

THE Centre News

FALL 2008



Child Witness Centre

Serving Waterloo Region, Wellington County and Brant County

Child Victims in Brantford to Receive Additional Support

We are very pleased to announce that, effective in June 2008, the Child Witness Centre began extending services to child victims in the Brantford court district. This follows our expansion of services to Wellington County in 2006 and fits with the efforts of the provincial government, working with community organizations like ours, to broaden the availability of specialized child witness services across the province. Along with child victims from Waterloo Region, this will result in more than 450 children being referred by police and the crown attorney's office to the Child Witness Centre each year.

"Children who are witnesses in court have special needs that are different from those of adults who have to testify. Child victims/witnesses are often involuntary participants in a system that is adversarial, alien and frightening to them. The goal of the Child Witness Centre," says Executive Director Jack Reynolds, "is to reduce the risk of the court process re-traumatizing children who have already been victimized; to help protect their sense of self worth and get them through the process with their confidence intact. We've come a long way since the agency was originally founded in 1981 and the child witness program was established in 1991, and we're pleased to now extend these vital services to children in the Brantford and Ohsweken areas."

This change builds on the victim/witness services provided throughout Brant County by the Victim/Witness

Assistance Program (VWAP) of the Ministry of the Attorney General. VWAP will continue to offer services to adults age 18 and over in the Brantford area who are victims and/or witnesses of crime, and to both adult and child victims and witnesses in the Simcoe and Cayuga court districts. The Child Witness Centre will offer its services in the Brantford area to children and youth under age 18. In cases where both the adult caregiver and the child are victims and/or witnesses of crime, the two services will collaborate to provide a seamless support system.

The Child Witness Centre is now working collaboratively with VWAP, Victim Services, Brantford Police Services, Ontario Provincial Police headquartered in Paris, Six Nations Police in Ohsweken, the Crown Attorney's office, Family and Children's Services and others who support victims in the Brantford area, to ensure that they receive the help needed while involved in the court process.

"We're very pleased that the Child Witness Centre is expanding its services to Brant County," said Rosemary Smith, Manager of the Brant County Victim/Witness Assistance Program of the Ontario Victim Services Secretariat of the Ministry of the Attorney General. "The Child Witness Centre program provides specialized services that directly benefit victimized children and we look forward to working with them in our community."

Child Witness Centre services for Brantford will be provided at 80 Wellington Street, on the first floor of the Land Registry Office.

Mark your calendars

The 11th Annual Child Witness Centre Pancake Luncheon is set for Tuesday February 24th, 2009 from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm. Once again the event will be held at the Delta Kitchener but in a new room this year - on the main floor in the Trillium Room and surrounding the pool area. At a cost of \$10 per person, you can enjoy a delicious buffet lunch of pancakes, bacon, sausage, ham, sliced fruits and coffee/tea/juice.

No Gala in 2009

Our annual **Star Light Gala** has been a tremendous success since its inception in 2005. The event has brought together a growing number of people each year for a very enjoyable evening, at the same time enabling these very caring individuals to help financially in sustaining the vital services provided to child victims. Perhaps it's "counter intuitive" but because it is something we hope to continue doing longer term, we think there is merit in taking a year off periodically, so that people don't tire of the event, and to utilize our resources for other events. All that to say there won't be a Gala in 2009!!



Gladys Grant

Snapshot of a Volunteer

Gladys Grant started volunteering back in 2004 when her grand daughter was employed with the Child Witness Centre. Every week, Gladys assists in a variety of administrative duties. We are tremendously grateful and indebted to Gladys for her countless hours.

On top of volunteering at the Child Witness Centre, Gladys also volunteers with St. George's of Forest Hill Church in the Altar Guild and Garden Guild, she's on the volunteer board of directors with her condo corporation, and is treasurer of the Downtown Community Centre Tuck Shop. Her

reason for doing all this is simple – she's making a difference.

Volunteers are a very important part of the agency. For further information on volunteer opportunities, visit our website.

Do You Need a Speaker?

Do you need a speaker for a presentation at your work place, service club or church? We would be happy to come and do a presentation. Here is what we offer:



Jo-Anne Hughes,
CHILD WITNESS
PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR

In 1991 Jo-Anne shared in leading the initiative to expand the agency's services to include a Child Witness Program. She has extensive experience working in the justice system and with traumatized children and families. Jo-Anne has been with the agency since its beginning in 1983 and was recognized by the Attorney General in 2007 with the first ever Victim Services Award of Distinction for outstanding service to victims of crime in the province of Ontario.



Laura Cook,
CHILD WITNESS
PROGRAM CASEWORKER

Laura is a University of Waterloo graduate (Sociology and Legal Studies). She joined the Child Witness Centre in 2000 and provides child victims and witnesses with support and court preparation.



Katrina Ratz,
CHILD WITNESS
PROGRAM CASEWORKER

Katrina holds an Early Childhood Education degree from Conestoga College, will complete her BA at the University of Waterloo in 2009, served as a volunteer with the agency, and became a staff member in 2005. She provides child victims and witnesses with support and court preparation.



Linda Mark,
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
CO-ORDINATOR

A University of Toronto graduate and formerly with the Hospital for Sick Children, Linda joined the agency in 2003. She leads the effort to build financial support for, and community awareness of, the Child Witness Centre.



Jack Reynolds,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

After a career in senior management with Mutual Life/Clarica, Jack joined the Child Witness Centre in 2002. He is accountable to the Board of Directors for leading the work of the agency.

Presentation Options

Children Testifying in Court

Most people haven't had to think about the reality of a child testifying in court. This presentation provides insight on how charges come to be laid; what the resulting court experience looks like through the eyes of a child; how the police, judges and lawyers carry out their role with children involved; the duration and flow of a court case; the impact the court experience has on children; and the current state of Canada's laws impacting the treatment of children in court.

The Child Witness Centre

Waterloo Regional Police and the Crown Attorney's office cite the Child Witness Centre as an agency which plays a unique and valuable role. How and when did the agency get started? What services does it provide and how has that changed over the years? How do the services benefit children and families? What number of children go to court each year as victims and witnesses, what age, and what circumstances bring them there? How does one prepare for and find career opportunities in child witness support work?

Governance Challenges in the Not-For-Profit Sector

Having worked directly with Boards in the corporate and not-for-profit sector, Jack shares his personal experience on issues that both sectors face—e.g. the role and authority of the Board and Board Committees; risk management and outcome measurement; director recruitment and training strategies; effective board-staff relations; strategy and policy development; evaluating Board performance, and effective control, monitoring and oversight of operations by the Board.

Cowan Golfers Win Again!!!

In our spring newsletter we told you about the team of golfers from Cowan Insurance Brokers who won a 2007 regional Chubb Insurance charity golf tournament, then competed in Las Vegas for a top prize of \$50,000 at the Chubb North American Championship. The Cowan team for the past several years has designated the Child Witness Centre as their charity!! Proceeds to the agency totaled \$10,000 in 2007.

Well...they've done it again!! The Cowan Insurance Broker foursome of Tom Burns, Bob Herron, Brian Boileau and Craig Beaton again won the regional Chubb Charity Challenge in Toronto on July 17, resulting in a \$2,500 donation from Chubb Insurance. They then competed with 40 U.S. teams and 2 other Canadian teams in the North American final held in Colorado on September 22-23 for a top prize of \$50,000.

We are thrilled to announce that the Cowan foursome's winnings in Colorado for the Child Witness Centre totaled \$13,000. WHAT AN ACCOMPLISHMENT!!!

We are tremendously grateful to Cowan Insurance Brokers and Chubb Insurance for their significant support over the years. Hats off to Chubb and Cowan—they set a high standard in terms of corporations giving back to the community, helping those in need, and building stronger communities!! The Chubb Charity Challenge began in 2000 and has since raised approximately \$6,000,000 for charities in Canada and the U.S.

Chubb is a leading provider of insurance and risk management services for businesses, industry groups, trade associations, not-for-profit organizations and other institutions worldwide. They provide a broad range of standard and specialty property and liability cover-



THE WINNING FOURSOME: Tom Burns, Bob Herron, Brian Boileau and Craig Beaton.



Ellen More, CEO, Chubb Canada

to individuals, businesses and organizations.

Heartfelt thanks to: Bob, Tom, Brian and Craig, and Chubb Canada CEO Ellen Moore for their efforts and for caring about child victims.

ages as well as specialized policies developed to meet the particular needs of individual industries.

Based in Ontario and insuring Canadians since 1927, Cowan

Insurance Brokers is a member of the Cowan family of companies. Through their branch network and more than 150 employees, Cowan provides insurance and risk management solutions across Canada

Caseworker's Notebook

Financial Assistance for Victims of Violent Crime in Ontario

Becoming a victim of crime

can happen to any of us, regardless of age or gender, or social, economic, religious, geographic and ethnic status. It is a frightening and unsettling experience for many Canadians...unpredictable, debilitating, demoralizing, and usually unpreventable and unexpected. Its effects are often long-term and difficult to overcome. Violent crime can have significant emotional, financial and physical repercussions for victims, and for their families.

The Ministry of the Attorney General for Ontario provides financial assistance to victims through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board (CICB) which hears applications for financial assistance for expenses and losses, as well as pain and suffering, relating to criminal injuries. The

CICB is an independent adjudicative tribunal composed of a full-time chair and vice-chair, two part-time chairs, and 28 part-time adjudicators (as at May 2008). It receives 4,000 applications each year, about half of which proceed to a hearing.

Ontario began providing financial assistance for victims of violent crime in 1967, following the model of New Zealand and the United Kingdom. All provinces have since followed suit except Newfoundland.

Originally funded on a cost-shared basis by federal and provincial governments, victim services are now viewed primarily as a provincial responsibility. Federal funding ended in 1992 when the feds introduced a victim surcharge on Criminal Code fines, to be applied to provincial victim services. That money goes into a Victim's Justice

Fund, from which the Child Witness Centre began to receive partial funding in 2006.

In 2007, the Ombudsman of Ontario released a report stating, "The CICB has become so dysfunctional that it often causes more frustration and hurt to crime victims than it relieves. Victims are required to fill out an 'avalanche of forms', which are often returned for minor corrections and /or sit for months waiting consideration. Victims attempting to find out information about their applications are often met with suspicion and lack of compassion and sensitivity. CICB has a backlog of 8,000 applications and some victims face a two-year wait before receiving a decision. There is a lack of consistent and sufficient funding by successive Ontario governments."

As a result of the Ombudsman's report, the Ministry of the Attorney General:

- Injected additional funds into the CICB and appointed 14 new adjudicators.
- Established a pilot program called Victim Quick Response Program (VQRP) which provides up to \$1,000 for certain immediate emergency expenses such as home repairs or emergency accommodation; up to \$5,000 for funeral expenses; and up to \$1,000 for short-term counselling. Victims of violent crime apply for VQRP financial assistance through local community agencies known as VCARS agencies, which in turn receive a final decision on the application from the Ontario Victim Services

Secretariat in Toronto, generally within three days.

- Commissioned the Honourable Roy McMurtry (formerly a trial lawyer, Attorney General, Solicitor General, and Chief Justice of Ontario) to make recommendations on victim services.

McMurtry's report was released in August 2008. He concluded that financial assistance remains a very important component in the spectrum of Ontario's victim services. He says "While financial assistance can never erase the emotional or physical consequences of violent crime, it can be of tremendous aid to victims recovering from the impact of such crime." Expenses victims face range from paying for counselling or support of a child born as a result of rape, to

installing security devices, replacing broken locks and windows, paying for temporary accommodation, buying new clothing, etc.

The amount of financial assistance paid varies between provinces, ranging from \$2,000 in Nova Scotia for counseling services, to Quebec's program at the other end of the spectrum, which has no maximum limits on what may be paid to crime victims. In Ontario, the CICB may make a lump sum award up to a maximum of \$25,000 or a monthly award of up to \$1,000 to a maximum of \$365,000. The average CICB payment between 2003 and 2006 was about \$8,400. Pain and suffering accounts for about 80% of the total payments issued.

McMurtry commented that the term 'compensation' in this context is a misnomer, since money can never compensate a victim for the trauma inflicted by violent crime, and such awards are not akin to damages in a civil action. McMurtry wants the term 'financial assistance' to be used with respect to criminal injuries financial programs.

The report points out that crime victims may also experience 'secondary victimization' following the crime. Notwithstanding police efforts to ensure that victims are treated with respect and compassion, victims sometimes face insensitive treatment during the investigation, and in the months or years during which the victim has to navigate through criminal processes such as the pre-

liminary hearing, the trial, and perhaps a parole hearing (...which is why the Child Witness Centre exists, to provide the information and support needed by child victims throughout the court process to avoid their retraumatization.)

McMurtry identified five specific needs which victims of violent crime face, independent of safety concerns and the need for information and support relating to the prosecution process:

- Financial assistance
- Counselling
- Acknowledgement of victimization
- An opportunity to tell what happened to an official decision-maker
- Individual assistance to navigate through the network of victim services and programs

In response to these needs of victims, and concerns with the existing system, McMurtry recommended that the government should:

- Continue providing financial assistance to victims of violent crime.

- Make the Victim Quick Response Program a permanent program.
- Reconstitute the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board as the Criminal Injuries Financial Assistance Board.
- Appoint an independent

Victim Advocate, mandated to speak out on behalf of victims of violent crime, reporting directly to the Legislature. This would help to address the concern that victims of crime can become forgotten individuals in a criminal justice system which focuses on the trial and the rights of the accused.

- Provide victims of violent crime with individualized assistance to access and complete applications for appropriate victim services and programs.

- Establish a single application form and a single administrative body for both financial assistance programs.

- Develop and implement a single province-wide protocol requiring police to notify victims of, and provide information about, the appropriate

local victim services and programs on a timely basis.

- Establish performance measures for both financial assistance programs and regularly evaluate the programs against these measures.
- Conduct a review at least

every four years of the needs of crime victims, how to best address these needs, and the availability and the use of victim services.

- Publish an annual report that is easily accessible by the public which:
 - reports on the victim services and programs that the Ministry either funds or delivers,

- identifies the performance measures and evaluation of the Ministry's financial assistance programs and
- summarizes the revenues and expenditures from the Victims' Justice Fund.

The Government of Ontario has indicated it will use the report's direction to build on improvements made to victim services since the Ombudsman's report in 2007, including:

- Investing nearly \$115 million in CICB to benefit approximately 9,000 victims of crime and their families, including support for more adjudicators and staff to speed up the hearing process.

- Reducing the CICB caseload by hearing 40 per cent more cases than before, which means approximately 1,000 more victims had their cases processed this year compared with last year.

- Providing direct assistance through the new Victim Quick Response Program, which covers emergency expenses in the immediate aftermath of violent crime.
- Completing 90 per cent of the recommendations made in the Ombudsman report on the CICB

The government has not placed the suggestion for an independent advocate as one of its priorities.

The entire report can be read at the Ministry of Attorney General's web site Ontario.ca/attorneygeneral-news.

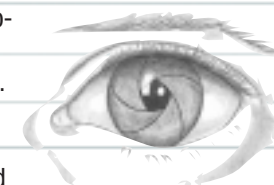
A Special Thanks to David McCammon

We are extremely grateful to professional photographer David McCammon for his recent donation of time, expertise and service, and his long-time support of the Child Witness Centre. David has been busy shooting various pictures for us, including board members, volunteers, child photographs in the agency and the courthouse and staff photos, some of which are displayed in this newsletter.

David is a member of the Professional Photographers of Canada — Ontario, a

group of accomplished photographers dedicated to the betterment of their medium. He has achieved the Licentiate Professional Photographer of Ontario and has won numerous awards within PPOC. Over the last four years, David has photographed pro bono for The KW United Way.

David creates unique portraits and photographs for commercial and editorial appli-

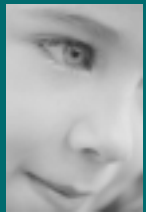


cations, and for families. His passion, commitment and excellence shows in his work. To view some of his exceptional work, visit his website at:

www.davidmcphoto.com

Without the help of community-minded individuals such as David, we would not be able to assist the more than 400 children referred to us each year. Thank you David, as always, for your marvelous support!!!

Thank you



Child Witness Centre

Every donation helps us provide child victims and witnesses with the support they need through the difficult challenge of testifying in court.

Child Witness Centre

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*On average it costs \$350 per child to provide court support services

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 \$50 \$350
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Please direct my donation to the Child Witness Centre Endowment Fund

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Donations can also be accepted online at www.childwitness.com/help.html

Mail Code: FALL2008



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