

Effective and essential

Block Parents: people who care

By SGT. RODNEY SINE
The Block Parent — it is a concept that is very simple, very effective and very essential to the welfare of every neighborhood.

In the most fundamental terms, a Block Parent is any responsible adult who cares enough about the well being of children and other persons to volunteer his or her

home as a safe refuge when a crisis arises.

A sign in the window lets children in distress know that a Block Parent is home to provide a haven.

Even when there is no cause for concern, the sign can act as a deterrent to potential offenders who can quickly conclude that the neighborhood has its own safety support system.

Block Parents have no legal status except their natural status as private citizens. Why is a Block Parent program a necessity?

The following points can aid in understanding the necessity:

- To provide the community with

an organized method of protecting its children and adults.

- To aid in the prompt reporting of emergency problems to the police force or appropriate agency.

This program requires total community involvement, which includes: police; local governments; and education boards. Block Parents is endorsed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

A common question that arises is "Who may be a Block Parent?" There is no one with special qualifications for the requirement.

- It involves any responsible citizen, 16 years of age or older



SGT. RODNEY SINE
Needs volunteers

who cares about the well being of everyone, especially children, that has been screened by police and is willing to provide help at any time.

Another question that may arise is "When is the Block Parent sign displayed?"

It is only displayed when someone over the age of 16 years, who has been screened by the police force, is available in their home. There is no change in lifestyle.

If the Block Parent is unavailable for any reason, he or she removes the sign. Absence of the sign does not mean the house is unattended.

The Block Parent is not expected to provide food or beverage, toilet facilities or transportation. They are not expected to administer first aid, leave their residence to break up fights or to actively engage any dangerous person.

The worst situation most Block Parents will ever have to contend with is a frightened child. If it was your child, wouldn't you say that was reason enough?

If you are interested in becoming a Block Parent, please contact your nearest school or the York Regional Police Force's Community Services Bureau.

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