

Halton police launch crime mapping function - Information is power

Effective immediately, Halton residents can access neighbourhood-level crime incident data from the previous day, week, or month, or even search as far back as six months ago through a new crime mapping function that can be accessed through the Service's website www.haltonpolice.ca

"Providing reliable, timely crime data to the communities we serve is one of our top priorities, because an informed public is a safer public," said Halton Chief of Police Steve Tanner. "This partnership with CrimeReports gives us the ability to keep the public informed on a regular basis as to what is going on in our community."

Police dispatch data is stripped of personal information, including the exact address, and sent securely to CrimeReports.com, which hosts the crime mapping software. The public can access the data through the Service's website, under the Crime Files/Mapping navigation button.

Incidents reflected on the map will be shown within 100 numbers of the address, to protect individual's privacy, while still being within the general vicinity to give people an accurate idea of crime in their neighbourhood.

The crime mapping data will include police-dispatched calls for property damage, sexual assault, assault, robbery, break and enter, theft, impaired driving, homicide, attempted murder, offensive weapons, drug-related offences, and various traffic-related offences such as impaired driving, hit and run, and motor vehicle injuries and fatalities.

"Information is power," Chief Tanner added. "We hope that by giving the community this information, it will help them understand crime trends and better enable them to assist us in preventing crime in their neighbourhoods."

The public can access the free crime data through the Service's website or through the



SUNDAY SCHOOL: Penny McCabe, (seated left) and helper Lilli Kosin (right) helped at the Sunday School offered during the Acton Ecumenical Unity Service held recently at the Acton Legion. - Ted Tyler photo

CrimeReports iPhone app, available for free download in the Apple iTunes store. The new service even lets local citizens sign up for free customizable email updates, so they can monitor crime in their neighbourhood, or click to link to the CrimeStoppers of Halton website to file an anonymous crime tip.

The HRPS asks the pub-

lic to keep a few things in mind when accessing the software:

- In order to access the data, people will need to first read and click a disclaimer

- It takes a few minutes for the map data to load, depending on your internet connection. Please be patient.

- Map data is based on

dispatched calls, not completed investigations so therefore incident codes may change.

"Police are often dispatched to a call that initially may be reported as a one type of crime and later turn out to be unfounded or another type of crime. In such a case, the call will appear on the map as initially reported but later be

removed or changed," explained Chief Tanner. "The crime map data is as accurate as possible, but not 100 per cent fool-proof given the evolving nature of police investigations."

Other Ontario police services sharing their crime information with the public through CrimeReports include those in Ottawa and Kingston.

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