

Halton crime rate tumbles but violent incidents on rise

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Special to The IFP

While Halton's overall crime rate went down in 2006, police say they saw a jump in the number of violent and property-related offences.

That fact was among the projected year-end statistics presented to the Region's administration and finance committee recently by Halton Regional Police Chief Gary Crowell.

He told councillors the number of criminal offences for last year dropped by 2.7 per cent— from 15,934 in 2005 to 15,503— bringing the overall crime rate (incidents per 100,000 people) down by 5.4 per cent.

"We are encouraged by the decrease in our crime rate, which appears to be a trend noted in other jurisdictions," Crowell said. "However, investigations are becoming very complex and time-consuming and court processes continue to be lengthy."

He went on to tell the committee that violent crime went up by 9.1 per cent, jumping from 1,928 in 2005 to 2,103 in 2006— the majority of which were assaults and

domestic assaults.

"We are concerned about the increase in violent crime," he said.

Councillors also learned that property crimes, like thefts, increased from 8,358 in 2005 to 8,900 last year, or by 6.5 per cent.

In addition, Crowell showed a comparison of 2005 crime rates between Halton and other regions across the province.

The numbers, collected by the Ontario Municipal CAO's Benchmarking Initiative, revealed that the region had 451 violent crimes and 1,955 property crimes committed per 100,000 people that year, while other areas had double that.

"Halton has one of the lowest crime rates for violent and property crime," Crowell noted.

While motor vehicle collisions saw an increase of 7.5 per cent in 2006— from 7,623 to 8,195— Crowell said the number of deaths in those collisions remained the same at 11.

"That's down from our high of 20 in 2003," he noted.

Calls for service also went up in 2006 to an estimated 105,864, compared to the 97,451 received in 2005.

Rotary student exchange program in desperate need of host families

The Rotary Club of Georgetown needs your help to continue its Student Exchange Program.

The club has been involved with the exchange program for more than 40 years but over the years membership has declined. In recent years membership has remained stable at approximately 20-25 members but the decrease in members has put a strain on the continuance of the program.

The Georgetown club is one of 53 Rotary clubs in District 7080 that encompasses an area bounded by Orangeville, Mississauga, Oakville and Woodstock. District 7080 is responsible for the student exchange program but each participating club must select a secondary school student to go to another country for the better part of a year as an "outbound" student.

Any student between the ages of 15 and 19, who are academically above average, articulate and demonstrate leadership in their communities, are eligible to apply for the opportunity to become a Rotary exchange student.

While the "outbound" student is gone from the community, an "inbound" student will be received from another country.

Selecting an "outbound" student is not that difficult; the problem is securing four host families to accommodate the "inbound" student during the year.

The "inbound" student would be welcomed into your home and basically, be part of your



Past participants in the Rotary Club's Student Exchange Program pose for a photo. The Georgetown club is in need for host families for inbound students. Submitted photo

family for a stay of about three months in duration and then would move onto another host family, and so on.

The club is reaching out to the Halton Hills community for assistance and an information meeting for those who wish to become host families and to those students who are interested in the exchange program will be held at the Georgetown police station (Guelph Street) on Tuesday, February 13 at 7 p.m.

For further information and to confirm your attendance please call 905-877-5948.

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