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REPORT
Police Services Board

For Information

File Class: 1-01-02-03

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DATE: September 16, 2015

SUBJECT: **2014 YOUTH CRIME REPORT**

FROM: Brian Adams, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Services

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received as an information item by the Police Services Board.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Young Persons represent 8.0% of the policing population, at 103,342 residents.
- In 2014, 1,944 Young Persons were charged by the Peel Regional Police. This is a 3.6% decrease from the previous year.
- Young Persons represented 13.4% of all persons charged by the Peel Regional Police in 2014.
- Peel Regional Police continue to work with schools and community agencies to help young people succeed

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The 2014 Youth Crime Report has been created to discuss crime statistics and trends, for Young Persons investigated by the Peel Regional Police. The statistics used to create this report were received from the Peel Regional Police Corporate Planning and Research Bureau.

The *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (YCJA) defines a Young Person as someone 12-17 years of age. The YCJA came into effect in April 2003. The legislation includes guiding principles that promote the long-term protection of society. Paramount within these principles is the need to have meaningful consequence for youth who contravene the law, yet speaks to the need to address the underlying causes and promote rehabilitation of offenders.

In 2008, the "Review of the Roots of Violence" report was released. This review was the result of tragic gun violence in Toronto. The analysis brought to light a number of underlying issues

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that called for attention in a structured and sustained way. Following the Roots of Violence report came Ontario's 'Youth Action Plan' in August of 2012. This plan identifies the need to increase support for evidence-based, impactful initiatives that provide opportunities to youth and that strengthen community capacity. It also identifies the need to begin early in a young person's life, and to better coordinate efforts and take a long term, sustained approach that focuses on positive youth outcomes.

a) Population

In 2014, the policing population in Peel Region was 1,297,000 of which 103,342 were Young Persons, a decline of 0.6%. In 2014, Young Persons represented 8.0% of the policing population.

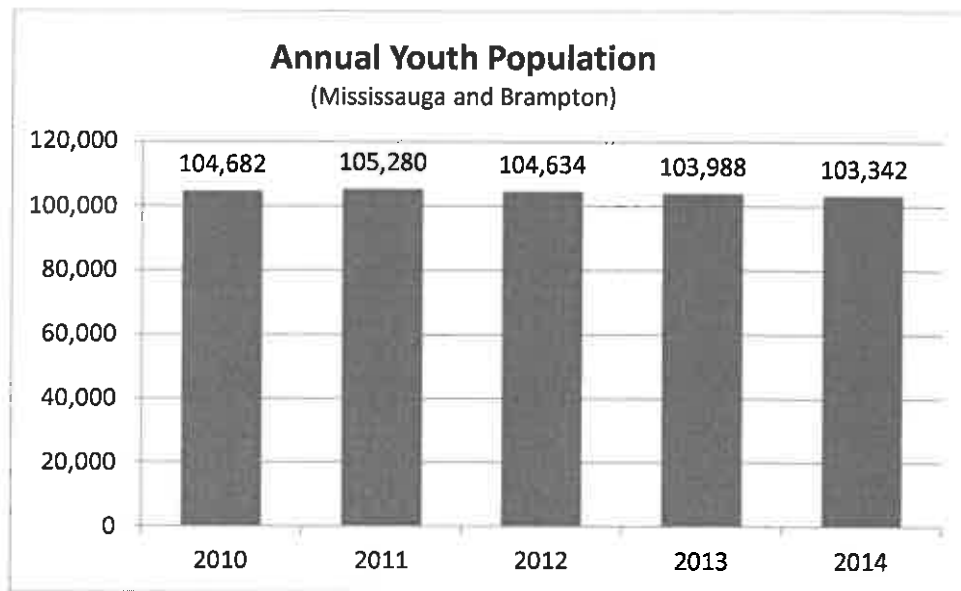


Figure 1

b) Crimes Against Persons

Crimes Against Persons included offences such as Assault, Robbery, Sexual offences, Criminal Harassment and Threatening. In 2014, 701 Young Persons were charged in relation to one of these occurrences. This represented a decrease of 104, or 12.9% from 2013.

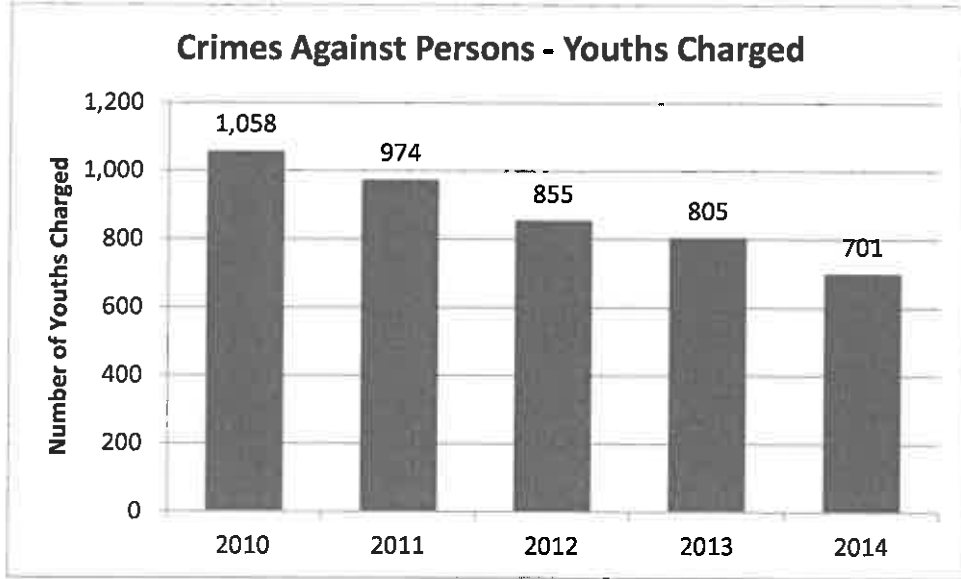


Figure 2

The four most frequently occurring incident types for Crimes Against Persons were Robbery, Assault Levels One and Two, and Uttering Threats.

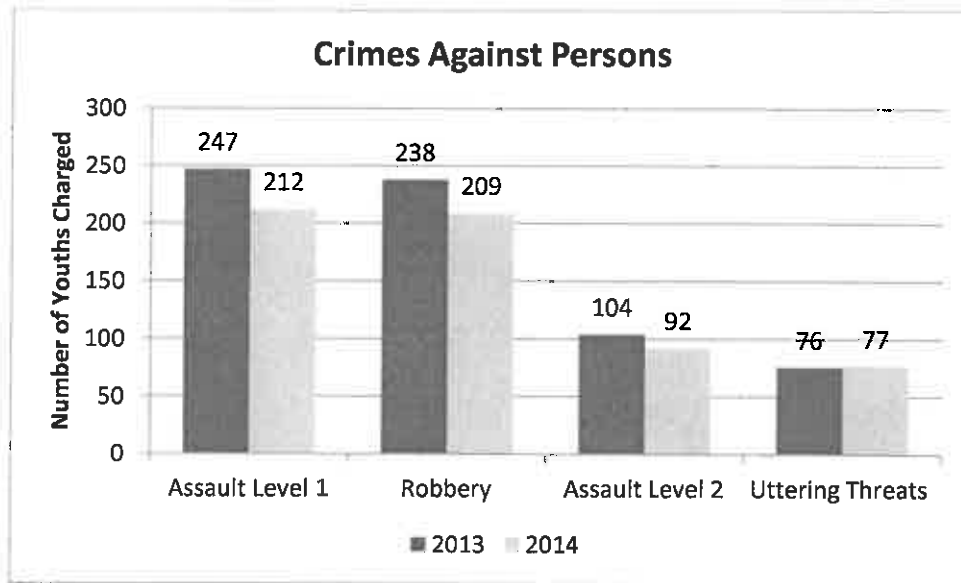


Figure 3

c) Crimes Against Property

Crimes Against Property included offences such as Break and Enter, Thefts, Possession of Property Obtained by Crime, Fraud, Mischief and Arson. In 2014, 650 Young Persons were charged in relation to one of these occurrences. This represented an increase of 34, or 5.5% from 2013.

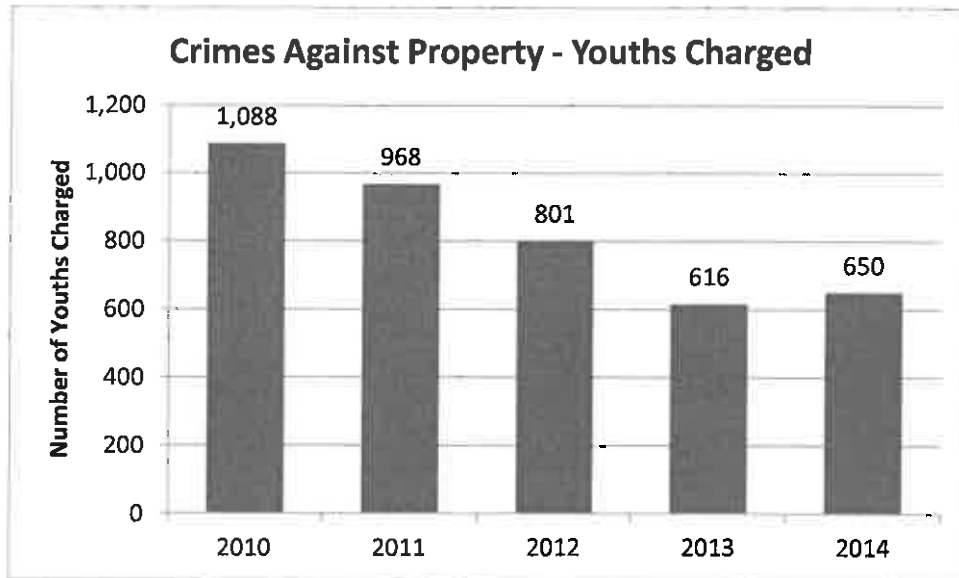


Figure 4

The four most frequently occurring incident types for Crimes Against Property were Theft Under \$5000 – Shop theft, Break and Enter, Mischief, and Theft Under – Other.

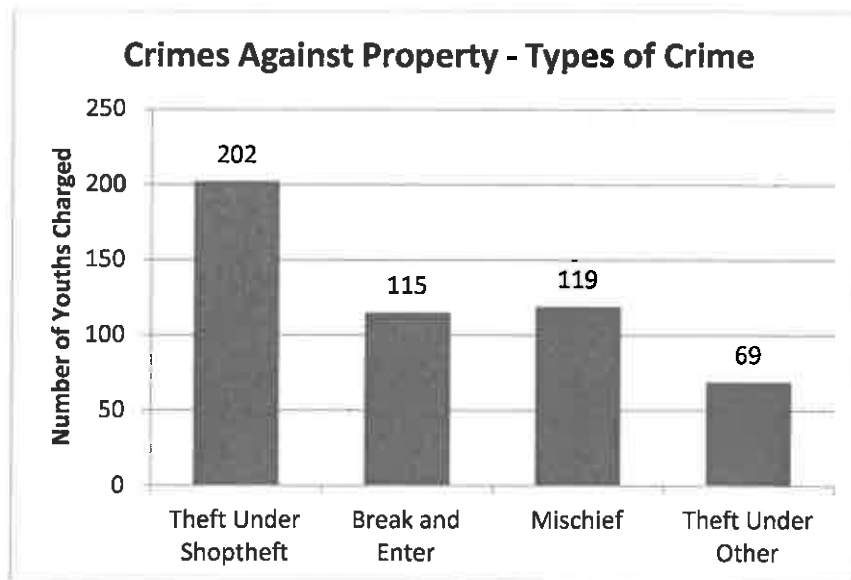


Figure 5

d) Criminal Driving Offences

Criminal Driving Offences included Impaired Driving and Fail/Refuse Breath/Blood Sample. In 2014, 16 Young Persons were charged in relation to one of these occurrences, a one-third (33.3%) increase from 2013.

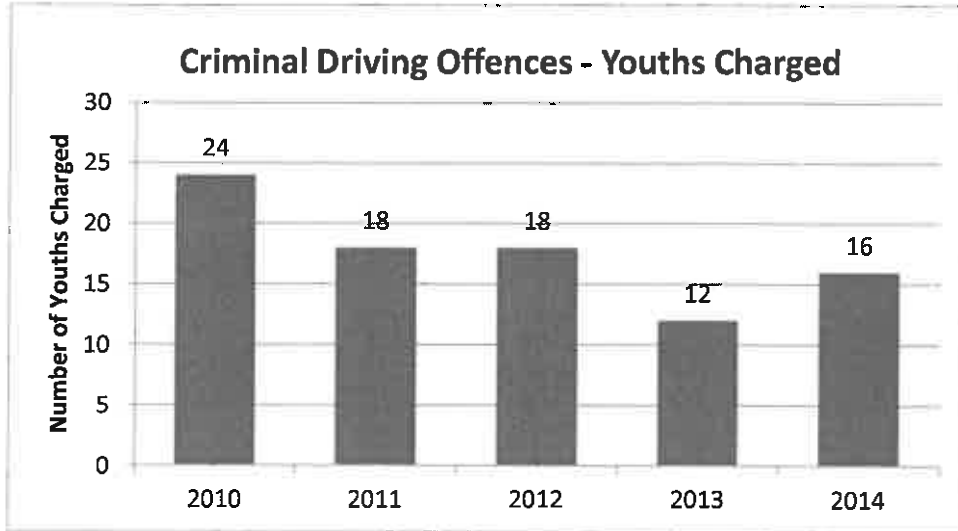


Figure 6

e) Drug Offences

Drug Offences included Possession, Trafficking and other related crimes. In 2014, 230 Young Persons were charged in relation to one of these occurrences. There was no change from 2013 to 2014.

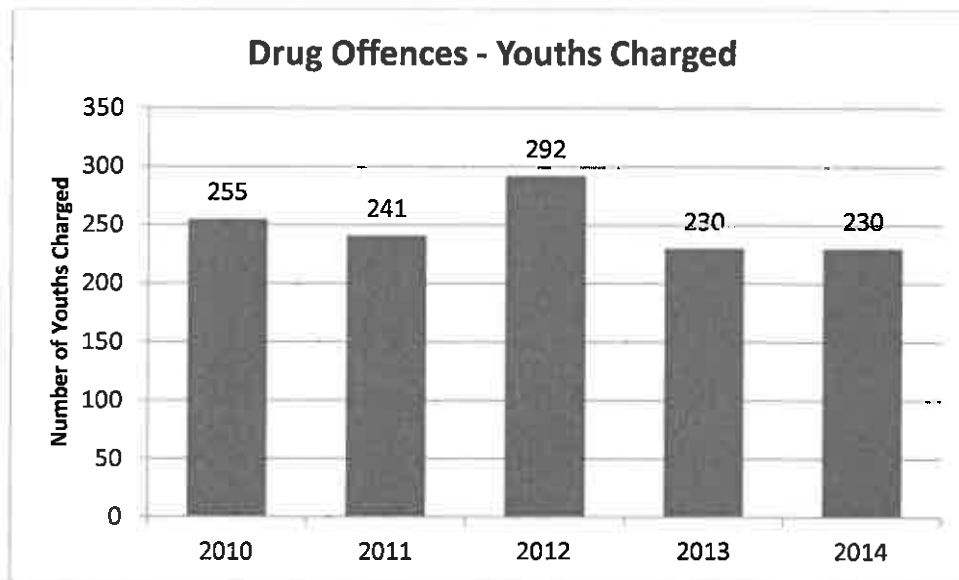


Figure 7

f) Total Young Persons Charged

In 2014, 1,944 Young Persons were charged by the Peel Regional Police. This represented a decrease of 72, or 3.6% since 2013.

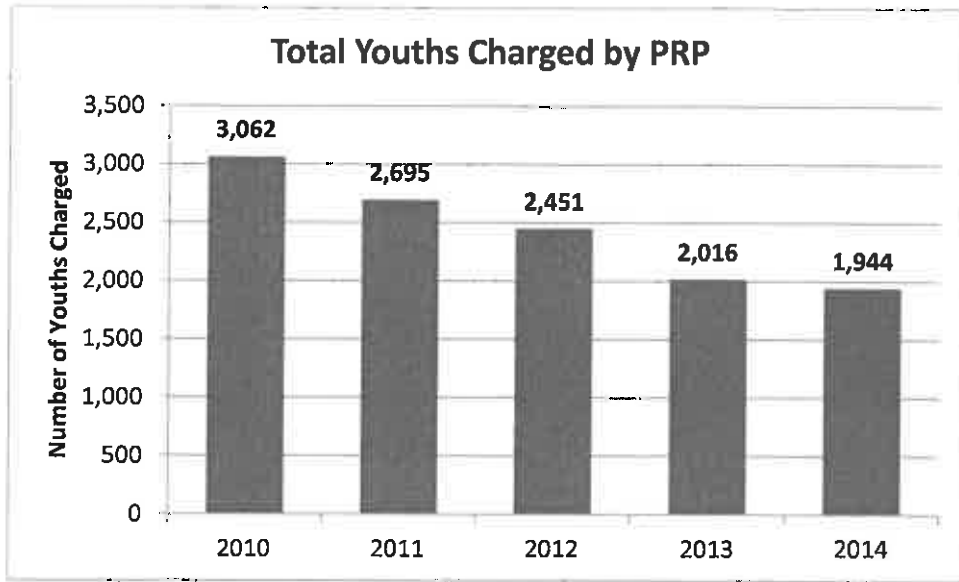


Figure 8

Young Persons represented 13.4% of all persons charged by the Peel Regional Police in 2014. The following chart summarizes this involvement, comparing 2013 to 2014, including the adult population.

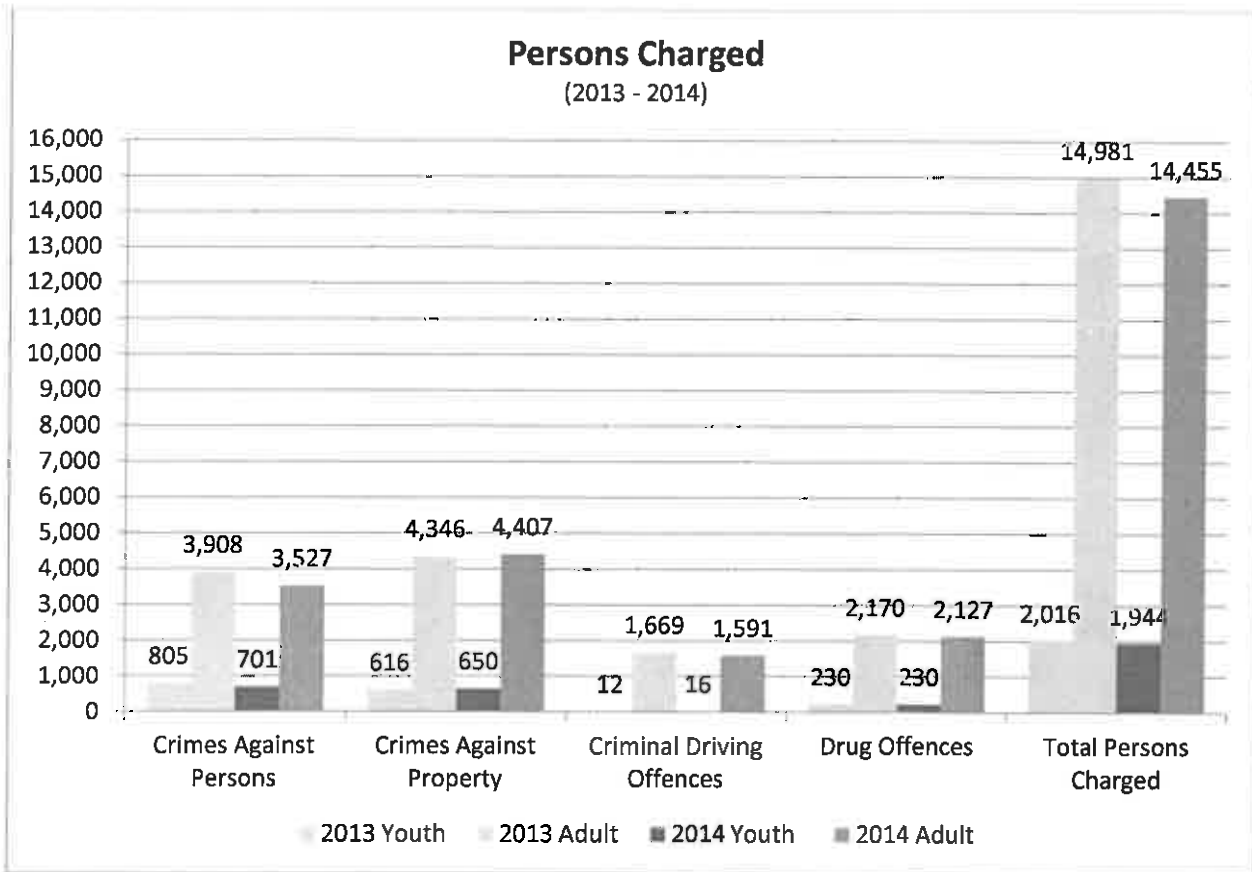


Figure 9

g) Pre-charge Diversion

A significant component of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* is the application of Extrajudicial Measures, where young people are diverted away from the Criminal Justice System, yet the goal is to still hold them accountable for their actions. When a Young Person has committed an offence, Extrajudicial Measures shall be considered before a charge is laid. Where appropriate, the Peel Regional Police refer youth who have committed a criminal offence to the Pre-charge Diversion Program administered by the Associated Youth Services of Peel, where they are counseled and required to perform tasks that help them to realize the significance of breaking the law.

In 2014, 591 cases were referred by Peel Regional Police to Associated Youth Services of Peel. With 416 referrals occurring in 2013, this represented an increase of 175 cases, or 42.1%, between 2013 and 2014. Each month, the Regional Pre-charge Diversion Program Coordinator examined the frequency of referrals compared to the use of Cautions by officers. In 2014, 60.8% of the Cautions that met the criteria of this program were referred by officers. In 2013, 46.4% of these cases were referred, an increase of 14.4%.

The decision to refer a youth to the program is solely that of the investigating officer, and it is one of the four options available under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. In 2014, officers referred more cases to the program than they did in 2013. Closing these minor cases by Caution is appropriate, if the investigating officer deems this to be the correct conclusion. It is worth noting that most of the cases referred to the Pre-charge Diversion Program are minor and non-violent in nature. By referral to the program, youth are simply given a greater consequence to their actions.

When the Pre-charge Diversion Program was established with Associated Youth Services of Peel, referrals were anticipated to be in the range of 300 youth per year. It is worth noting that the program had experienced dramatic growth between 2008 and 2009 of 92.13%, nearly doubling the 445 cases referred in 2008. The high number in 2009 stressed the resources of that agency. In 2012, the Associated Youth Services of Peel received additional funding allowing an increase in resources allocated to the Pre-Charge Diversion Program.

In 2014, youth were charged in 21 matters, where they did not complete the program offered by Associated Youth Services of Peel. Another 19 young people were either unsuitable or were withdrawn from the program because they did not qualify for referral. These cases included incidents where the youth had previously been referred to the program or had a previous criminal charge, had uncooperative parents, or was experiencing mental health issues, among others. Some youth were not charged on the recommendation of the counselor who had been working with them. These young people were dealt with by caution.

Each month, an analysis was conducted on the recidivism of youth from the same time period of the previous year. Of the youth who successfully completed the program in 2013, only 12.1% committed another crime within a one-year period. For those who did not complete the program, the recidivism rate was considerably higher, at 27.5%.

2. Findings

Generally, there was a decrease in youth crime statistics reported between 2013 and 2014. As identified in figure 8, the total criminal charges involving youth for 2014 decreased by 3.6% during this period. The incidence of Crimes Against Persons, including crimes of violence,

decreased by 12.9%. The frequency of charges, in the broad categories described in figure 9, has shown overall that the criminal involvement of young people and adult persons have decreased over that past year. The only category showing an increase for both youth and adult criminality is in Crimes Against Property.

The Pre-charge Diversion program enabled just under 600 young people to have a second chance before experiencing the criminal justice system.

3. Continuing Work with Young People

The Peel Regional Police has an excellent reputation for collaborating with organizations to make our community safer. Our working relationships with the local school boards, local crime prevention associations and the Region of Peel contribute on a daily basis toward helping youth succeed. The Peel Regional Police has had a number of successful programs that served to bring youth and police together.

a) Neighbourhood Policing Units

Divisional Neighbourhood Policing officers have been placed into every secondary school. The relationships these officers have established with students and staff, continue to help maintain a safe environment for young people to learn. Officers have continued to conduct enforcement, while at the same time provided positive role models. Countless hours have been spent by Neighbourhood Policing Unit officers in fund raising, sports and other volunteer school activities.

Officers in the schools investigated 2,463 incidents in 2014. Many of the youth criminal charges have been the work of Neighbourhood Policing Unit officers.

b) Youth Education

The Youth Education Bureau has been responsible for the police-related education of elementary level students. Having the opportunity to provide drug awareness through the *Reduce Abuse in Drugs* (R.A.I.D.) program for 11,700 students, and hosting 10,646 youth at the *Peel Children's Safety Village*, has given Peel Regional Police a chance to positively impact a broad spectrum of our children.

Youth Education officers attended classrooms throughout the year to present topics such as Bullying, Youth and the Law, Stranger Awareness, Policing as a Career, Community Helpers, Drug Abuse Prevention and Youth Gangs. In 2014, 54,073 youths were provided with Internet Safety education and another 58,450 were provided with Bullying Awareness education for a total of 112,523 students.

c) Youth in Policing Initiative

Last year, the Peel Regional Police, in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, employed 10 young people in a mentoring relationship. With the assistance of the Peel District School Board, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and our French language secondary schools, students were selected to work alongside officers and civilians. This mentoring opportunity was well received by these young people. The Youth in Policing Initiative program has been continued for 2015 and has been augmented to ensure a

meaningful employment experience for the students. The students will be required to select a topic of importance to them, research the selected topic and prepare a presentation from a youth's perspective. They will deliver the presentation to their fellow students and to officers from the Youth Education Bureau, ultimately educating the police about their topic from a youth's perspective.

CONCLUSION

The Peel Regional Police 2014 Youth Crime Report has identified important data on the involvement of youth in our policing activities. Although there were some minor fluctuations, the incidence of youth criminal activity has remained fairly constant. It is encouraging to see the incidence of Crimes Against Persons where youths were charged has decreased by 3.6%. The Peel Regional Police has continued to have programs and partnerships that shall adhere to Ontario's Youth Action Plan, and contribute to a safer community for our youth.

Approved for Submission:



Brian Adams, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Services

For further information regarding this report, please contact Superintendent M. Rodrigues at extension 3600 or via e-mail at manuel.rodrigues@peelpolice.ca

Authored By: Detective Michael Szabo #1975, Youth Crime Coordinator