

# Crime Stoppers of Halton celebrates partners in keeping community safe

By David Lea  
Metroland Media Group

Crime Stoppers of Halton held an open house Monday at Halton Region headquarters to both celebrate its partners and what it is all about.

Organizers noted 2015 was a busy as tips to the charity led to 28 arrests, saw \$83,936 in stolen property recovered, and led to the seizure of illegal drugs with a street value of \$21,527.

"Crime Stoppers is a partnership that is comprised of the Crime Stoppers program, the community at-large, the police service and the media, and it helps keep Halton the safest regional municipality in Canada in which to live and work," said Norm Bellefontaine, Crime Stoppers chair.

"Crime Stoppers gives people a means of reporting tips on unsolved crimes with guaranteed anonymity. Tipsters do not identify themselves to Crime Stoppers and never have to appear in court."

Bellefontaine noted that while the organization is independent from the police, it is an important and cost-effective tool for law enforcement because it can help significantly shorten police investigations and solve crimes that might otherwise go unsolved.

Crime Stoppers partners honoured during the evening included Halton Region, whose chair, Gary Carr, spoke about the program and especially the need for everyone to do their part to help keep Halton a safe community.

"We have the finest people working in our police services, but we cannot do it without the community. You are an integral part of this," said Carr.

"If we want to remain the safest, if we want to attract businesses, if we want to make this a good place to raise kids and grandkids, you need to continue to do the work you are doing," he told Crime Stoppers officials.

Halton Police Chief Stephen Tanner was rec-



Crime Stoppers of Halton held an open house as January is Crime Stoppers Month. The theme is Celebrating Our Partnerships. Here, Norm Bellefontaine, chair of Crime Stoppers of Halton, is joined by some of the programs partners. Pictured, from left, are: OSPCA officer Brandon James; Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources conservation officer Jotham Dumesnil; Bellefontaine; Halton Regional Police Chief Stephen Tanner; John Sawyer, Oakville Chamber of Commerce president and Jamie Frye, investigator, Ontario Racing Commission.

Photo by Graham Paine

ognized for the liaison between police and Crime Stoppers and underlined the importance of Crime Stoppers' role in police work.

"Crime Stoppers, quite simply, is a critical, crucial and most necessary program not only in Halton, but around the world," said Tanner.

"Many, many members of the Halton police service have used Crime Stoppers' information to successfully investigate, prosecute, solve or prevent crime."

Crime Stoppers also recognized its partners from the local business community.

Oakville Chamber of Commerce President John Sawyer noted local chambers, which are involved in building strong, healthy, sustainable communities, were instrumental in bringing Crime Stoppers to Halton.

"The research we've seen, shows the No. 1 issue in building a community is safety. That's what

people want. They want to feel safe and secure in their homes," said Sawyer.

"Crime is a very important concern for the business community. Businesses are not immune to crime. Everything from shoplifting to armed robbery, fraud, counterfeiting of currency and products, all has a negative effect on the busi-

ness community."

Sawyer noted even crimes like vandalism and graffiti could shape a person's perception that an area is unsafe. Places viewed as unsafe are not welcoming environments for customers and can impact business, he said.

"We understand there is a real need for businesses to work with Crime Stoppers, and the police, to not only deal with white-collar crime and criminal activity targeting commercial enterprises, but businesses also need to be aware of new trends in crime in our increasingly computerized and highly-technical world."

Ministry of Natural Resources Provincial Enforcement Specialist Paula Norlock said the ministry has its own tip line, but noted it cannot guarantee anonymity and directs callers to Crime Stoppers for this. She said tips that come from Crime Stoppers often turn out to be the best because those will be from someone who, for example, is in a camp with a chronic poacher and witnesses them breaking the law.

Crime Stoppers of Halton also recognized its media partners during the event, including Metroland Media Group West, along with CHCH and Cogeco. Other partners recognized included the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, OPP, Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and others.



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