

## CRIME STOPPERS MONTH IN YORK REGION

# One-person bureau gets big results

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN  
Staff Writer

When a 22-year-old man was shot numerous times at a Georgina house party last summer, police spent months scouring the region for the suspect.

It wasn't until autumn, when a tip came through York Region Crime Stoppers, that investigators were able to cement their case, locate the basement apartment in Toronto where the suspect was staying and make an arrest.

Robert Paul Morris, 20, was charged with four counts of attempted murder Oct. 26.

While specifics of cases solved through a Crime Stoppers tip are rarely made public, in this case Toronto Police released the fact they were aided by many tips. That move protected the person who made the case-breaking tip.

January is world-wide Crime Stoppers month and is an opportunity to publicize the program and its partners — the media for publicity, the community for its funding support and the tipsters themselves, said program director Kim Killby.

Tips to York Region Crime Stoppers during 2000 resulted in 108 arrests, \$5.6 million in drugs seized and \$119,350 in property recovered.

Not a bad year — in fact, the best ever.

"Also in the year 2000, we authorized our first ever \$1,000 reward and that was for an arrest made in a homicide," Killby said.

"The caller didn't provide a whole lot of information, but there was one bit that really helped the homicide squad."

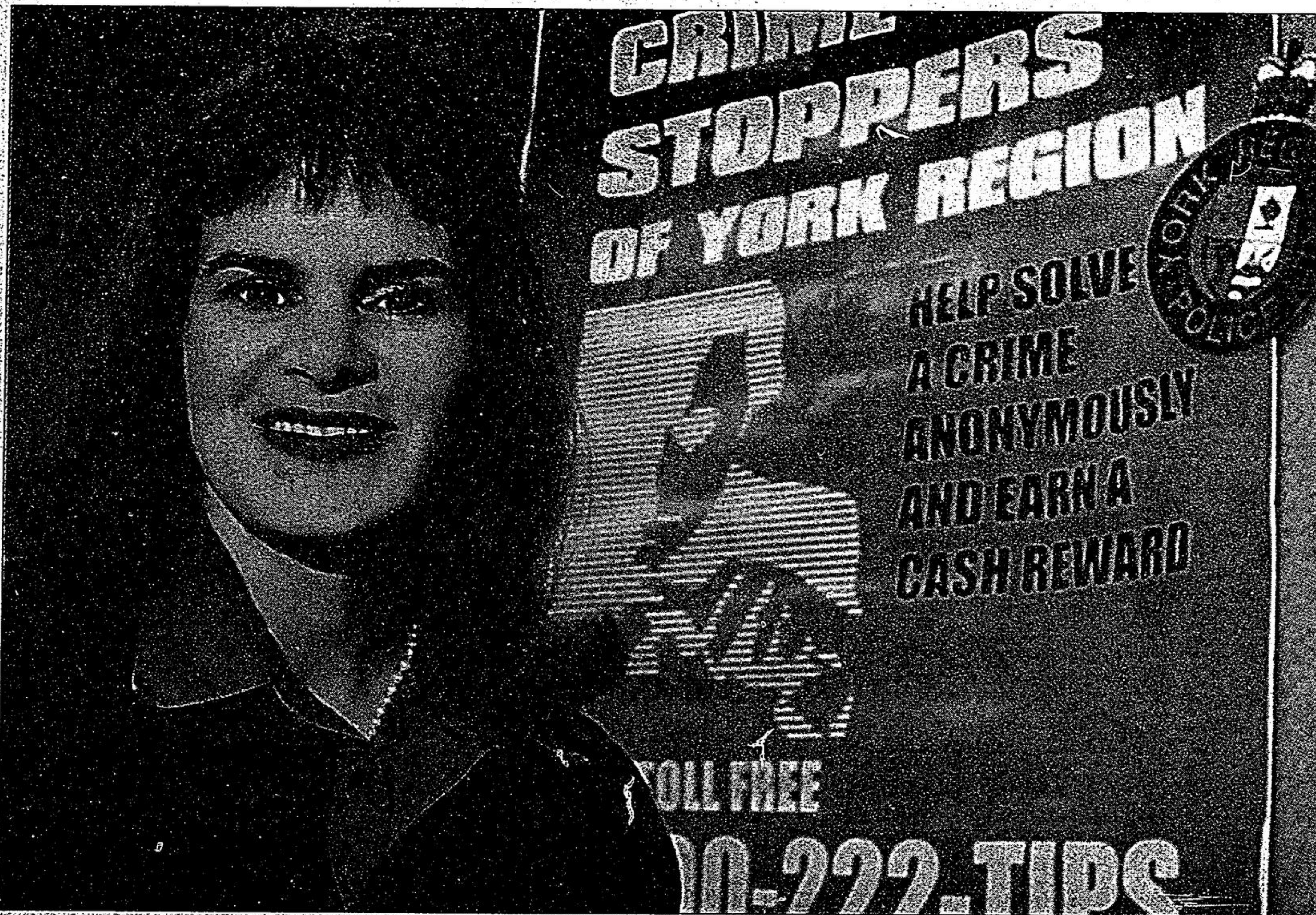
Killby pointed out Crime Stoppers month is also a way to remind the public the identity of tipsters is protected and they never have to testify in court.

"The number one goal is to get information while protecting the identity of the tipster," Killby said.

But she admits it's sometimes difficult to convince callers this level of protection exists.

"They're scared. They want to blurt out the information and hang up. We probably spend more time trying to keep people on the phone than getting actual information. Some of them are in fear for their lives. We tell them there's no way anyone will ever know, but it's sometimes hard to make them believe us."

Killby said Crime Stoppers call-takers are so committed to keeping the identity of tipsters secret, if a caller lets his or her name slip out



STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

Kim Killby, program director for York Region's Crime Stoppers, emphasizes the identity of tipsters is never revealed to call-takers, the public, police or lawyers. "In fact, if there was ever a court challenge to that, Crime Stoppers would request the case be withdrawn from court."

by mistake, they're advised to hang up and call back so another operator can take the call.

Operators don't have call display. Only Crime Stoppers staff talk to callers, so there's no chance case investigators can discover the tipsters' identities. When a tip is written up and passed along to investigators, not even the gender of the caller is revealed.

Tipsters are also protected by case law — in fact the tip itself is the only piece of evidence not required

to be disclosed during a court case — and that tip never has a name attached.

"The tip itself should never fall into the hands of a Crown attorney or defence lawyer. They are printed on horrendous red paper or fluorescent green so it can't be copied. If that single copy ends up in a Crown's folder by accident he or she can see it and yank it pretty quickly," Killby said.

"In fact, if there was ever a court challenge to that, Crime Stoppers

would request the case be withdrawn from court. We would rather give up the case than disclose information which could identify the tipster."

Callers can be good citizens, many of whom never claim the cash reward, telling officers they didn't call in for the money. Some calls are for revenge; accomplices betraying each other or upset ex-lovers who have knowledge of a previous crime. Some are from scared, innocent bystanders who find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"It doesn't matter who they are, they're all protected," Killby said.

Last year, the York Region Crime Stoppers authorized a total of \$15,175 in awards.

A \$300 award was given to a person who had information about several street robberies in Markham. A \$700 award was authorized to someone who called with

information about two homes that may have been used as drug labs. When officers executed search warrants, evidence led them to two other houses in the region and as a result, \$3 million worth of marijuana was seized.

"It's the largest one-time drug seizure in Crime Stoppers history in York Region," Killby said.

But there's always a struggle for funds. Killby runs York's program by herself, in comparison with Toronto Crime Stoppers which has 13 staffers. Funds are needed not only for tipster pay-outs but for promotional purposes as well.

This year, for example, Killby hopes to erect billboards advertising the program in every York Region municipality.

Her ideas seem to be working, because the York Region Crime Stoppers brought home four awards from an international conference in Vancouver last fall.

## CRIME STOPPERS: THE STATISTICAL STORY

### FOR THE YEAR 2000

Reports taken: 453  
Arrests made: 108  
Cases cleared: 94  
Charges laid: 278  
Property recovered: \$119,350  
Drugs seized: \$5,600,045  
Rewards authorized: \$15,175

### SINCE THE PROGRAM BEGAN IN MARCH, 1986

Arrests made: 1,451  
Cases cleared: 1,769  
Charges laid: 3,441  
Property recovered: \$3,371,448  
Drugs seized: \$13,683,132  
Rewards authorized: \$88,400

## A New Year's Resolution Worth Keeping

Make a resolution to include Eye Health as part of your family's General Health Plan. Our Practice supports a public awareness campaign promoting healthy eyes and vision safety.

1. Children should have a thorough optometric eye health examination by the age of three.
2. Have your own eyes examined without delay if you experience any visual changes, pain, flashes of light, or injuries. Diabetics should have more frequent examinations. African-Canadians are at a higher risk for glaucoma and also require closer monitoring.

3. Always wear protective eye wear during sports and when working with mechanical tools. Ninety percent of such injuries are preventable if only protective eye wear is used.
4. Toys blind children everyday. Take sufficient care with toy guns and fireworks, they are the worst for eye injuries in children.
5. Encourage every member of the family to have their eye health examination. Often those who need it most are the ones who are deprived the most.

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