

Group aims to raise awareness of domestic violence

Members of the Halton Violence Prevention Council display one of the many Act Against Violence signs that can be seen across the region.

Photo by
RON KUZYK



BY TIM WHITNELL

Special to The Champion

More often than not it's women who are the victims of domestic violence, and Halton's deputy police chief backed up that observation by saying he has come face-to-face with many such situations during his career.

Gary Crowell was at Halton Region headquarters last week to help lend police support, and his personal and professional experiences, to the regional agencies promoting public consciousness of November as Family Violence Prevention Month.

The committee of the Halton Violence Prevention Council (HVPC), the umbrella group representing the various social service agencies, is raising banners across Halton with the words 'Act Against Violence' in order to raise awareness of domestic violence. The HVPC was formed in 1992 out of the violent deaths of Burlington residents Leslie Mahaffy and Nina de Villiers.

Deputy Chief Crowell told those gathered at a press conference for Family Violence Prevention Month that he has been no stranger to witnessing the effects of domestic disturbances.

In 1971, Deputy Chief Crowell was a first-year RCMP officer in Nova Scotia. The Burlington-born and bred 33-year policing veteran said he had barely begun an overnight shift, his first ever, when a woman came into the police station and told him her husband had beaten her. She had fled their home but he wouldn't let her leave with their two babies. "I'm 'Joe Rookie' so I told her, 'I'll go and get your kids,' never expecting what I'd run into."

Deputy Chief Crowell ventured to the Shearwater naval base on his own. "We had very little (domestic violence) training back then. It's only in the past 10 years or so that that we've armed our officers with the (proper) training," he said, noting officers-to-be get such instruction at the Ontario Police College and through ongoing workshops within Halton police.

"We are (now) trained and know that one of the most dangerous calls you can get is to respond to a domestic violence situation."

Deputy Chief Crowell said when he got near the door of the woman's home on the naval base it was dark. Before he knew it, "I met the business end of a shotgun. If he wanted to have me, he had me."

Deputy Chief Crowell was able to talk his way out of the potentially-deadly moment. The husband put the weapon down and the young children were found unharmed.

The deputy chief also related that as a boy his mother's sister used to visit his home with her children during parts of summers. It was only years later that Deputy Chief Crowell found out his aunt was really trying to escape domestic violence.

"I can think of a number of other incidents," Deputy Chief Crowell said of his on-the-job experiences with domestic violence. "It's more prevalent than you like to believe it is."

Deputy Chief Crowell said Halton police have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to such situations. "If we have evidence to support a case of assault or another charge, we will prosecute it."

Halton police have had a domestic violence co-ordinator since one was provincially mandated in 2000. Det. Alison Freeman has been in that role in the one-person unit since January of this year.

• see NO on page 16

Emerald Isle Home Decor

Magical Touches
Turning the Ordinary into the
Extraordinary!

Accessorizing can be the key to why we fall in love with a room! The mood of a room can be established or changed by the accessories. Good taste in decorating need not be expensive. It is achieved by the skillful selection and blending of various elements. At Emerald Isle we will help you add that special piece to create just the right accent to your room. We offer beauty that works ...
... extraordinarily.

Home Consultations are available.



ACCESSORIES & PICTURES



TABLE DECOR LAMPS



GIFTS



Emerald
ISLE

HOME DECOR

TWO LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU

MILTON
400 Main St. E.
905-693-9948

GEORGETOWN
265 Guelph St. E.
905-873-2753

OPEN 7 DAYS • SUN 12-4



Martindale
GARDENS

RETIREMENT RESIDENCE

In The
HEART
of Milton

Enjoy an independent life style
Where assisted living is always an option

NOW OPEN

Affordable all inclusive rates
Studio style suites from \$2,100.00 per month
One bedroom suites from \$3,200.00 per month
Two bedroom suites from \$3,600.00 per month

Call for your personal tour

905-693-8592

45 Martin St. Milton