the learning doesn't necessarily take place solely during the sessions.

"What I learned that I'm using regularly now came more from the interaction and building of relationships with the other officers," says Young. "That isn't the stuff you program into the week, but it's still such a valuable opportunity."

YOUTH OFFICER RESOURCE CENTRE

The same 2005 strategic review that identified the need for consistent youth officer training also called for a universally available resource pool for those officers. Thus, the Youth Officer Resource Centre (YORC) was created.

The website, available through the RCMP's internal website and the Canadian Police College website, is a one-stop-shop for members to access resources like fact sheets, presentation material or ideas for programs that encourage youth involvement.

Samuel Breau, a national policy analyst for NYS, manages the content for the site.

He says the topics YORC covers come from keeping a pulse on what is arising out of both the media and especially relationships with the officers working directly with youth. Frontline officers often make requests for information that are relevant nationwide, which works out nicely for the policy centre.

"One of the main points of having YORC is that we want to make sure that we get the best message possible out there so that the relationship between the RCMP and the communities is the most meaningful it can be," says Breau.

The site currently has more than 100 bilingual presentations available and receives about 1,000 to 1,500 unique visits per month, a number that also fluctuates depending on the popularity of the information available.

CHANGING LIVES

As helpful as YORC is, some of the most helpful information comes right from the source.

Cpl. Greg Church, the youth co-ordinator for Nova Scotia, says valuable information that would otherwise be unattainable comes to light when you engage and involve youth in decisions that directly relate to them.

"When we include youth, we experience a much richer, encompassing relationship with all citizens in our jurisdiction," says Church. "In the long term, we're very hopeful that this will help us identify many of the complex issues surrounding the root causes of crime."

Not every police officer can get these results from youth. Pyne, Neuman, Young and Church all agree that to be a successful youth officer, a member needs to have nearly endless amounts of patience, empathy and compassion.

Young says they not only have to believe that youth are the solution rather than the problem and that working for and with youth is critical, but that it's vital that they themselves are able to make a difference.

Also important in the equation is a good relationship with school administrators. Church says that nothing will get done in a school where you are not on the same page as the principal. Coming from a policing background, officers often have to get used to the different approach a learning environment calls for.

Sheila Morissette, the principal at Sullivan Heights Secondary School, has been a school administrator for 15 years.

She says she has noticed a significant difference in the approach to policing schools over the years.

"It has only been a good thing having officers in our schools building relationships with both the kids and us," says Morissette. "Their presence can be comforting but it can also serve as a deterrent — kids won't bother risking as much when they know that officers will be around."

IF WE CAN INTERVENE AT A YOUNG ENOUGH AGE, PERHAPS WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND CHANGE SOME LIVES.

But Neuman stresses that all the effort is worth it, given that positive relationships between youth and officers opens the door to great possibilities.

"We have to be able to provide those kids with the best opportunities for them to become contributing members within our communities," says Neuman.

"Look at the opportunity these relationships offer us. To be able to change lives for the better is huge." ■

CENTRED ON THE CHILDREN

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION

By Sigrid Forberg

Technology has made it so that images of child sexual abuse are now readily available at your fingertips. And this has greatly transformed how police investigate these cases.

Profiling these offenders is nearly impossible. The stereotype of the socially stunted, middle-aged man who lives in his mother's basement amassing millions of photos of children no longer reflects reality.

The perceived anonymity of the online world and easy accessibility to images and like-minded individuals has opened the door for almost anyone — including professionals like teachers, scout leaders and even police officers — to satisfy their urges.

And while all crimes are criminal and all victims of crime are victims, it's the innocence of these exploited children that evokes emotional responses to this kind of abuse.

DEMAND DRIVES DEVELOPMENT

In response to numerous investigations generated by foreign police agencies, the RCMP and the Canadian government created the Canadian Police Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (CPCMEC) in 2004. Prior to this, Canadian law enforcement had no infrastructure to receive and handle cases of online child sexual exploitation.

The National Child Exploitation Co-ordination Centre (NCECC) operates within the centre. Their mandate is to enforce the law component of the Government of Canada's national strategy against child sexual exploitation.

All investigations from abroad come through NCECC, where they are triaged and prioritized, and from there, intelligence is supplemented and distributed to the appropriate jurisdiction. All provinces, as well as several large cities, have their own integrated child exploitation (ICE) units that then take on the investigations.

"Each image is the scene of a crime," says Supt. John Bilinski, the officer in charge of CPCMEC. "It's just like a police officer walking onto the scene of a break-in or an assault — the only difference is that it's on the Internet."

Victim identification investigators look at images daily in the hopes of isolating objects in the background that range from bedspreads and wall plugs to cans of soda and clothing that can help pinpoint the location of the victim.

Sometimes these images also lead investigators to related crimes. Since 2004, seven Canadians have been arrested for traveling sex offences. Michael Serapiglia, the senior research analyst at CPCMEC, says that all of these offenders have also had links to child pornography crimes.

"For most offenders, psychologically speaking, these sexual acts become significant to them and either to relive their experience or to have some sort of trophy, they produce and maintain images and videos of their crimes," says Serapiglia.

He adds that in many cases, the offender's online involvement has led police directly to them.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

According to Sgt. Jackie Basque, the manager of operations for NCECC, the term pornography doesn't convey the gravity of the situation.

"You're actually seeing violent images of children being abused," says Basque. "We call it child pornography because that's how it appears in the Criminal Code. But we feel

as investigators, that that label minimizes the offence, so we call them images of child sexual abuse."

What makes investigating these cases challenging is that most offenders are known to their victims. Non-custodial parents, members of the clergy and family friends gain access to their victims without garnering much suspicion.

In the past, someone with an interest in children used to have to go out and touch a child themself, at the risk of being caught or leaving a witness. Now, they can privately enjoy images of child abuse, surrounded by the four walls of their own home.

And this, for many, has created a false sense of comfort.

"They think nobody can see them, that they can log on anonymously and surf the net," says Basque. "In their minds, since they're not touching the children, they're not committing an offence. But they are. Viewing these images is just re-victimizing the children."

Even after being rescued, the sad reality is that the structure of the Internet and the way offenders share and save these images means that they will continue to circulate indefinitely.

There's no doubt that this line of work does takes a toll on how investigators view the world. Basque says she now instinctively wonders about children she sees in the mall or people photographing children on the beach, but she adds she can't let these thoughts and questions overcome her.

"If I let my job overtake me personally, then it's time to move on," says Basque. "You still have to live just like any other job. Just like a drug investigator might see drug dealers in everyone on the street, we have to separate our lives and jobs."

INNOVATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Over the past eight years, NCECC has become a world leader in investigating online child sexual exploitation cases. More than 250 Canadian children have been removed from abusive situations.

One tool of particular interest is the Child Exploitation Tracking System (CETS), an image database that was developed in partnership with Microsoft and rolled out in 2004.

All images from seized computers are run through the database and sorted into six categories: child exploitation, child nudity, collateral, adult pornography, obscenity and other.

Forensic investigators look for both known and identified series of photos. Known series are images of children that investigators are aware of, but have yet to identify. Identified series, on the other hand, feature children that have been rescued and therefore, do not require further investigation.

Canada is currently the only country that makes its national image database accessible to all police agencies across the country.

What makes this system revolutionary, explains Natalie Tasker, a member of NCECC's technology team, is that running the images found on a suspect's hard drive against those of already known or identified series can shave countless hours off of investigations for local police.

As of July, the database contained more than 1.4 million images. Some ICE units are finding up to 70 per cent of seized images already categorized, which not only saves police and investigators precious time, but has an indirect health benefit.

Tasker says running a suspect's collection through the database cuts down the number of images investigators need to view and therefore spares them the difficult and unnecessary task of reviewing images.

Even with these improvements, the centre is always looking for ways to further the database's effectiveness.

"When CETS came in, there was a series of issues that investigators were concerned about like speed and security," says Tasker. "Now that those critical humps are out of the way, we're looking at linking CETS up to different countries as well."

The centre's method has garnered international attention and renown. Countries like Brazil and Thailand have requested NCECC's guidance to help model their own operations centres after the Canadian law enforcement approach.

STRENGTH IN SHARING

In June, Bilinski and Basque travelled to Brazil to share best practices with state and federal law enforcement agencies, provide training and help with the establishment of NCECC's Brazilian equivalent, the

FINDING MISSING CHILDREN WITH FACEBOOK

The efforts of two of North America's leading child safety advocates have made Amber Alerts, the missing children notification system, even more accessible to tech-savvy Canadians.

Dr. Parry Aftab and Allan McCullough spearheaded a partnership between the national Amber Alert Working Group and Facebook Canada that has resulted in five provinces launching Amber Alert Facebook pages.

Facebook users in Ontario, Quebec, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador can now receive up-to-the-minute updates through their computers and smartphones. Liking these pages puts Facebook users on a list to receive messages about current Amber Alerts and ongoing cases.

In missing children cases, every minute counts. Quicker dissemination of important details could make the difference between a rescue and a recovery mission.

Aftab and McCullough, based in New York, have dedicated their lives to

RCMP

Dr. Parry Aftab and Allan McCullough accept the Air Canada – RCMP Child Recovery Award.

Internet safety and protecting children. In recognition of their efforts, Aftab and McCullough received the Air Canada – RCMP Child Recovery Award, which was presented to the pair in Ottawa on National Missing Children's Day in May.

"Social media has the power to do good, to change the world and to bring home children," says Aftab. "If you want to measure how much Canadians care, you can do it by counting the number of fans on these pages."

— Sigrid Forberg

Brazilian Federal Police's Centro Nacional Policial de Proteção Online à Criança e ao Adolescente (CENAPOL).

CENAPOL was developed after two Brazilian Federal Police chiefs participated in a Canadian study tour last year. The Brazilian centre is now gathering support with its own federal authorities such as the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of Justice.

Facilitating the exchange is the Child Protection Partnership (CPP), a project of the International Institute for Child Rights and Development (IICRD), which operates out of the University of Victoria in British Columbia.

Since CPP's inception in 2008, NCECC has been its Canadian law enforcement arm. The project provides a link between the various actors fighting child exploitation and its root causes.

Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), CPP co-ordinates a number of initiatives in Brazil, Thailand and Canada.

"When we all work together, it creates long-term strategies and better solutions," says the CPP's Taryn Danford. "We work with law enforcement from a top-down approach, but then we also work with children to help them learn to protect themselves."

Moving forward, Bilinski is pleased the centre is making connections across the world with law enforcement agencies, other government agencies as well as non-governmental groups because the problem extends beyond CPCMEC's own mandate.

"We love sharing our information because it means for us, it's another partner out there who is dedicated to the same cause," says Bilinski.

"As Canadian law enforcement, there are borders for us, but there are no borders for the bad guys." ■

The Child Protection Partnership (CPP) shows children in Chiang Rai, Thailand, how to safely navigate the internet.

CPP

PANEL DISCUSSION

WHAT'S THE BEST APPROACH TO REDUCING YOUTH CRIME?

THE PANELISTS

- **Insp. Rick Shaw, officer-in-charge of crime reduction, New Brunswick RCMP**
- **Joe Hornick, executive director, Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family**
- **Sgt. Rob Davidson and Kim Petelski, registered social worker, Serious Habitual Offender Program, Calgary Police Service**
- **Irvin Waller, president, International Organization for Victim Assistance**

INSP. RICK SHAW

Most people asking this question of a police officer probably expect a response that focuses on enforcement and prosecution. While these are important options in the effort to keep communities safe, the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) actually states the first option we are required to consider when dealing with a young person is extrajudicial measures (EJMs).

The YCJA seeks to prevent youth crime by addressing the underlying causes. Many police agencies also employ prevention strategies that seek to address the root causes of crime. I think most police know intuitively — and there is a myriad of research to support this — that the underlying causes of crime are often risk factors resulting from unmet social needs.

NOT ALL YOUTH ARE THE SAME. REDUCING YOUTH CRIME IS ABOUT GETTING THE RIGHT YOUTH TO THE RIGHT SERVICES AT THE RIGHT TIME.

So the question is: what role do police officers play? After all, we're not social workers or doorstep counselors. How can we contribute?

I have absolutely no doubt that the most powerful tool at our disposal is our discretion. The decision made by a police officer who is contemplating a charge against a young person is very likely to have an impact that will last the rest of the young person's life — for better or for worse. We have an obligation to always try to make this decision for the better.

In the mind of most police officers, it may not seem like the most important decision they will make that day, even that week. But there is a growing body of evidence that suggests it is an incredibly important decision for that youth and one that could needlessly criminalize the youth and result in a label that could potentially stick with them forever.

The YCJA recognizes the importance of officer discretion by first limiting it (with the requirement to consider EJMs), but also by giving police officers the authority to refer youth to community agencies or to seek advice from others in the community who might be able to assist in reducing the likelihood of the youth committing further offences.

We've all heard the African saying "it takes a village to raise a child." The YCJA enables a police officer to call upon the "village" at a time when they are most needed.

Ultimately, reducing youth crime is about getting the right youth to the right services at the right time. The simple fact is that not all youth are the same, nor are their circumstances the same, so we shouldn't treat them all the same. In exercising discretion, I believe it's vital for police officers to know the provisions of the YCJA and know who they are dealing with by doing a proper, pre-charge screening of all youth.

Once a youth is screened, we are in a much better position to determine which part of the "village" we must call upon. Call it fully informed discretion. And yes, sometimes this involves prosecution.

But more than anything, proper screening helps identify those youth who should be steered away from an overburdened and costly criminal justice system and into programs proven to reduce offending behaviour.

RCMP

The decision made by a police officer who is contemplating a charge against a young person is very likely to have an impact that will last the rest of the young person's life — for better or for worse.

JOE HORNICK

Self-reported delinquency research suggests that most youth experiment with independence and do things that could be considered offences — usually minor. However, only a few of these incidents are brought to the attention of the justice system. Further, very few youth continue to reoffend.

Those youth who reoffend multiple times, known as chronic or prolific offenders, make up only a small percentage of the youth who come into contact with police, but they are responsible for a disproportionately high number of crimes. For example, one recent national study found that 16 per cent of youth offenders were responsible for 60 per cent of youth crime.

In the short term, the most immediate and effective approach to reducing youth crime is to target chronic or prolific youth offenders with programs that increase monitoring but also have a rehabilitative component that focuses on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors.

Numerous risk factors have been identified; however, recent research suggests that mental health issues, such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, are some of the most significant predictors of reoffending.

Thus, there is a need to emphasize the importance of programs that include therapeutic resources in the rehabilitative component of the program. There are many multi-agency/intervention programs that involve police in partnership with community-based services, commonly called prolific offender management programs or serious habitual offender programs, as well as the Quebec youth centres, which emulate this approach.

While evaluation research is limited, what is available suggests that these programs are effective at reducing reoffending by youth and young adults. Unfortunately, however, these programs do little to reduce the number of potential chronic or prolific youth offenders who have not yet made the transition to a career of offending.

In the long term, the most effective approach to reducing youth crime is to target youth who are at risk of offending or reoffending before they become chronic/prolific offenders.

This requires prevention programs that focus on reducing individual, family, and community risk factors and increasing protective factors such as positive parenting and education but do so at an earlier age before the youth has developed a pattern of offending.

Obviously, the best overall approach would be a comprehensive crime prevention/crime reduction strategy that focuses on those youth who are at risk to offend, those who have offended and are at risk to reoffend, and offenders who have become chronic/prolific offenders. Responding to this spectrum of offending patterns requires the development and implementation of programs and services with educational and developmental components focusing on those children and youth who are at risk for offending as well as supervisory, rehabilitative and treatment programs to focus on offenders and re-offenders including chronic/prolific offenders. The design and development of specific programs would depend significantly on community needs and resources.

The National Crime Prevention Centre not only provides numerous examples of school, family and community-based programs that have been demonstrated to be effective, but it also offers critical knowledge for the development and implementation of programs designed to prevent crime and/or reduce reoffending.

SGT. ROB DAVIDSON AND KIM PETELSKI

The best approach to reducing youth crime is to target at-risk youth with appropriate early education, prevention and treatment programs. In the context of reducing chronic youth crime, the Calgary Police Service (CPS) developed the Serious Habitual Offender Program (SHOP), which has been operational for the last 21 years.

SHOP is part of the CPS's overall Crime Prevention and Reduction Continuum strategy. The team is comprised of 11 constables, a registered social worker, a tactical analyst, an information clerk and a

sergeant. The mandate of the program is to manage the most serious of youth offenders between the ages of 12 and 21.

These youth are responsible for the majority of youth crime in the city of Calgary and are in need of additional support and supervision given their continued criminality despite less intrusive preventive programming and interventions.

When it comes to reducing youth crime, the importance of community collaboration cannot be emphasized enough. In recognition of the need for a collaborative response to youth crime, SHOP established a Multi-Disciplinary Resource Team consisting of professionals from probation, social services, school boards and youth corrections.

This team examines not only the type or number of offences committed, but other factors that place a youth at an increased risk for committing crime, such as substance abuse, difficulties in school, poor parental management, mental health issues, association with negative peers or little to no involvement in pro-social activities.

Once accepted into the program, a youth is assigned to two members who develop an individualized offender-management strategy that balances the need for public safety with the rehabilitative needs of the youth.

The key components are intensive monitoring and coordinating efforts of justice and social partners. The monitoring of court-order conditions, investigative follow-up and collaboration is at the same time an enforcement, treatment and prevention strategy.

With the inception of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, there are far more offenders serving community-based dispositions and more onus on police and other agency providers to manage youth crime. Members of SHOP prepare comprehensive bail packages, attend court proceedings, liaise with community service providers and work closely with the youth and their families.

SHOP investigators also conduct extensive criminal investigations and covert operations. In general, youth offenders have a strategy focused on rehabilitation, while those who continue their criminality have a strategy focused on enforcement and public safety.

In 2011, SHOP reviewed the criminal behaviour of its youth by extrapolating data for offenders who were retired from the program between 2006 and 2009 to assess the program's overall effectiveness at reducing criminality.

Over the reviewed period, for all retirement categories, there was a 76 per cent reduction in pre- and post-program convictions. This data suggests that the monitoring of serious habitual offenders through SHOP and a targeted offender-management strategy that relies heavily on collaboration has a significant impact on crime reduction.

IRVIN WALLER

The best approach to reducing youth crime is to re-invest in what is known to work but is not being widely used. We have the knowledge to reduce street and sexual violence by youth by 50 per cent or more for a reinvestment of about 10 per cent of what we are spending on reactive policies now.

Statistics Canada estimates our expenditures on policing, courts and corrections at $20 billion and rising. Justice Canada estimates the tangible and emotional losses to victims at $83 billion in losses to crime victims. So the bottom line is to reinvest $2 billion smartly and so reduce losses to victims by $40 billion.

One way to get the re-investment is to establish a task force that analyses what we are currently doing, identifies the gaps with international knowledge and then recommends the necessary actions. This is exactly what the province of Alberta did in 2007 and so became the leading jurisdiction in North America on implementing the best approaches for reducing youth crime. It implemented a three-pronged and evidence-based strategy of enforcement, treatment, and prevention, committing an additional $500 million over three years as part of a long term and comprehensive strategy.

STATISTICS CANADA ESTIMATES EXPENDITURES ON POLICING, COURTS AND CORRECTIONS ARE $20 BILLION AND RISING.

It is also what the Winnipeg Auto Theft Suppression Strategy did about car theft and so saved many lives and more than $80 million so far. It is also what a growing number of municipalities are doing such as Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa and Waterloo region.

Cities such as Boston did some of the analysis and so reduced the number of gang-related homicides between young men by 50 per cent within only two years of finishing the diagnosing phase and implementing its city-wide strategy.

It used strategic approaches that combined existing police resources, programs to help young men complete school and get jobs, and the mobilization of mothers to pressure their sons to abandon violent associates.

And several experimental projects have demonstrated that it is indeed possible for at-risk offenders to overcome their negative life experiences in order to live their lives without victimizing others.

For instance, programs such as the after-school Quantum Opportunities Program in the United States reach out to young men who are likely to drop out of school. As a result of mentoring, more of these at-risk youths are kept in school, and acts of violence perpetrated by those men are reduced.

A Canadian initiative, Stop Now and Plan (SNAP), helps children and parents regulate youth aggression. This program has been subjected to rigorous evaluations, many of which have demonstrated positive outcomes among children under the age of 12.

We can also look to the United Kingdom's Youth Inclusion Programmes, developed to reach the most difficult teenagers and significantly reduce their offending. The Canadian National Crime Prevention Centre funds replications of these projects but the time is long overdue to make investment in these proven programs a national program.

The U.K. did not wait to test and re-test the Youth Inclusion Programmes. Instead it multiplied them in 72 priority neighbourhoods with an evaluation. When they succeeded again, they doubled the projects.

Youth are also involved in many of the sexual assaults occurring in schools and universities and neighbourhoods in Canada. Fortunately, Canadian initiative and research confirms that when we change male attitudes towards violence and women, we can expect to reduce most common types of violence against women. One strategy that stands out is the school-based Fourth R, which was tested in a large scale random control trial in Canada. It changes the attitudes of teenagers in high school regarding alcohol and drug abuse, violence and sexual assault against women. ■

YOUNG LEADERS STEER THE SHIP

TEENAGERS TAKING PART IN TURNING AROUND THEIR COMMUNITIES

By Sigrid Forberg

Hayley Ivany is 15 years old. She just finished Grade 10 and she thinks she might want to study to become a doctor after high school. But for the time being, she's tackling an issue almost as challenging as medical school — combating alcohol and substance abuse in her community.

With a little guidance from the RCMP, the St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, native is developing an action plan to divert her peers from using and abusing alcohol and drugs.

In March, 19 youth from across the country met in the middle at Depot, the RCMP's training academy in Regina, Saskatchewan, for the first Youth Leadership and Project Development Workshop.

The workshop, organized by RCMP National Youth Services and funded by the Department of Justice, brought together young people aged 13 to 18 and partnered them with officers from their communities to discuss and address youth crime and victimization issues.

Each young person identified an issue in their community and with a little help from the organizers, their member partners and a workshop workbook, they developed an action plan to combat these issues. The topics ranged from boredom to relationship violence to peer pressure. Ivany decided to take on drugs and underage drinking.

"I'm not sure why kids turn to drugs and alcohol abuse," says Ivany. "I plan to tell kids the effects of substance abuse. I want them to know what really happens to them if they take drugs."

Ivany plans to visit junior high schools accompanied by a guest speaker with personal experience with addiction and then use feedback she will gather from surveys and focus groups to perfect her presentation.

IMPRESSIVE INSIGHT

Erin Mulvihill, project officer in the Youth Engagement Section of National Youth Services, a branch of the RCMP's National Crime Prevention Services, led the planning of the workshop. Within six weeks of receiving approval for funding from the Department of Justice, the participants were gathering in Regina.

Commanding officers from each province selected the participants. Some, like Ivany, were volunteers with DEAL.org, the RCMP's by-youth, for-youth website, or involved in the community elsewhere. Others came from a variety of backgrounds.

Each youth impressed the organizers equally, says Mulvihill. They carefully considered their topics, which were all well-thought out and broad in spectrum.

"What was really fascinating was that a lot of the youth weren't just thinking of an issue, they were thinking also of why that issue was occurring and then other problems that issue was leading to," says Mulvihill.

Sgt. Wayne Newell, the non-commissioned officer in charge of Community and Aboriginal Policing Services in Newfoundland and Labrador, was Ivany's member partner.

Although Ivany technically resides within the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary's jurisdiction, Newell has helped her liaise with her local officers to get her project off the ground.

"The youth have credibility in their communities," says Newell. "We hear time and again that kids want peer advocates. They prefer role models their own age rather than some outsider coming and telling them what they're doing wrong."

Newell was so pleased with the workshop's results that this fall, Newfoundland and Labrador will now have the projects that come out of their annual Commanding Officer Youth Advisory meeting be youth-championed structure rather than police-led.

WHIRLWIND WEEK

Throughout the week, the youth and officers attended workshops during the day and participated in group activities in the evenings.

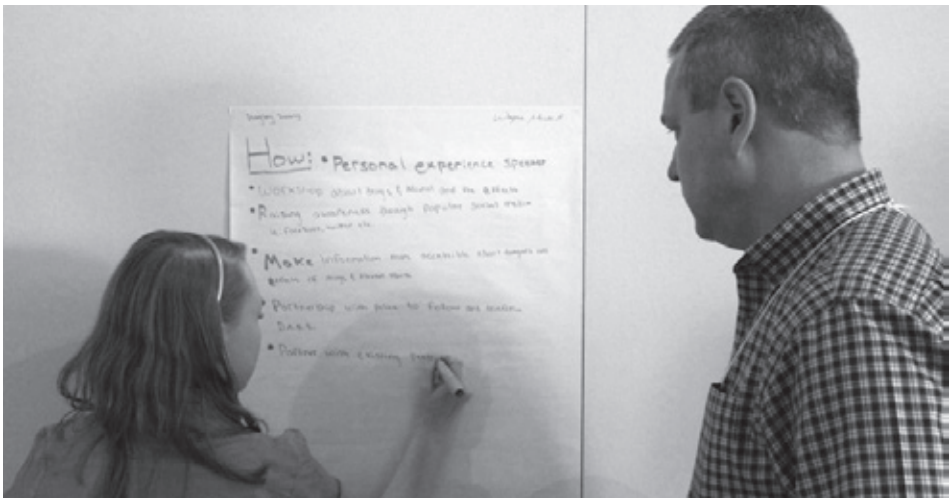
Depot was chosen as the location not just because it was so affordable but also because from cots to classrooms, everything was nearby, making it easier to keep track of everyone. It also made it possible for the youth to participate in fun activities like running the RCMP Physical Abilities Requirement Evaluation (PARE) and taking part in a drill session.

At the end of the week, Mulvihill says everyone was wishing the session could have been longer. National Youth Services hopes, depending on availability of funding, to make it an annual event.

Over the next year, the youth will check in at three-month intervals with updates on their progress through blog-style entries on DEAL.org.

"I hope more youth get to experience what I did," says Ivany. "It was an amazing experience and the number one thing I learned was that if nobody took initiative in their communities, nothing would ever be accomplished." ■

Hayley Ivany and Sgt. Wayne Newell, the RCMP member with whom she was paired, brainstorm during one of the sessions at the Youth Leadership and Project Development workshop.



RCMP

UN Photo/Myriam Asmani

The Child Soldier Initiative conducts training for members of police and the military, including forces with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on how to prevent the use and recruitment of child soldiers.

A WAR ON INNOCENCE

WHEN CHILDREN ARE RECRUITED AS SOLDIERS

By Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire (retired) and Dr. Shelly Whitman, director of the Child Soldiers Initiative

In many areas of the world we must recognize that the great majority of the population is below the age of 18 years. There are an estimated 2.2 billion people in the world below the age of 18 years and two billion of these children live in the developing world.

Yet, despite these demographics, we often fail to hear the voices of young people and, even worse, we fail to address their needs. If children are the future, then surely they should also be a priority.

Unfortunately, the use of children as soldiers is the starkest reminder to the entire world that we have failed miserably to uphold the rights of children. International laws exist to protect children from war, yet girls and boys continue to be recruited and used as child soldiers.

A child soldier is not only a boy with a gun; it can be any girl or boy under the age of 18, in any role associated with a military or other armed group including, for example, a fighter, cook, porter, messenger or spy. It also includes children being used by armed groups for sexual purposes.

RECRUITMENT

The recruitment and use of child soldiers amplifies the impact of armed conflict. By using child soldiers, the number of combatants to a conflict increases. The number of individuals needing to be disarmed and, in many cases, rehabilitated post-conflict also increases.

Millions of programming dollars have been spent to assist with the rehabilitation of child soldiers after they have been abused, exploited, injured, drugged and raped, yet the problem persists — children continue to be recruited and re-recruited as child soldiers.

In addition to the use of children by armed groups in armed conflict, the use of children by organized criminal gangs create low intensity conflict in many regions of the world, including Canada.

Emerging or failed states often employ children in a multitude of illegal activity that ranges from child trafficking, child labour, drug smuggling, looting, piracy efforts and spying. Such activity also fits into the international definitions of a child soldier.

Strong links can be made between the recruitment and use of children in youth and criminal gangs and the use of youth in armed combat. Tactics to recruit, reasons for their use, extracting children from such groups and difficulties in rehabilitating such youth are very similar and need to be researched further.

ROLE OF POLICE

Military and police are often placed on the front lines with little, if any, training on what to expect or how to deal with children being used as soldiers.

Yet, military and police are usually the first point of contact with child soldiers and have an important role to play in preventing their recruitment and use.

Recognizing that a child soldier may be used in any of the roles listed above means that military and police may come into contact and interact with child soldiers in a multitude of scenarios other than just combat. It also provides an opportunity to ensure children avoid recruitment or are able to escape from armed groups.

Examples of places where children are used actively in criminal gangs and armed groups include strategic places of interest to Canada such as Haiti, Colombia, Mexico, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Jamaica, Somalia and Afghanistan.

This means we have a deep responsibility to ensure that children's needs are placed at the top of the peace and security agenda. Children can be the rallying point for collaboration and action that may lead to key lessons that can be transferred to other problems that emerge.

Instead of relegating children to the bottom of the agenda or as an "add-on" item, we need to convince policy makers, international organizations and governments that the protection of children in armed conflict and during peace time is critical.

In response to these shortcomings and the persistence of the problem, the Child Soldiers Initiative (CSI) is working to eradicate the recruitment and use of child soldiers. Since January 2010 the project has been located at Dalhousie University's Centre for Foreign Policy Studies.

TRAINING

The CSI is building the capacity of military and police, by providing options for their possible interactions with child soldiers. We provide training where no standardized training currently exists, adaptable to the specifics of a context in which girls and boys are being used by armed groups.

We have hosted training sessions in Botswana with military and police from the Southern African Development Community and we travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo this past summer to conduct training with United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) forces as well as the national army.

We are also revising our field guide to provide all stakeholders with a means of learning beyond their participation in training activities.

The revised field guide will be web-based and interactive. In addition, we actively host workshops and conduct research on cutting-edge issues related to child soldiers and security dynamics.

By building the capacity of military and police, we aim to change the possible outcomes of the interactions they may have with children and thereby prevent recruitment. By ensuring military and police, especially officers moving up the ranks, are aware of their roles in relation to child soldiers, we aim to have a systemic impact on the issue beyond just the individual being trained.

Training also builds confidence at the community level so that military and police have the skills necessary to protect its members.

The recruitment and use of child soldiers is not new, however, there is still much to be understood, such as what profiles exist on recruiters of child soldiers and how can they be used to prevent further recruitment? What are the experiences of girl soldiers and how does gender affect the child soldier issue? What can communities do to prevent recruitment? How can the leadership potential of former child soldiers be nurtured to prevent re-recruitment? How can knowledge from police interactions with youth gangs be applied to the child soldier issue? How best do we engage military and police on the issue?

With these, and many other questions in mind, the project aims to uncover and document new knowledge. The CSI will apply its findings to its training and capacity building and police can apply that which they've learned through CSI training activities.

CONCLUSION

We recognize that our efforts alone will not solve the issue of children being recruited and used as soldiers. We also recognize that to build the capacity of military and police is insufficient without affecting the broader context in which military and police can apply that which they've learned through CSI training activities.

To this end, we are advocating for change and the adoption of an integrated approach to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers by: drafting new concepts and doctrine for police and military; engaging with political and military leaders; and implementing a public mobilization campaign to raise awareness among youth and to motivate community-based action.

We actively seek opportunities to collaborate with others who recognize their role in preventing the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

Child soldiering may seem like a distant reality, however, migration results in the potential for former child soldiers, former military and police who have dealt with child soldiers in countries affected by armed conflict, to live, work, and study, side by side with each of us. ■

PEDALING FOR PEACE

Three young men spent their summers biking across Canada to raise awareness about the issue of child soldiers.

The Zero Force cycling team, made up of Drew Steeves, Mitch Torrens and Laurent Gazaille, all under the age of 20, pedaled from Vancouver to Halifax through weather ranging from torrential downpours to blistering heat to raise money for Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Roméo Dallaire's Child Solider Initiative.

With a primary goal of raising $150,000 for the organization, the team also set out to inspire and, as Torrens puts it, see others "get their boots dirty" as well. Just over halfway through their journey, the team met up with Dallaire on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to celebrate and rally support.

"All along the way, we've met people doing similar things," says Torrens. "But we've always been the youngest because no one in Canada would send children out unprotected. How is it fair that the same protection is not afforded to all children everywhere?" ■

— Sigrid Forberg

Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Roméo Dallaire meets with the Zero Force cycling team on Parliament Hill, half-way through their cross-country cycle.

Sigrid Forberg

COVER

YOUTH

STANDARDIZING SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

NEW GUIDES FOR SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

By Tracy Luciani, Ph.D., Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse

Illicit drug use is a significant problem that costs Canadians an estimated $8.2 billion a year.

What's more pressing is that the rate of use by youth is almost four times higher than that reported by adults — with the average age of first use as young as 11 among some groups of high-risk youth.

Youth that use drugs experience harms that can negatively impact their health, safety, academic achievement and future goals. Yet overdoses, injuries, mental health problems, impaired-driving-related accidents, violent acts, sexual assaults and the breakdowns of families and relationships affect everyone — everywhere.

As such, everyone plays a role in preventing youth substance use. That's why effective drug prevention efforts are critical to ensuring the healthy development and success of young people.

IMPORTANCE OF DRUG PREVENTION

As leaders in the community, police officers play an important role in making communities safer and healthier. One way in which they do this is by delivering drug awareness and prevention programs in school and community settings across Canada that give school-aged kids the skills and information they need to make the educated and informed decisions that can lead to healthier lifestyle choices.

Canada's first national resource for drug abuse prevention, the Portfolio of Canadian Standards for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention, is an essential guide for those participating in drug prevention activities for youth. The guide provides police and other prevention teams with step-by-step guidance, based on the best available evidence, on how best to plan, implement and evaluate prevention efforts with schools, communities and families.

Developed by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) and its Canadian Standards Task Force — a group of prevention experts that included the RCMP — the Portfolio of Canadian Standards for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention comprises three complementary components:

- Building on Our Strengths, standards developed for prevention in schools;
- Stronger Together, standards aimed at communities; and
- Strengthening Our Skills, guidelines for family skills programs.

These three settings — schools, communities and families — address everyday environments where police officers collaborate with educators, health professionals, parents and others to build positive relationships with children and youth, increase their coping skills and help them lead productive lives.

SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTION

Efforts to prevent substance abuse and promote student well-being contribute directly to academic success.

Substance use among teens directly interferes with the mission of schools and may affect academic performance in a number of ways.

For example, a student who is intoxicated or hung over during the school day learns less; an ongoing pattern will interfere with scholastic achievement.

Young people also have not reached

Substance use among teens directly interferes with the mission of schools and may affect academic performance in a number of ways.

full maturity physically, psychologically or socially; substance use may affect brain development and interrupt crucial developmental processes.

In addition, student substance use is often associated with other social or emotional difficulties and disruptive behaviours that affect the social and academic environment for others

Effective prevention does not mean working more; it means refocusing resources to what has been shown to work.

The Building on our Strengths component emphasizes a comprehensive school health approach, one that pays attention to the school's environment, its teaching and learning practices and policies as well as its partnerships and services.

This approach integrates prevention into the school's core mission and links to community initiatives that aim to improve the well-being of youth.

COMMUNITY PREVENTION

While schools have significant opportunities to promote positive youth development, many other influences fall largely outside of school boundaries.

And many of the harms associated with substance use — vandalism, fighting, automobile accidents — are of concern to communities.

The Stronger Together component emphasizes that everyone plays a role in prevention and that positive outcomes for youth are most likely when prevention takes a comprehensive approach that links schools and families with other settings in the community, such as the workplace, recreation centres, nightclubs and bars.

These community-based standards show that while youth substance abuse prevention is a long-term process, wherever a community-based team begins its work, the potential rewards are great. Fewer substance use problems occur among local youth, more youth experience positive development and the quality of life in the community improves.

FAMILY SKILLS PROGRAMS

A range of factors, from genetics and temperament to broad social and environmental influences, can influence youth development and problematic substance use. However, family-related factors are crucial because they can increase or decrease the effect of these other influences.

A positive family environment can have a preventive effect on substance-abuse behaviours as well as other health and social issues, such as mental health problems, violent acts, criminal behaviour and risky sexual practices.

In fact, evidence shows that family skills programs positively affect parent-child family relations by increasing family cohesion, decreasing family conflict and decreasing family health and social problems, including substance abuse.

The Strengthening our Skills component provides direction to those wishing to design their own family skills program, strengthen an existing program or adopt a published program. These guidelines emphasize the importance of including family skills programming, not only in a comprehensive prevention initiative, but also as a part of general parenting and family support.

Family skills programs are defined as multisession, skills-based programs directed to groups of parents or families with children aged 0 to 18 years, which include in their objectives the prevention of substance abuse among the children in those families.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

In addition to providing a practical process, the school-based and community-based standards documents include and are supplemented by supportive resources, including:

- 20-minute checklists to help schools and communities assess where their strengths or opportunities lie in current prevention activities;
- workbooks that enable teams to thoroughly monitor their progress and evaluate efforts;
- a national review panel that provides feedback on how to further improve an initiative; and
- a database housing a growing collection of prevention resources and practical tools to support the use of the standards.

POLICE PARTICIPATION

In addition to being actively engaged in the development of the standards, the law enforcement community has expressed significant interest in adopting the standards to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of their prevention efforts.

Having officially endorsed the portfolio, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, in collaboration with the CCSA and Quebec's Centre de liaison sur l'intervention et la prévention psychosociales (CLIPP), have delivered two training workshops on school-based prevention —one with the Sûreté du Québec and another with the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal — on how to integrate the standards in their prevention work. Similar presentations were delivered to the RCMP's Drugs and Organized Crime Awareness Service earlier this year.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

The Portfolio of Canadian Standards for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention is part of the CCSA-led A Drug Prevention Strategy for Canada's Youth, a five-year initiative that aims to reduce illegal drug use by Canadian youth aged 10 to 24. It involves key stakeholders from across the country, including the RCMP, and is funded through the federal government's National Anti-Drug Strategy.

The development and structure of the strategy was informed by research showing growing support for multi-faceted programming, suggesting that combined sets of interventions may be more effective than single-component programs and that prevention efforts are most effective when they are multi-faceted, sustained and used in tandem with programs that involve schools, communities and families.

CONCLUSION

By forming and maintaining new and existing sustainable partnerships, such as CCSA's media/youth consortium, which develops and delivers evidence-based drug-prevention messages to engage, educate and empower Canadian youth, and by developing the Portfolio of Canadian Standards for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention, the CCSA continues to work towards its vision and goal of a society free of the harms associated with alcohol and other drugs and substances. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
WWW.CCSA.CA.

TURNING LIVES AROUND

SURREY WRAP PROJECT TAKES INDIVIDUAL, COMMUNITY APPROACH TO GANGS

By Rob Rai, Surrey School District and Cst. John G. Wilson, Surrey RCMP, Surrey Wrap Project

The Surrey Wrap project is a youth gang prevention and intervention model initiated by the Surrey School District and the Surrey RCMP detachment in partnership with multiple community organizations to respond to youth gangs and youth gang violence.

The project is based on the Milwaukee Wraparound program, which serves youth who have serious emotional disorders and who are identified by the area's child welfare or juvenile justice system as being at immediate risk of residential or correctional placement or psychiatric hospitalization.

The Wraparound approach itself is a philosophy of care that includes a planning process to produce a unique, individualized set of community services and natural supports for a youth and his or her family to achieve a positive set of outcomes.

The Surrey Wrap Project blends elements of the Milwaukee program and other successful Wraparound models throughout North America with emerging and best practices to create a response that is customized to local trends, cultures and concerns.

GANG PROBLEM AND RESPONSE

The lower mainland of British Columbia has seen a dramatic increase in the number of gang related violence, shootings and homicides that peaked in early 2009. The young men involved in gang violence come from all walks of life, from those that would be considered traditionally at-risk due to their poor socio-economic status to those that come from non-traditional at-risk backgrounds with both parents at home and multiple life opportunities.

The city of Surrey, one of the fastest growing cities in Canada, decided to take a proactive approach to keep young people away from and out of gangs.

Spearheaded by a group of dynamic individuals at the Surrey School District, the Surrey RCMP, and the City of Surrey, the Surrey Wrap Project was created to address the growing number of young people being recruited in gangs and the problem of gang violence.

HOW THE PROJECT WORKS

Youth are referred to the Surrey Wrap Project from multiple sources including school staff, school liaison officers, Surrey Youth Probation and other agencies.

Typically, a youth referred to the program will have had multiple police contacts, current or prior probation, serious school discipline and attendance issues in addition to other anti-social behaviours. The youth may be extremely committed to negative peer groups and they may also have extenuating family situations, the most typical being parental and sibling criminality.

The only stipulation to a young person being accepted to the program is that he or she must be attending school or be a part of some type of school program, which includes online education, alternate schools and visiting teacher arrangements.

The student and/or their respective guardians also have to agree to take part in the program.

With an extensive program waitlist, it is essential that finite supports and resources are afforded to those that show some interest in making life changes.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

The Surrey Wrap Project assesses each youth referred to the program using multiple tools to accurately identify and inventory individual risk and protective factors, which can help explain why a problem exists and why certain individuals or groups are more or less likely to become victims of crime or to become involved in crime.

While risk factors are negative influences that may increase the likelihood of engaging in crime, protective factors are positive influences that can decrease those

One of the Surrey Wrap Team's success stories include a youth, who, as part of a street gang, had both of his arms tattooed from shoulder to wrist.

chances. (See sidebar for examples.)

From this inventory of factors, case managers create individual plans for each youth to build upon and expand existing protective factors while reducing and eliminating risk factors. Youth are supported in all five domains of their life — individual, family, peer, school and community — and the case management reflects this.

Based on these initial assessments, interventions and supports for the youth participating in the program are comprehensive and culturally specific.

Through community partners and collaboration, youth are provided with highly coordinated, timely and barrier-free access to pro-social recreation opportunities, individual therapeutic support, family-functioning support, employment training and other services and resources as required until they show increased resiliency and stability in their lives.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Surrey Wrap Project has grown in capacity as a result of numerous community agencies that have come forward to offer their skills and resources to support gang-involved youth and their families.

The City of Surrey's Parks, Recreation and Culture offers multiple pro-social recreation programs, the YMCA provides leadership programs and local Kwantlen Polytechnic University facilitates paid work experiences and internships.

And the B.C. Lions Canadian Football League team donates 20 sets of season tickets each year while players provide mentorship and coaching.

RESULTS

Thus far, the program has shown strong success. In a recent independent evaluation, which sampled 45 youth who had participated in the program, there was a significant reduction in the number of police contacts per youth.

For those participants, the average number of police contacts for six months prior to and six months after enrollment in the program fell a dramatic 67 per cent.

Beyond the statistical data that demonstrates clear successes are the anecdotal stories that staff share of young men and women stabilizing their lives while making strong choices to become productive members of society.

SUCCESS STORY

An example of one of these successes can be demonstrated by the story of Derek (whose name has been changed to protect his identity).

At 15, Derek was involved with a local street gang that had links to other mid-level organized crime groups. Derek came from a home and neighborhood that did not offer many opportunities so he turned to gangs for their promise of quick money, power and stature.

This promise was quickly dashed as Derek soon found himself working 12-hour shifts at a rat-infested crack shack measuring and packaging crack-cocaine.

Derek was quickly pulled into a violent lifestyle and, as part of the gang, had both of his arms tattooed from shoulder to wrist, all at the age of 16.

He was struggling at home and he was in constant conflict with school staff, local police and community members — his life was spiraling out of control very quickly.

The adults in Derek's life were very concerned for him and referred him to the Surrey Wrap Project.

Derek was in over his head and he wanted to get out of the gang, but he had no idea where to begin.

He was relieved to have someone to talk to, someone that he could trust and look to for support and guidance. Over the following 18 months, Derek worked very hard with project staff to shift his life decisions and plans.

The team worked closely with Derek to inventory his life and to systematically reduce and remove risk factors while building his protective factors and resiliency.

Derek created lasting relationships with the team and began to move towards success. After attending seven different high schools over five years, Derek graduated with his high school diploma this past spring. He was even rewarded with box seats to this year's National Hockey League Stanley Cup final courtesy of a private donor.

CONCLUSION

There are constant challenges, setbacks, and successes when it comes to working with gang-associated youth.

Often it seems that there are two steps back for each step forward and that the light at the end of the tunnel seems so far away.

But through dedicated resources, highly coordinated responses, and the commitment of individuals and organizations, the Surrey Wrap Project and the youth involved in the project are clear examples of the successes that can be achieved when organizations and people work together. ■

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There are many possible risk and protective factors. The extent to which they have an influence on crime or victimization will depend on the particular situation.

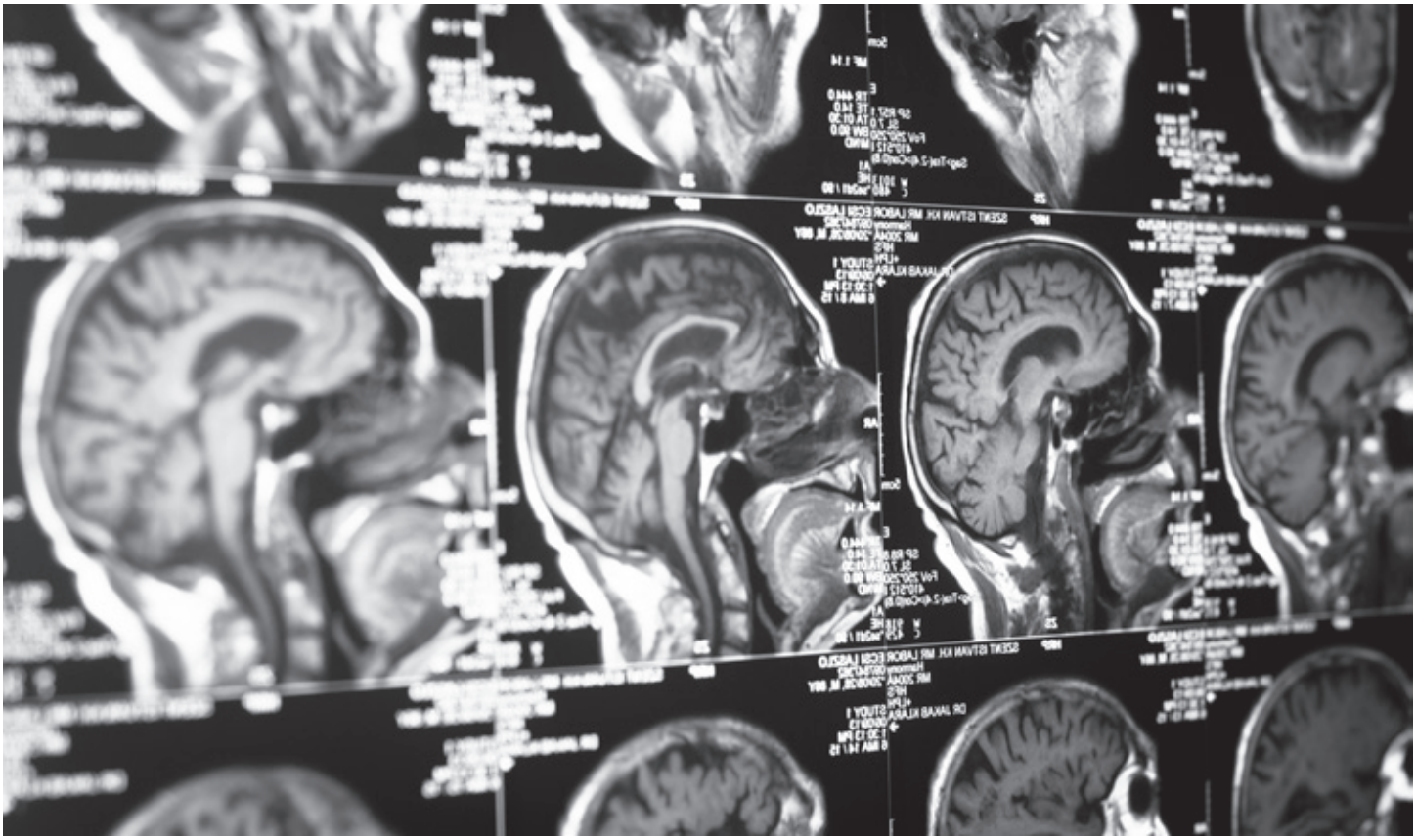
RISK FACTORS

- Negative attitudes, values or beliefs
- Low self-esteem
- Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse
- Poverty
- Children of parents in conflict with the law
- Homelessness
- Presence of neighbourhood crime
- Children who witness violence
- Lack of services (social, recreational, cultural, etc)
- Racism
- Mental or physical illness
- Low literacy
- Family violence

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Positive attitudes, values or beliefs
- Conflict resolution skills
- Good mental, physical, spiritual and emotional health
- Positive self-esteem
- Success at school
- Good parenting skills
- Parental supervision
- Problem-solving skills
- Positive adult role models, coaches, mentors
- Good peer group/friends
- Stable housing
- Availability of services (social, recreational, cultural, etc)

Source: Public Safety Canada



The teen brain is not fully developed, therefore spontaneity and inconsistency of mood-driven actions is not uncommon, which can affect young people's ability to cope with environmental stressors.

THE ROAD TO TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

EARLY PSYCHOSIS INTERVENTION

By Christina Krack, Fraser Health Early Psychosis Intervention Program, White Rock, British Columbia

Recent research suggests that mental health conditions and substance use disorders peak during adolescence and young adulthood and are, in fact, the primary health concern for young people in all societies between the ages of 12 and 26.

Virtually all of the burdens or disabilities accompanying health conditions among youth and young adults can be attributed to substance use and mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and psychosis.

An American study shows 75 per cent of people with a mental illness had an age of onset younger than 24 years old.

Other facts that highlight the need for much more attention and education include the following:

- More than 60 per cent of Canadian youth between 15 and 25 who experience a mental disorder do not seek professional help.
- The stigma of mental illness continues to be a barrier to seeking and accessing services.
- A longer duration of untreated psychosis is associated with slower and less complete recovery, more re-hospitalizations, and poorer psychosocial functioning.

In the field of early psychosis intervention, the priority is to promote early detection and treatment of psychotic symptoms and then to prevent relapse of symptoms.

Psychosis is treatable and recovery is expected. Therefore the goal is to catch the illness early, at its first stages, and work with young people, families and communities to promote this recovery.

PSYCHOSIS PHASES, SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of psychosis are due to imbalances of the chemicals in the brain. Psychosis presents itself in phases; prodromal, acute and residual/recovery.

The prodromal phase can be described as the rumblings of something going on. This is where a young person's functioning may begin to change. They may experience sleep and concentration problems, depression, anxiety or substance use problems. Socialization and leisure activities may decrease along with possible changes in characteristics.

Often, looking back, parents or family members will say they could sense something was happening, but couldn't put their finger on it, or they thought their child was using drugs and/or alcohol. This prodromal phase can be from two weeks to two years prior to an acute onset of psychosis.

The acute phase often results in a crisis, requiring urgent medical response. This phase can present itself quite dramatically and may cause trauma to both the young

person experiencing it and his or her family. Or, it can be experienced quietly, unnoticed, in isolation, yet still impacting the young person's life and requiring assessment.

The longer acute symptoms of psychosis go untreated, the more damage it can cause on the brain and the more difficult it is to treat; therefore, there will be a longer recovery phase.

If you suspect symptoms of psychosis when connecting with youth, it is paramount that the young person get support and assistance in having a professional mental health assessment.

The expressed psychotic symptoms can vary for each individual and can include hallucinations, delusions, disorganized behavior, speech and thought disorder. The most common symptoms seen are paranoid ideas and hearing voices.

A distorted perception of reality can be very real for the individual and he or she may react accordingly to the misperceptions. They may be hearing a voice telling them to do something, or have a delusion that they have special powers or are invincible.

Moods will also respond according to their psychotic symptoms. You may see real fear, anger and anxiety, sadness or exhilaration, but not recognize from where it stems. The actions may not make sense to you. But to the individual, it may be the appropriate behaviour. This described cluster of symptoms will appear in episodes, similar to having a fever.

When dealing directly with a person who might be experiencing psychosis, it is important to approach the situation focused on establishing a connection or alliance with the young person.

Often they will be feeling afraid, anxious, confused and alone in their experience. You may need to provide more time for response. Being patient, listening and keeping the conversation brief may be necessary.

Being respectful and non-patronizing in your manner, not arguing or agreeing with delusional ideas, providing choices where appropriate, being honest and clearly stating your plan of action will contribute to successfully having a young person assessed by a mental health professional.

The recovery/residual phase is when the young person's acute symptoms of psychosis have remitted and they are able to continue to work towards his or her life goals. Supporting and managing environmental stressors, building protective factors and, often, the use of medications will promote ongoing recovery.

Contrary to misinformation, psychosis is not a predictor of violence towards others. Young people experiencing these distressing symptoms are at a much higher risk of self-harm and vulnerability than hurting others.

CAUSES OF PSYCHOSIS

The causes of psychosis are believed to be a combination of genetic, biological and environmental vulnerability factors. Genetically, mental illnesses are thought to arise from a combination of mutations in more than one gene, with no single gene being sufficient on its own to cause mental illness.

In addition, there are environmental factors or stressors, which, in combination with genetic variables, can cause psychosis.

Some of the environmental stressors that youth may experience can include substance use, trauma, grief and loss, family problems, housing problems and life in an urban setting, which can decrease a sense of community. Even head injuries from hockey or other sports can play a role.

When working with troubled youth, it's important to help identify the stressors in their lives. Supporting or advocating for them to manage the stressors can have a strong impact on their recovery.

Some practical examples of this would be to support a referral to a community agency for trauma or substance misuse counseling, or to connect the young person with a healthy community peer network or mentoring program.

TEENAGERS

Further to genetic and environmental stressors, there are some factors that can affect the youth's ability to cope with environmental stressors.

The teen brain is not fully developed until approximately the early twenties. In youth, behavior is more driven by the amygdala, the 'random and instinctual' part of the brain function.

When it comes to what is considered typical teen behavior, this does make sense. The spontaneity and, at times, inconsistency of mood-driven actions is not uncommon. In combination with the slower developing frontal cortex that assists with reasoning, problem-solving, memory and so on, teens tend to respond much more randomly, instinctually and emotionally.

And drug use — marijuana, in particular — causes major stress on brain development. The earlier and more frequent use of this popular drug significantly increases the risk of developing psychotic and other mental health symptoms.

PREVENTIVE ROLE

Protective factors are a very important aspect of youth's vulnerabilities to developing mental health and substance use issues.

Good intellectual functioning, good peer group/social skills and attachment to family are examples that assist to counter the vulnerabilities a young person may be experiencing.

When working with youth, it's important to recognize the positive effect your role or relationship may have. It is important to recognize the value you may have in that young person's life, and to provide support in establishing more of the protective factors with them.

CONCLUSION

All police community agencies, service providers and others working with young people need to keep in mind that mental health issues are rarely black and white, or simple and concrete.

Effective management and support requires us all to think outside of the box, to decrease stigma, to advocate for services and support and to work collaboratively as a team.

Gaining and maintaining a level of knowledge and services of how to deal with presenting symptoms and behaviours related to mental health and substance use issues is a community responsibility. ■

Christina (Nina) Krack has been a registered psychiatric nurse for 19 years and has worked in the field of early psychosis intervention, both clinically and as an educator, since 2000.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
WWW.PSYCHOSISSUCKS.CA
WWW.MINDCHECK.CA

SEEING THE SIGNS

THREAT ASSESSMENT AND THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

By D/Sgt. Glenn Sheil, Threat Assessment Unit, Ontario Provincial Police

Violence within educational institutions throughout the United States, Canada and Europe has raised concerns about student safety and school security. Incidents of school shootings have been occurring since the turn of the 20th century, with a significant increase in the 1990s.

Despite this, school shootings continue to be rare events and there exists a greater likelihood of other forms of violence and threats of violence occurring within schools.

It is important to understand the dynamics of the difference between these forms of violence, and how school officials, parents and law enforcement can identify which students may pose a risk of violence and how to best manage the risk posed by a particular student.

It is also important to understand that violence is dynamic and multi-dimensional and can escalate or de-escalate rapidly. As such, a student's risk can change and can be changed. Different, new or any change of information concerning the individual or situation will impact on an individual's risk of engaging in violent behaviours.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

Threat assessment is an area of specialized practice requiring extensive experience, study or investigation of violence as well as professional education and training.

Some law-enforcement agencies in Canada, including the Ontario Provincial Police, Durham Regional Police Service, York Regional Police Service, and Peel Regional Police Service, Alberta's Integrated Threat and Risk Assessment Centre and the RCMP, have an 18-month understudy program that identifies a prerequisite course of study that new threat assessment investigators to those units must successfully complete.

In recent decades, the study of violence by a number of disciplines, including medical and mental health professionals, law enforcement, and specialists in the field of threat management, has resulted in instruments being developed to identify which individuals may commit a violent act and why they become violent.

One of these approaches is the scientifically based approach, known as Structured Professional Judgement (SPJ) in which factors have been found to be statistically significant in determining the risk of violence.

The other approach is not scientifically based but rather concept based and involves the retrospective examination of prior specific violent incidents, such as school shootings.

Both approaches provide a structured, systematic organized framework to assist threat assessment investigators with making an informed statement concerning violence risk using standardized measures.

MODES OF VIOLENCE

Violence is the end result of a continuing process of thoughts and behaviours,

developed over time, and is dependent upon an interaction between an individual inclined to act in a violent manner, a stimulus that causes that person to become violent, and a setting —something that does nothing to prevent the violence.

The first type of violence that is frequently observed in schools is affective violence. This mode of violence is accompanied by high states of autonomic arousal, such as anger, fear, and is reactionary to a perceived threat based on rejection, criticism or frustration.

The violence is unplanned, impulsive and spontaneous in nature which can make it difficult to determine when the student may become violent. Often the student may respond with physical violence or threats of violence. If weapons are involved, they typically involve weapons of opportunity, objects within the student's reach or on their person.

Threats, in general, are not a guarantee of harm but are often spoken from a position of desperation and fear, rather than power. They reflect failures of persuasion, influence and control. Affective aggression regulates the individual in that they feel relief after making a threat or striking out impulsively.

A student may act out in a single isolated incident of this form of affective violence or has been known to educators to have engaged in frequent incidents of violence since entering the school system. The SPJ approach should be utilized in these instances.

The second type of violence is instrumental violence. This mode of violence is goal-driven, planned, purposeful and targeted. It is predatory, absent of intense emotion and frequently involves the use of weapons. There is no time imperative for this mode of violence.

KNOWLEDGE OF AN ATTACK IS OFTEN GAINED THROUGH THE INDIVIDUAL'S COMMUNICATIONS WITH OTHERS.

This individual engages in behaviours that may be disguised or hidden; however, they are noticeable, necessary and cannot be avoided.

As such, individuals who have considered and are engaging in a targeted act of violence can be identified for intervention and prevention of a violent act.

There is no profile for which students may engage in a targeted act of violence within the school setting.

When considering a student's risk of violence, particularly if a student might commit a school shooting, both the empirically based and concept-based approaches should be used simultaneously, as empirically based approaches could lead investigators to not consider or inquire about dynamics that might suggest intent and planning.

Often, others are aware of when an individual is considering or engaging in preparatory attack related behaviours. Knowledge of an attack is often gained through the individual's communications with others. It is important that these communications are not ignored by law enforcement, teachers, student peers and parents as they afford intentional or unintentional clues that provide insight into the feelings, thoughts, fantasies, attitudes, as well as behaviours the individual has, or is considering engaging in, that would indicate planning of a violent act. These communications can come in the form of verbalizations, writings, drawings, social networking sites and other means.

MOTIVATIONS AND INDICATORS

Motivations for violence within a school setting vary. They can be multiple and they can be difficult to determine. Those frequently identified as motivating students who have committed a school shooting include:

- a sense of injustice from, for example, being bullied or a failed relationship,
- a desire to seek revenge,
- a desire to pursue fame or notoriety,
- a sense of mission, and
- a need to bring attention to a personal problem or to end a personal pain by way of suicide.

Indicators that are seen as enhancing risk for violence can include personality deficiencies, including: an exaggerated sense of self, grandiosity, a sense of entitlement, a tendency to be easily frustrated, poor coping skills, a need for attention, low self-esteem, impulsivity or the need to take risks, depression, and other psychiatric influences.

SAFE SCHOOLS, SAFE STUDENTS

Incidents of school violence sometimes can't be predicted or prevented.

That's when Canadian schools call on the RCMP School Action for Emergencies (SAFE) plan.

Rolled out nationally in 2007, SAFE is a computer database that gives officers arriving on the scene crucial information ranging from floorplans, roadblocks, medivac and police observation positions to media and parents staging areas — all important aspects for neutralizing threats that include armed suspects, bomb threats, chemical spills or property crimes.

There are approximately 4,800 schools in RCMP jurisdiction. Since 2007, 151,000 points of interest, 189,000 photos and 17,000 layouts have been added to the database.

In 2010, the program received the International Association of Chiefs of Police's distinguished Webber Seavey Award for Quality in Law Enforcement.

"When in doubt, schools activate the lockdown plan because seconds save lives," says Cpl. Stu Leach, national SAFE plan co-ordinator. "For police, arriving on the scene of a false alarm is a relief."

Leach adds that the plans are considered living documents, meaning that work on them is never really complete as they require annual updates. ■

— Sigrid Forberg

Other risk enhancing considerations include peer rejection, lack of intimacy/instability within the home environment, poor parental management, substance abuse and inequitable discipline by school officials.

Adolescence is a time of significant change, physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally — this cannot be overlooked. Negative behaviours, attitudes and traits are commonly observed during adolescence and at some point will be present in varying degrees and intensity.

It is possible these traits can and will be misinterpreted. Typically they are unlikely to persist into adulthood.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The ultimate goal of threat assessment is violence prevention and risk reduction and management.

Young people typically spend a majority of their time within a school environment where they are exposed to a significant proportion of their social contact. As a result, the risk for an act of violence is greatest while at school.

In addition to their home, the school provides opportunities for stable and positive support. Positive parental support and exposure to other responsible adults is critical to the success and development of young people.

Parents and school staff need to set boundaries and limits on acceptable behaviour, monitor activities and enforce discipline fairly and consistently. Identifying which students pose a risk of causing harm to others and preventing an act of violence from occurring is beyond the capability of any one group.

Doing so requires the co-ordinated and sustained efforts of school staff, students, parents, community members and law enforcement. ■

D/ Sgt. Sheil is a 26-year member of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). He has been assigned to OPP Investigation and Support Bureau's Behavioural Sciences and Analysis Services since 1997 and has been with the Threat Assessment Unit since 2001. He has conducted more than 875 individual threat assessments for provincial, national and international criminal justice agencies, and has been qualified as an expert in threat assessment and risk management at various court levels in Ontario.

SOMALI YOUTH RADICALIZATION

A VIEW FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER

By Dr. David H. Shinn, Adjunct Professor, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University

The radicalization of Somali youth in North America has taken two principal forms — supporting extremist organizations in Somalia and joining Somali gangs in the United States and Canada.

These two phenomena are related to the extent that social alienation experienced by those living in a new and alien culture contributes to their attraction to gangs and extremist organizations.

As worrying as these two developments are, it is important to underscore that only a small minority of Somali youth has been drawn to these harmful and dangerous groups.

It is estimated there are more than 100,000 Somalis in the U.S. and between 150,000 to 200,000 in Canada. The overwhelming majority of these Somalis have become good citizens and are only trying to escape violence in Somalia or find a better life in North America.

SOMALI GANGS HAVE A MODUS OPERANDI THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM MOST GANGS. THEY DO NOT OWN A TERRITORY AND THEY ARE HIGHLY MOBILE.

At the same time, the small minority that join a gang or support an extremist organization in Somalia or elsewhere do incalculable damage to the image of the Somali community in North America.

GANG CULTURE IN THE U.S.

Youth street gangs have a long history in the U.S. and have become a mini-society within the larger American society and a separate subculture.

Gangs often have an exclusive territory and exhibit a common culture. They provide an alternative set of values that replace those learned by mainstream society as a result of ties to family, religion, school and community.

Each gang has a culture of its own, although it may be similar to the culture of other gangs.

The culture of the gang is often one of violence. This willingness to turn to violence is often driven by frustration resulting from a lack of opportunity for meaningful employment, poor quality schools, failed public services, incompetent parents, inattentive churches and mosques and discrimination, real or perceived, from the wider community.

Ethnic gangs have a need for social interaction and have developed in communities as widely varied as immigrants from Albania, Russia, China, Serbia, Nigeria, South Africa, Ireland, Iran, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and, more recently, Somalia.

SOMALI GANGS IN NORTH AMERICA

There is little statistical data on the number and size of Somali youth gangs in the U.S., although the number of gangs and their membership appears still to be small. Most of the attention has been on the rise of Somali gangs in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area in Minnesota, otherwise known as the Twin Cities, which also has the largest Somali population in the U.S.

Somali criminal gangs first consisted of a small number of loosely connected members who adopted the gang culture, using signs and symbols to show their affiliation.

Unlike common gang culture, however, the first Somali gangs tended not to have a particular leader or an established hierarchy, although older members were treated with more respect than younger ones.

A report commissioned by the state of Minnesota's Department of Civil Rights concluded that the refugee experience was partially responsible for the rise of gangs. Fractured family structures and post traumatic stress disorder followed many young Somalis from refugee camps to Minnesota.

By mid-2009, it was estimated that between 400 and 500 Somalis were active in gangs in the metropolitan area.

Somali gangs now have a modus operandi that is different from most gangs. They do not "own" a territory, as is the case

Somali gangs in Alberta quickly found it was easier to make more money selling drugs but immediately encountered opposition from more established non-Somali drug gangs, such as the Hells Angels.

for most gangs, and they are highly mobile. They have also become hard to identify because they don't have gang tattoos or display signs or symbols.

On the other hand, the Somali gangs have become well organized. This suggests that the gangs based in Minnesota are changing their tactics to elude the law and expand their activities.

Mohammad Zafar published a study in 2010 based on interviews with a small number of gang members in the Twin Cities. He concluded that Somali youth found themselves in a new environment where they felt unwelcome on all sides.

Members reported that they joined a gang to be part of something, to fit in and to get respect on the street. Parents and children experienced role reversal after arriving in the U.S. due to the increasingly heavy reliance of parents on their children. As a result, many young Somalis did not have anyone to identify with as they went through adolescence.

Ground zero for Somali gangs in Canada seems to be Alberta, where at least 30 young Somali men have been killed in the past five years in violent battles surrounding the drug trade. Most of those involved in the trade went to Edmonton, Calgary and Fort McMurray from the large Somali community in Toronto to work in the oil sands.

They quickly found it was easier to make more money selling drugs but immediately encountered opposition from more established non-Somali drug gangs, such as the Hells Angels and Asian triads. Some of the non-Somali gangs recruited Somalis to work for them at the lowest levels of the operation.

Somali community leaders in Alberta believe many victims were related to or knew each other before arriving in the province, suggesting they may have been lured by friends into the drug trade.

Others point to the absence of paternal guidance and lack of direction by many Somali fathers in Somali communities. Among other recommendations, community leaders are calling on parents to become more engaged in their children's education and for Somali elders, community leaders, educators and parents to listen more to the concerns of Somali youth.

SOMALI-AMERICANS AND EXTREMISM

There is a fear that Somalis recruited into extremist organizations, such as al-Shabaab in Somalia, might one day return to the U.S. to carry out attacks.

While the number of Somalis who support or have joined these organizations is miniscule, there have been just enough of them from a variety of different cities to

attract widespread, negative attention that reflects badly on the responsible Somali community.

Al-Shabaab has one of the more effective internet recruitment programs developed by extremist groups.

By early 2007, al-Shabaab began recruiting in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Small numbers of young Somalis began leaving for Somalia from Seattle, Boston, Portland, Maine, and Columbus, Ohio. More than 20 young Somalis, most of them from Minnesota, joined al-Shabaab by mid-2009.

Although the numbers have subsequently grown, it is almost impossible to provide an accurate total today. Those Somali-Americans who have joined al-Shabaab represent a wide variety of backgrounds — from criminals to intelligent, upstanding citizens.

SOMALI-CANADIANS AND EXTREMISM

In October 2009, RCMP Commissioner William Elliott warned that radicalization of the American Somali community may be an indicator of similar processes at work in Canada.

He suggested there is also a possibility that Somali-Canadians who travel to Somalia to fight will return to Canada, filled with an extremist ideology and the skills to translate the ideology into action.

Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, a Somali-Canadian who immigrated to Ontario in 1989, spent six months with al-Shabaab in 2008. He said the presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia inspired him to join.

BEFORE PARENTS BLAME OTHERS FOR THE FAILINGS OF THEIR CHILDREN, THEY SHOULD FIRST LOOK AT THEIR OWN ROLE.

When the Ethiopian force left Somalia early in 2009, he became disillusioned with al-Shabaab and returned to Toronto where he is trying to start a group called Generation Islam to combat radicalization in his community.

MOVING FORWARD

It has not been easy for Somalis to integrate into North American society. Somalis have confronted a new culture and language. Many have had to deal with broken family structure and poverty.

But Canada and the United States have opened their doors to Somalis and immigrants from numerous other nations, who have become an integral part of North American society. There is no reason why Somalis will not also succeed.

While some of the responsibility for successful integration falls on local social service organizations, schools and police forces, the first line of defense for ensuring that Somali youth do not join gangs or become radicalized is their families.

There is no substitute for caring parents, siblings and grandparents.

Before parents blame others for the failings of their children, they should first look at their own role.

The second line of defense is the leadership at the mosque. By helping to encourage young Somalis to act responsibly and by keeping extremism out of the mosque, the imams can have a critically important impact.

Government and community organizations can then help meet the remaining challenges. ■

Dr. David Shinn is an adjunct professor in the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. He served for 37 years in the United States Foreign Service with assignments at embassies in Lebanon, Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritania, Cameroon, Sudan and as ambassador to Burkina Faso and Ethiopia.

SAY NO TO SURFING SOLO

A new RCMP publication is calling on parents to monitor their children's internet activity.

More and more, young adults are being targeted online by radical groups, such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, through violent extremist messaging.

They use tools known to appeal to youth such as video games, images and colourful animation to share their violent and radical ideologies.

Youth Online and at Risk: Radicalization Facilitated by the Internet is designed to inform parents, teachers, and others in position of influence — including police — of the presence of this threat as well as how to take measures against it.

Youth, in particular, are vulnerable to these influences because they rely heavily on online information to shape their opinions.

This image, taken from a radical website is used to help recruit children and youth and promote extremist ideals.

"Young people are still developing their own critical thinking skills," says Dr. Anna Gray-Henschel, of RCMP National Security Criminal Investigations, which created the guide. "Without the ability to judge credibility, seek alternative perspectives, or fully understand the intent of online messaging, youth may be easily misled."

Parents are advised to take active roles in their children's online activity by using software controls, monitoring downloads, keeping the computer in an open area, engaging in conversations and consulting website reviews.

Finally, the publication adds that encouraging and empowering young people to report inappropriate content is crucial to stamping out the root issue.

Visit www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca to read the full report.

— Sigrid Forberg

THROUGH THEIR EYES

RCMP HELPS YOUTH BRING DRUG, ALCOHOL EXPERIENCES TO LIFE

By Mallory Procunier, contributing writer

Through the art of filmmaking, children at Aqsarniit Middle School in Iqaluit, Nunavut, are being given a new way to express their creativity, as well as their feelings about drug and alcohol abuse in their community.

Mark Caine, a Grade 7 teacher at Aqsarniit Middle School, has put together a filmmaking project that gives students the opportunity to write a story about drug and alcohol awareness in Iqaluit, and then transform their writing into film.

As part of a film club that Caine spearheaded, along with fellow teachers Geela Jaw and Daniel Farrow, these children get experience in every aspect of making a film — including writing, directing, acting and editing.

Not only does this give students a way to communicate their views of drug and alcohol abuse, but it also exposes them to career opportunities within the film industry that they may not have discovered otherwise.

"The material comes through their eyes and their experience, and if they have something to say then they now have a platform to do it," Caine says. "It's mainly for empowering them and giving them greater self-esteem."

Mark Caine

Students at the Aqsarniit Middle School act in and shoot a story of drug and alcohol awareness.

GIVING YOUTH A VOICE

The project, called *Through Inuit Eyes*, stems from a previous initiative Caine did in Toronto with a group of children from the Jane and Finch neighbourhood — an area known for crime and drug abuse. He realized that children in the community did care about drug prevention, but didn't have the means to speak openly about it.

Following the project's success in Toronto, Caine brought the idea to Iqaluit. There, he reached out to Nunavut RCMP to collaborate on the project by bringing support to the students as well as an authentic view of how substance abuse affects law enforcement.

"We know about the exposure that kids have to drugs in the community, so part of our health curriculum is to talk to kids about prevention and making correct choices when it comes to alcohol and drugs," says Caine.

Cst. Angelique Dignard, of the RCMP's Drugs and Organized Crime Awareness Service in Nunavut, became involved with the project and quickly realized the benefits of such an initiative.

"That is important in itself because they view addiction reduction differently than adults do," she says. "The impact of drugs on a teenager's life is drastic and it's only by working with them that we can capture their perspective."

REACHING OUT

Dignard pointed Caine in the direction of the Government of Nunavut's Public Health Strategy, which was good timing as Iqaluit, the province's capital city, was looking for community initiatives that addressed the addiction reduction component of the strategy.

Caine proposed his idea to the committee and eventually received funding, which allowed him to bring the students' stories to life.

The first is told through a young girl's eyes as she is affected by her family's struggle with addiction. The second focuses on a family who lost everything due to addiction and their hope for redemption to overcome the problem.

Students act in their own films, but if they are short on cast members, they look to the community for assistance. Several local filmmakers also volunteered their time to assist with the project. Sebastain Icart gave the students pointers in animation, and Martin Ouimet and Qajaaq Ellesworth assisted with writing and directing.

With the students in charge of all aspects of the film-production process, Caine says he is noticing a big change in their confidence.

"It's interesting when you start seeing these kids direct and produce and they go from being incredibly shy to being really assertive," Caine says.

Drug and alcohol awareness is only the first phase of the project, which will then begin to focus on social issues in the community such as neglect and abandonment. The group is also working on developing an animation film that addresses the dangers of drug use in a comical way.

Once the films are fully produced, Caine hopes to turn them into commercials that will be shown across Nunavut and eventually throughout Canada. ■

JUST THE FACTS

Getting behind the wheel under the influence of drugs or alcohol can cost a lot more than a hefty fine or a driver's license. As these facts show, it also places a heavy burden on society — both financially and socially.

A 2010 Ipsos Reid poll found that 97 per cent of Canadians recognize impaired driving as an important public safety issue.

The Ministry of Transportation in Wellington, New Zealand, estimate that for every 100 alcohol or drug-impaired drivers and motorcyclists killed on their roads, 54 passengers and 42 sober road users die as well.

The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics has noted that, following a 25 year general decline, national impaired-driving offences increased for the third straight year in 2009. Prince Edward Island was the province with the greatest increase, rising by 39 per cent.

Research by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau found that drunk drivers tend to fall in the following demographics: male, aged 18 to 24, of a low socio-economic standing, work in a blue collar job, possess limited education and literacy and are single or divorced with low self-esteem.

According to the Institute of Alcohol Studies in the United Kingdom, alcohol can reduce reaction times by 10 to 30 per cent. It can also cause reduced and double vision and loss of peripheral vision, all of which are dangerous coupled with a sense of overconfidence, another typical side effect.

In Australia, Dr. Olaf H Drummer at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, found that the average blood alcohol concentration in victims of fatal accidents is 0.15 per cent for those with full licenses. The legal limit there is 0.05 per cent and zero per cent for those with learning, provisional, probationary or restricted licenses.

According to the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration, alcohol-related crashes accounted for an estimated 18 per cent of the $103 billion in auto insurance payments in the United States. Reducing alcohol-related crashes by 10 per cent would save $1.8 billion in insurance payments and loss adjustment expenses.

In 1954, Dr. Robert Borkenstein of the Indiana State Police invented the Breathalyzer, the testing device still used by police to measure alcohol levels in the body.

In a 2010 interview with the Global Post, South African Transport Minister S'bu Ndebele said that road crashes will be the leading cause of death in children aged five to 14 in Africa by 2015 — pulling ahead of both malaria and HIV/AIDS.

The Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program was developed by the Los Angeles Police Department in the 1980s. To be certified, DREs in Canada must pass eight exams and two practical tests as well as complete at least 12 drug evaluations.

As of 2008, refusing a roadside drug test in Canada is considered a criminal offence. Drivers caught driving under the influence of drugs face a minimum fine of $1,000 for a first offence and a month in jail for a second offence.

In 2009, electronics manufacturer Philips announced the creation of an on-the-go drug test in the vein of the Breathalyzer. The machine can be used roadside to test saliva for cocaine, heroin, cannabis, amphetamines and methamphetamines.

In October 2010, Belgium became the first European country to use saliva tests on drivers they suspect of being under the influence of drugs.

Existence of alcohol in the bloodstream of crash victims works to limit the extent and level of recovery from injury, according to a Drinking and Driving report by the World Health Organization and the World Bank.

In 2011, Ireland will introduce stricter roadside testing laws relating to drugs. Officers will now be allowed to check for dilated pupils and have drivers stand on one leg and to walk in a straight line. Drivers that refuse face a €5,000 fine or a six-month jail sentence.

Drunk driving accounts for almost 25 per cent of all road fatalities in Ontario, Canada.

One in five people admitted to the Irish Road Safety Authority to being a passenger in a car driven by someone under the influence of drugs.

PHONING IT IN

APPLICATION MAKES GRAFFITI REPORTING FASTER, EASIER

By Sigrid Forberg

The Neighborhood Services Department (NSD) in the city of Phoenix, Arizona, is tackling graffiti with a new smartphone application for citizens to report incidents of blight.

The free Citizen's Smart Phone Reporting App, which is available for iPhone and Droid cellular phones, uses a mobile device's global positioning system to allow members of the public to take a photo of the problem and send both it and its location immediately to the NSD database.

Erynn Crowley, the deputy director for the NSD, spearheaded the new initiative. She says the idea came from a government industry report magazine and was based on a similar initiative in California. City employees liked the idea because not only is the application convenient for people on-the-go, it's also economically sustainable.

"One thing that is very important, especially in this economic time, is that it was free. It's free for the public, it's free for us and it easily integrated with our existing software and user systems," she says.

The new application was designed by App-Order, a private company that offers the application to government agencies for free.

Two years ago, following the publicity from another graffiti application App-Order had created, several municipalities started contacting the company to see whether they could also make something to suit their needs.

Each time a new municipality approaches App-Order, the company creates a new application tailored to its specific set of city code violations. With this information, new applications can be created in a matter of days.

"City employees were doing the same job twice," says Barry Steinhart, the general manager of App-Order. "They would go out into the field and record the incidents and then go back and enter it into their database. It just wasn't efficient."

For city employees looking for something to help report code violations, they can cut back on doubling of work. Instead of having to go out and take notes in the field and then returning to enter the information into a database, everything is available right there in the smartphone.

And for cities looking for an easy way for their citizens to report blight, like in Phoenix, they can take a photo within a matter of seconds, rather than having to call in, write or email a full description of the blight.

And, because it is GPS-based, they don't need to scramble to figure out their exact location.

Steinhart emphasizes that while it is a sophisticated technology, it remains simple to use and extremely efficient for both those reporting and those investigating.

"An app has to be very precise. It has to get you where you want to go quickly," he says. "People don't want to be there for 10 minutes on an app. They just want to get done what they want to do in less than a minute and move on."

Crowley says the response to the application has been positive. In less than a year, reports show it had already seen more than 2,949 downloads and yielded 1,256 reports of blight, more than half relating to graffiti.

Tim Boling, deputy director for the NSD's Revitalization Division, whose Graffiti Busters program aims to remove graffiti within 48 hours of receiving a report, says graffiti has a bigger impact on the community than most people realize.

"It's not art. It destroys neighbourhoods. It destroys the visual esthetics of the city," he says, adding that the city has invested more than $2 million each year removing graffiti. "And businesses don't want to come into a neighbourhood that is ridden with graffiti. It can affect property values up to 15 per cent."

Crowley adds that so many people now carry smartphones that it was important to try to reach out to the tech-savvy citizens and make it easier for them to perform their civic duty. The fact that the city of Phoenix can do so without adding to their budget is a bonus.

"I think it's important for government to keep pace with technology and keep pace with what's important and resonates with the public because we're there to serve them," she says. "And we're also there to make it as easy as possible for them to access our services." ■

Residents of Phoenix, Arizona, can now capture and submit to city officials incidents of blight with a smartphone application.

Phoenix Neighbourhood Services Department

BETWEEN BONES AND BOOKS

MATTERS OF FACT BECOME MATTERS OF FICTION

Public interest in forensic science has soared in recent years, especially within the realms of television and publishing. Forensic anthropologist Kathy Reichs helped spur this popularity in the 1990s with her Temperance Brennan novels, which are now the basis for the hit TV show, Bones. Gazette *writer Sigrid Forberg chats with the author about the two vastly different elements of her life.*

Marie-Reine Mattera

Kathy Reichs has been writing her Temperance Brennan novels, based on her own experiences in forensic anthropology, since 1997.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST DO?

As a forensic anthropologist, I am responsible for identifying the deceased by deciphering the scientific indicators found on their bodies or bones. I usually determine how the person died, and how long ago. My job requires me to conduct autopsies on partially or completely decomposed remains to tease out information about the person's physical characteristics and to determine cause of death.

HOW DID YOU INITIALLY GET INTO FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY?

I've always found forensic anthropology fascinating. Since I was a young girl I've loved scientific experimentation and the challenge of solving puzzles. In this job, I get to do both. I enjoy the work because I'm responsible for determining who a deceased was and what happened to them. I'm able to give answers to the family members left behind, to help them better understand what happened to their loved ones, and perhaps make it slightly easier for them to cope with their loss.

YOU'VE TESTIFIED AT A UN TRIBUNAL IN RWANDA, EXHUMED A MASS GRAVE FROM GUATEMALA AND IDENTIFIED THE DEAD FROM GROUND ZERO OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER. HOW ARE THESE PROJECTS DIFFERENT FROM YOUR LABORATORY WORK?

To start with, those projects have a higher profile, meaning a lot more people are watching and interested in the outcome of your work. Further, many of those projects require extensive fieldwork outside the lab, often in dangerous or volatile conditions. I enjoy big-scale projects immensely. While every case is important, there is a certain satisfaction that comes with being involved in work that extends to issues larger than just the set of remains before you. Such cases provide an invigorating sense of purpose.

ARE THERE ANY CASES IN PARTICULAR THAT HAVE REALLY STUCK WITH YOU?

I was once contacted by the Catholic Church in Montreal to identify remains located on one of their properties, which became part of my second book, *Death Du Jour*. Historical identifications are a pleasant change of pace. Unfortunately, the disturbing cases are often the ones that stick with me. Innocent victims. The weak. Children. Abused women. The elderly. Sometimes it takes a great effort to put certain images behind you.

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR JOB THAT YOU STILL FIND CHALLENGING?

The hardest part of my job is confronting death every day. At times it can be a severe emotional strain. Writing has been a great outlet for me.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH CASES TO BASE YOUR NOVELS ON?

Almost all of my novels derive from professional experiences in my real life. For example, *Fatal Voyage* centered on a plane crash investigation in which I took part. *Devil Bones* sprang from the real life experience of finding strange things such as wax or feathers stuck to bones in ceremonial fashion.

Exhuming mass graves in Guatemala became the setting for my novel *Grave Secrets*. You just never know what will spark an interesting story.

HAS WRITING TEMPERANCE'S STORIES TAUGHT YOU ANYTHING ABOUT YOURSELF AS BOTH A WRITER AND A FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGIST?

I think Tempe teaches me something every day. Writing her character has made me much more aware of the realities of my work, and how it must look and feel to outsiders. In a way, I'm more able to understand my own personality by writing the story of a fictionalized version of myself. It can be very cathartic. Of course, at the time it can be eye-opening as well.

WHAT KIND OF FEEDBACK HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM YOUR FORENSIC COLLEAGUES?

My colleagues have been wonderfully positive and supportive. Make no mistake, they hold me to a high standard in terms of accurately portraying the science of our profession, but I could not ask for a more supportive group of people. ■

SOLVING CRIMES INSIDE AND OUT

PEN SQUAD BRINGS TOGETHER THE BEST TO INVESTIGATE THE WORST

By Mallory Procunier, contributing writer

Within the walls that house Canada's worst offenders, the unthinkable can happen. Inmate on inmate assaults, contraband weapons manufacturing and even brutal homicides are just some of the violent episodes that can occur even after criminals are locked up within one of Kingston, Ontario's maximum security penitentiaries.

And just as they would warrant investigations outside prison walls, these offences are thoroughly examined on the inside by an integrated group of dedicated police officers.

PEN SQUAD

Comprising members of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), the Kingston City Police and one RCMP member, the Pen Squad is a 12-person unit based in Kingston.

The unit operates between eight penitentiaries in the region that range from minimum security facilities to the maximum security Millhaven Institution and the notorious Kingston Penitentiary.

On any given day, the team can be called in to investigate assaults, homicides or drug smuggling between inmates.

"Every day is different and we can see anything," says Cst. Robert (Bob) Ferguson, the sole RCMP member on the Pen Squad. "It's like working general duty when you don't know what the next call is going to be."

Tough skin and an understanding of criminal culture are strong assets to Pen Squad members, as working in a prison environment can be extremely difficult.

Equally as important is an understanding of the Criminal Code, as well as experience in drugs and organized crime work.

"An understanding of criminal activity is key, as these inmates are world-renowned for being the worst of the worst," says D/Sgt. Jim Gorry of the OPP, head of the Pen Squad.

RCMP BENEFITS FROM PARTNERSHIP

From the inside, the Pen Squad is also able to provide each of its three associated agencies with valuable information about inmates, as well as their ties to organized crime on the outside.

"If a member calls from (Saskatchewan) inquiring about an inmate that is connected to a local crime, Bob is able to tap into a more expansive intelligence base, which may prove beneficial to the investigation at hand, plus provide a link to other occurrences," says S/Sgt. Andy Harper, who's in charge of the RCMP's Kingston detachment.

Ferguson answers operational requests that the Kingston detachment receives pertaining to inmates at any of the eight penitentiaries in the area. He also has quick access to records at the facilities, as well as information from Kingston City Police and the OPP.

With all this information at his hands, Ferguson makes it easier for investigators in the field to connect the dots.

"It's important for the RCMP to put our best foot forward when entering any (joint forces operation)," Harper says.

"Bob is a seasoned and competent investigator who possesses a skill set that is conducive to this inter-agency team environment. He enhances the image of the force, and he is a tremendous resource for the organization."

Working together with other agencies within this close-knit team also proves beneficial to form new relationships and fortify those that already exist.

"There is so much work being done here that every group needs the other, and it's a great way to build partnerships," Ferguson says.

It isn't only RCMP members who see the benefit in this partnership.

"The nice thing about working with the RCMP in our office is that with cases where we end up investigating in different parts of Canada, it is easier to build relationships and have contacts in those communities," says Gorry.

INTEGRATION

Through this partnership, RCMP in Kingston are not only better prepared to investigate crimes in the area, but they have also become more engaged with the Kingston City Police to support the city.

In the recent past, the RCMP has brought in members from across the country to assist with a homicide investigation, they've provided Kingston members and tactical troops to assist with crowd control during a Queen's University homecoming event, and the detachment is also currently looking at a member exchange with Kingston City Police.

"It's very important for us to build upon these relationships at a local level and strengthen those that are already in place," Harper says. ■

LATEST RESEARCH IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

The following are excerpts from recent research related to justice and law enforcement. To access the full reports, please visit the website links at the bottom of each summary.

AGED ARMOUR TESTING STUDY

By Christopher Withnall, For Biokinetics and Associates Ltd.

Researchers with Biokinetics and Associates are investigating the performance of used and aged soft body armour.

Partnered with the Canadian Police Research Centre, and with support from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the researchers tested 150 aged and decommissioned National Institute for Justice (NIJ) level-II body armours.

The purpose of the study is to find a scientific basis to create a general protocol on aged armour replacement. Current protocols vary by police force, ranging from five years to indefinite service.

The sample panels, collected from 22 Canadian police forces, were subjected to laboratory ballistic testing according to the NIJ protocol under which they were originally certified.

The NIJ level-II protocol indicates that the body armour must be tested with both the firing of a .357 magnum semi-jacketed soft point bullet and a 9 mm full-metal jacketed bullet within a specific speed range determined to be fair. The product must stop the bullet within the specified range in order to be certified. Garments typically specify their minimum protection level on their labels as numbers in the low end of the spectrum.

Fired at the fair speed or lower, the .357 rounds yielded perforations in 12 per cent of the sample panels. Of that number, two per cent of the shots were at speeds below the designated minimum. However, the most recent NIJ standard allows for a degradation margin, making those numbers acceptable.

The 9 mm fired at both the fair and a lower speed did not result in any perforations.

Testing panels ranged from two to 17 years old. Interestingly enough, the results suggest that the initial design and construction of the body armour played a larger role in its performance than age.

Panels as old as 13 to 17 years performed well, while others as young as three years were subject to perforations. The group with the highest failure rate was the six- and seven-year-old panels.

The report notes that these results are preliminary and that the sample panels may not be typical of current in-service armour.

Biokinetics and Associates continue to collect decommissioned products for a further series of testing. In future studies, researchers plan to focus on testing body armour at the low end of the fair speed range. They believe that this method will help to reveal the most non-conforming products.

TO ACCESS THE FULL REPORT, PLEASE VISIT:
CSS.DRDC-RDDC.GC.CA

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

By Samantha Bricknell

Environmental crime has not always been considered a legitimate area of legal concern in Australia.

However, as the vulnerability of the environment and the long-term effects of harmful practices become clearer, the government is responding.

This report sets out to address a lack of comprehensive accounts of environmental crime by looking at the available literature and examining laws and legal practices against environmental crime in Australia.

The most commonly recognized environmental crimes in Australia include: pollution and illegal disposal of waste; illegal trade in fauna and flora and harms to biodiversity; illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (from both domestic and foreign fronts); illegal native vegetation clearance; illegal logging and timber trade; and water theft.

The true extent of environmental crime is hard to pinpoint. Published data and analyses are incomplete and cannot effectively identify or describe trends in environmental crimes.

The data does suggest that the rate of environmental crimes is not decreasing. And while there are those that are genuinely ignorant of their actions, there are deliberate offenders causing environmental harm.

Different states and territories have varying statutes and regulations for conservation and protection, environmental

Eco-vandalism in Australia's Tasmanian forests.

management and sustainable development. The range of offenses and punishments vary greatly across the country.

In general, activities that may harm the environment need some form of license or permit.

Detecting offences relies heavily on routine monitoring, auditing or targeted operations.

There are also multiple independent agencies geared towards the protection and management of natural resources or regulating environmentally harmful practices.

Many of these agencies have hotlines or online complaint services where individuals can report suspicious behaviour or apparent evidence of environmental harm.

Others focus more on the prevention of environmental wrongdoing such as developing specialized management plans, educating the public and partnering with other interest groups.

Most illegal acts in Australia are treated somewhat leniently with infringement notices or, when the matter is prosecuted, are dealt fines that are predominantly on the low end of the penalty prescribed.

The likelihood of prosecution varies by jurisdiction.

For example, in two states, specialist courts have been established to overview environmental matters, while some other jurisdictions leave matters almost exclusively for the Magistrates' courts.

There is also the question of whether criminal prosecution is the best way to deal with offenders.

Large businesses will absorb fines as a 'cost of business.'

And the tendency towards low penalties has proven to be an insufficient deterrent for many.

Alternative sentencing, while not an option for all courts, is a good solution. They are tailor-made sentences that compel the offender to make retribution for their actions.

But more research needs to be done in order to better understand the scope of environmental crime.

TO ACCESS THE FULL REPORT, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.AIC.GOV.AU

YOUNG PEOPLE, KNIVES AND GUNS

By Arianna Silvestri, Mark Oldfield, Peter Squires and Roger Grimshaw

Recent killings of teenagers and children have sparked debate that more young people are turning to violent crime.

However, research suggests that 'knife crime' is nothing new. During times of peace in the United Kingdom, young men have been historically more likely to kill one another with knives than guns. And, while guns are far less common and accessible than knives, the long-term patterns of gun-related offences closely resemble those of knife-related offences.

This report weighs the diverse knowledge of young people's attitudes and behaviours spanning from 1998 to 2008 in order to critically assess the effectiveness of anti-weapons initiatives.

KEY FINDINGS

- there are many initiatives, but little evidence of their effectiveness;
- no strategy has proven to be effective long-term;
- weapon use is a symptom of a larger problem relating to social, psychological and economic conditions;
- disarming is not enough – policies must also deal with understanding the perceived need for the weapon;
- public health work must consider and seek to protect children from damaging influences

While there are many efforts to alter young people's inclinations to weapons, a lack of funding and independent review make drawing definitive conclusions challenging.

Nurse-based counseling programs in related studies looking at alcohol reduction (a known cause of violence) have shown higher success rates.

Most firearm research has found that various, locally based agencies are more effective in combating gun violence in young people than single-focus groups working alone.

One study in Boston paired community centre workers with probation and parole officers to help at-risk youth.

The most successful approach was through substance-abuse counseling, job-skills training and recreational and educational opportunities.

WHAT DOES NOT WORK

- suppressive approaches
- tougher sentencing
- attempts to disrupt illegal supply
- gun buy-back/exchange programs
- gun searches and seizures
- gun bans, restrictions on acquisition
- 'zero tolerance' in schools
- 'scared straight' prison-tour programs

RISK AND PROTECTION

Predictive methods such as looking at an individual's influences and exposures (family, school, peers and community) must be used cautiously. Not only can they be fallible, but labeling certain young people as criminals can have negative effects on their lives.

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND DISADVANTAGE

Reduced opportunities, racial discrimination and social exclusion as well as existing levels of violence often contribute to young people's behaviour and reliance on crime.

Acting to preserve ideas of street credibility and respect among peers can be very important to young people. While this cements bonds, it also serves to distance young people from the greater community and its associated values.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE OR PUBLIC HEALTH?

Studies have shown that contact with the criminal justice system can be counterproductive.

Deterrent approaches can even sometimes increase violence among young people.

Some of the most promising youth violence prevention strategies involve a public health approach.

Identifying problems early and aiming to address risk factors by introducing protective factors seems to have a promising effect on reducing delinquent and violent behaviour.

TO ACCESS THE FULL REPORT, PLEASE VISIT:
CRIMEANDJUSTICE.ORG.UK

INVESTIGATING WAR CRIMES AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE

By Robert C. Hotston

Much has been written about war crimes prosecution since the war crimes trials at Nuremberg, Germany, more than 50 years ago. However, the actual investigation of crimes against humanity is an aspect that arguably deserves more attention. While similarities between international tribunals exist, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) posed unique investigative challenges, which the author, writing from his personal experience as a criminal investigator with the Office of the Prosecutor for the SCSL, examines here.

Like other international criminal tribunals, the SCSL is a legal institution established to try violations of international humanitarian law, committed during a specific time and at a specific location, in this case the civil war fought in Sierra Leone between 1991-2002.

The SCSL was established jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations on January 16, 2002, with a mandate to bring to justice those deemed most responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law, committed in the territory of Sierra Leone after November 30, 1996.

BEYOND DANGERS TO INVESTIGATIONS FROM DEALING WITH NATIONAL POLICE AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES, THERE WERE ALSO THREATS POSED BY DISEASE AND LACK OF ADEQUATE MEDICAL TREATMENT.

The Special Court's Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) targeted members of a number of armed groups (the Revolutionary United Front, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, and the Civil Defence Force) as well as certain individuals (former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor) for investigation and later prosecution. OTP investigators, however, encountered some significant investigative problems.

THE OTP INVESTIGATIONS SECTION

The investigation of crimes against humanity falls to the Investigations Section in the OTP. The position of criminal investigators within the Special Court is unique to the organization. Investigators might be Sierra Leone Police officers or international. At any given time, there could be at least six Canadian police officers.

The only investigators with invested police powers were those from the Sierra Leone Police, and then only within the national jurisdiction. International investigators possessed no police powers. Working in a post-conflict environment, with little infrastructure and no authority, proved challenging enough. But there were other problems.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

At the SCSL, the investigative teams were led by criminal investigation managers, but there were typically one or two legal advisers associated to each team, many of whom had served as prosecutors in their national jurisdictions. The presence of two equally competent and paid groups of professionals on an investigation led to some of the greatest conflict within the OTP.

By and large, police are in charge of the criminal investigations in common law systems such those of Canada and Sierra Leone. But police and prosecutors are seen as separate, yet equal, in the investigation and prosecution of crime. Many OTP investigators, either serving or former police officers, are from these countries.

This is in contrast to the civil law system where investigative judges are typically in charge of the investigation, dispatching officers to undertake various investigative functions. Often the police will locate and arrest an individual, only to have him interrogated by the investigative judge. Several OTP prosecutors have come from this system.

Having an experienced police investigator from a common law system operating under the authority of an investigative judge or prosecutor can be difficult because the education and training that each group receives in preparation of their professional careers is similar.

ELEMENTS OF THE OFFENCE

Police investigators who are responsible for investigating these crimes need more training from legal advisors and prosecutors on the elements of the offences that must be proven — what is being investigated, the proof required, and the relevant rules of evidence. Such training needs to take place before the investigative process begins, not during or after, to ensure that time and resources are not wasted and the necessary evidence is gathered.

INTERVIEWING AND INTERROGATION

In some legal systems, police can use brutality or torture to successfully obtain information. In civil law systems, techniques go to the other extreme with a question and answer approach being used.

Modern forensic interviewing techniques, whereby leading questions are avoided and a behavioural-based approach is used, were not always viewed favourably by members of the SCSL who came from various criminal justice systems, whether common or civil law.

In many cases, an investigator was tasked simply to ask scripted questions and record the answers. There was little concern for interaction between the investigator and witness.

HEARSAY

There is a great reluctance on the part of common law criminal investigators to pursue evidence based on hearsay. International tribunals, including the SCSL, are more flexible when it comes to the often-rigid hearsay rule.

This provides trial judges with more

Courtesy Robert C. Hotston

A United Nations checkpoint at the Liberian capital of Monrovia, where thousands of refugees from Sierra Leone fled to escape civil war.

discretion to allow the evidence in the truth-seeking process. Investigators need to be told that hearsay should be considered when building cases for prosecution.

INFORMATION SHARING

Tracking and arresting fugitives, cultivating sources, locating witnesses and gathering relevant evidence is not an easy task when war crimes investigators are operating within the borders of a sovereign nation.

No state is required by international law to assist the Special Court. Where possible, the court entered into specific agreements with individual countries to provide assistance.

Often information requested from national police or intelligence agencies was not forthcoming, as it could not be released to SCSL investigators without a national security clearance. In some cases, certain states perceived SCSL investigators to be intelligence agents and saw the release of information to run counter to their national interest.

In many instances, investigators were forced to develop personal relationships with individual members of national police and intelligence agencies in order to obtain assistance. This was a time-consuming process.

And when investigators, who had been seconded to the Special Court, returned to their parent organizations, such contacts were often broken, requiring new efforts at developing relationships and the information shared from them.

Alternatively, while investigators were hot on the trail of evidence, members of foreign police and intelligence agencies were, on occasion, trying to determine what investigators knew. Witnesses who might have been somewhat leery of SCSL investigators proved reticent when confronted with representatives of national agencies.

To complicate matters, investigators could not be certain of the loyalties of those assisting them. There was the apprehension that information provided to officials of national agencies might be leaked to those indicted by the OTP or their supporters, thus compromising investigations.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Beyond the dangers to investigations posed by dealing with national police and intelligence agencies, there were more threats for which precautions needed to be taken.

These include theft, break and enter, assault and robbery and political demonstrations.

There were also threats posed by disease and lack of adequate medical treatment, traffic collisions and fires. The simple act of knowing what brand of bottled water was safe to drink could prevent a life-threatening medical emergency.

CONCLUSION

Much has been written about the causes of war crimes and crimes against humanity and the evolution of international criminal law to deal with these most serious of offences. This article has focused not on the legal issues of such investigations, but rather the practical problems of effectively investigating international crimes.

And while some may suggest that it is merely sufficient to know the statutes and relevant tribunal decisions under which the investigation is being conducted, many problems cannot be resolved by legislation alone.

Many of the problems result from differences in the criminal justice systems that investigators and prosecutors come from and their respective roles within those systems. In the end, there must be a partnership between the two groups for an investigation and prosecution to be effective.

To reduce conflict, more indoctrination needs to take place between members of police and prosecutorial services from different criminal justice systems.

All parties need to learn to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the various systems, the roles played within them and how these can impact the criminal investigative process.

Overall, there needs to be more training for investigators and prosecutors at the time of initial assignment to an international case. Training should range from issues of personal security to information gathering to case management.

Crimes against humanity constitute threats to international peace and security. The prosecution of the perpetrators of such acts requires that those privileged enough to undertake such investigations be properly trained in international criminal law and all the inherent diversity issues that make such work so challenging. ■

ANATOMY OF A COLLISION

SERIOUS CAR CRASHES INVESTIGATED SAME WAY AS HOMICIDES

By Cris Leykauf, contributing writer

Canvass teams. Warrants for blood. Securing video footage. Taking witness statements. DNA comparisons.

If the above sounds like a homicide investigation, that's the point. The Surrey RCMP's Criminal Collision Investigation Team (CCIT) in British Columbia has an exclusive mandate to investigate motor vehicle incidents that result in fatalities or serious injuries. To improve the chances of charges being laid, these files are now being treated like homicide investigations.

Historically, traffic teams in Surrey had to balance routine traffic enforcement with the demands of investigating these complex files. Because of their intricacies, it could take up to a year or more to complete these investigations.

"In the past there was no set criteria to follow for serious motor vehicle incidents," said Cpl. Bruce Macgillivary, who heads up the Criminal Collision team. "We needed consistency."

When it was formed in January of last year, Surrey's eight-member team adopted major case management techniques, assigning a file manager and providing electronic disclosure to the courts.

"We're hoping the end result is that this style of investigation will provide more incentive for suspects to plead guilty, if a good package is presented to Crown," says Macgillivary.

It's no coincidence that the processes CCIT uses mirror those of B.C.'s Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT), the largest team of its kind in Canada

"There's not a lot of difference between a homicide investigation and a major fatal traffic collision," says Macgillivary. Just like homicide investigators, his team goes to great lengths to track down witnesses or canvass nearby businesses to find video footage of the crash — or the conditions that led to the crash.

While the CCIT handles the investigative work, it works closely with the Integrated Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Service (ICARS).

ICARS officers are highly trained forensic experts who look at the physical evidence at the site of the crash, such as skid marks, to make conclusions about speed and braking. ICARS officers are also trained to examine seatbelts and can download information from the vehicle's airbag system, recorded seconds before the collision.

The ICARS team, run out of the Lower Mainland District Regional Police Service office, travels to fatal collisions all over the Lower Mainland of the province.

CASE STUDIES

In September, a young man walking along the Fraser Highway was struck by a vehicle. There were no witnesses, but investigators were able to find fragments from a headlight. Surrey RCMP issued a news release, which prompted a call from a lawyer saying someone was interested in coming forward. However, no one did.

In the meantime, investigators pieced together the fragments and concluded the car that hit the man was a Volkswagen City Jetta. Another media release was issued. Investigators had secured a list of every City Jetta in the Lower Mainland and were prepared to contact each owner. But the lawyer contacted them again. This time, the person would be coming in.

Those are the type of results Cpl. Macgillivary looks for.

Unusual circumstances can make solving the case a challenge. Some such cases Cpl. Macgillivary has been involved in include a tragic suicide where the person deliberately ran into oncoming traffic, and a fatality that resulted from a driver and passenger actively participating in a sexual act while driving down the road.

EXPANSION

There are similar teams in Langley and Burnaby, and others being created in Chilliwack, Mission, Boston Bar and Hope, says Supt. Norm Gaumont, who is responsible for Traffic Services for the RCMP in the Lower Mainland. Teams for other cities are also in the planning stages.

"We want to ensure that all these teams have a similar and very high level of training, including the major crime courses, file management, criminal crash investigation, and major crime investigation," says Supt. Gaumont. "Right now we're building capacity in relationship to the trainers. We're doing it step by step, and making sure it's done right."

The end goal for all the new Criminal Collision teams is to get serious crash investigations to Crown within six months. This will ensure Crown Counsel has the full range of options, to go summarily or to indict.

And that means those convicted of dangerous or impaired driving will face the full consequence of their actions. ■

The Surrey RCMP's Criminal Collision Investigation Team now treats motor vehicle incidents like homicide investigations.

Surrey RCMP