

Federation of Calgary Communities – Building Safe Communities

Through the Chair: my name is Stephanie Sokolowski, Building Safe Communities coordinator at the Federation of Calgary Communities. With me today is Sergeant. Brett Hodel, from the Crime Prevention Unit at the Calgary Police Service, who is a community partner of ours.

The Federation provides a number of programs, services and educational opportunities to support community associations working to improve neighbourhood life in Calgary. As you may know, Building Safe Communities (or BSC) was launched in January 2012 as a pilot project using a community development approach to working with community associations and partners to provide Calgarians with the tools and resources to create and maintain safe and caring communities. The BSC project facilitates and supports safe neighbourhoods through a variety of initiatives focusing on preventing and reducing crime as well as increasing community cohesion. We have had approximately two thirds of the 150 community associations in Calgary interested in the BSC engagement process since its inception. We've also received hundreds of inquiries around crime and safety concerns from 2014 which indicates a need for our support. Our Virtual Resource Centre online where our resources and tip sheets are located has had over 3,500 hits last year. Calgarians are always in search of valuable information for their communities.

The Building Safe Communities program has evolved each year in order to maximize impact and best support communities. We are a conduit for citizen action and inspire residents and communities to embrace each other and work together. Our community based approach offers support in doing so. We help to build pride in community and increase neighbourliness among residents. Our newly enhanced program seeks to increase capacity within communities and the general public by engaging residents in programs and activities that address crime and safety issues and maintain community standards. Our communities and their residents need this program so we ask for your continued support.

Building Safe Communities (BSC) works proactively to circumvent crime before it occurs or before it takes hold in the community. BSC has three main areas of focus of which we have adapted for 2015 to boost community impact:

1. Learning Tools – creation, distribution and promotion of resources

The Virtual Resource Centre on crime prevention and safety provides tools and resources to individuals and community groups, including crime prevention tip sheets, safety information, community based crime prevention resources, and more. Over 100 resources are available on our website, with more to come. 2014 brought a new partnership with CIWA which enabled BSC to translate popular resources into various languages spoken in Calgary. 2015 will bring a continued partnership and new resources to offer an inclusive approach to safety, crime prevention and engagement.

We have enhanced our approach to promotion and distribution of our resources by increasing opportunities to interact face-to-face with the public and communities. We are developing presentations and collaborations to capitalize on work already done by BSC, as well as promotion for new resources and new endeavors. We are continuing the momentum around community based approaches to crime prevention and safety.

2. Community Association Engagement

As you may know, the BSC engagement process with communities has typically consisted of a facilitated 3-4 meeting process to identify strategies and initiatives focused on preventing and reducing crime as well as creating safe communities. From this process comes a unique plan of action which residents will carry out as citizen led initiatives. In order to serve more Calgarians and diversify services to increase impact among communities, we are adding a new mini BSC process for communities with a lower capacity, or lower volunteer base. Our goal is to provide support to as many community groups as possible.

Additionally, we will increase our presence in the community by developing and offering workshops and presentations around the value of knowing your neighbours, engaging volunteers and what community based crime prevention can look like.

3. Public Engagement and Community Partnerships

Building Safe Communities has developed many partnerships and collaborations since its inception in 2012. We realize the importance of these relationships and believe that community partners have valuable offerings we can leverage, and vice versa, to reach the best outcome possible for communities and their residents. Time spent nurturing and cultivating these relationships is key to productivity, mutually beneficial partnerships and services for Calgarians. New partnerships and endeavors will be explored in 2015 including a potential website expansion.

We are also enhancing the breadth of topics and the frequency of citizen engaging workshops for our Partners in Crime Prevention workshop series that is in partnership with the Calgary Police and other community partners. I would now like to pass the microphone over to Sgt. Brett Hodel to share with you about our partnership.

Thank you.

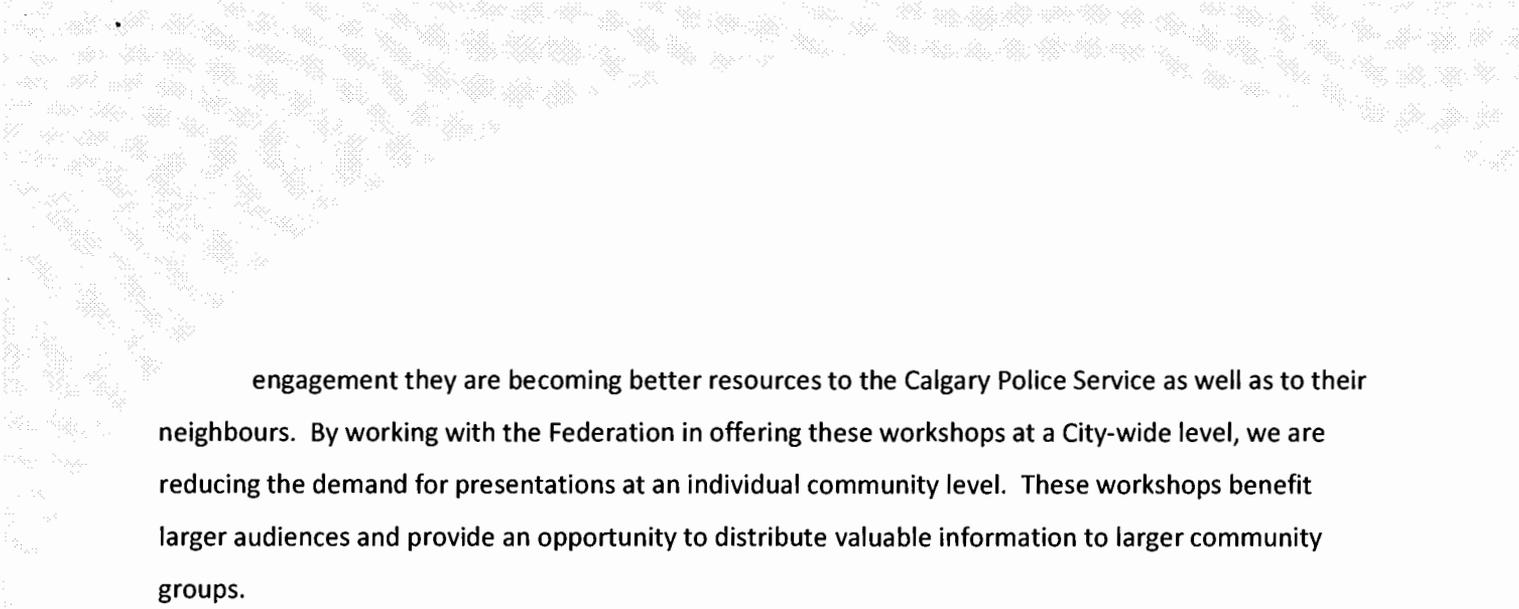
Through the chair: Good afternoon. I am Sgt. Brett Hodel with the Crime Prevention Unit. I would like to speak to our partnership with the Federation of Calgary Communities, Building Safe Communities program.

Our relationship with the Federation and BSC program began in 2012 with the inception of the My Neighbour Card. We were approached by the Federation with the idea to work jointly on a safety resource that connected residents with one another and encouraged them to report any suspicious activity or crime. This resource has been extremely popular with Calgarians, and over 25,000 have been distributed through both the Federation and our CPS district offices via the Community Resource Officers to date.

Due to the success of the My Neighbour Cards, our unit was happy to partner together on another endeavor proposed by BSC- the Partners in Crime Prevention Workshop series. Together, our unit and BSC determined topics geared towards helping community association volunteers and the general public, learn valuable information about crime prevention and safety issues in Calgary. Our first workshop was launched in February of 2014 on the topic of Being a Good Witness and the Hub Messaging System. On a -30 degree evening in Dover, over 40 Calgarians from all over the city came out to this workshop.

Since then, we have offered or will be offering workshops on a variety of topics including Cybercrime, Graffiti Vandalism, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and Organized Retail Crime to name a few. The workshop series includes presenters from other community partners and City Departments such as the Calgary Fire Department, Animal and Bylaw Services, Calgary Transit as well as the Calgary Police Service Guns and Gangs Unit. Through the 8 Partners in Crime Prevention workshops to date, we have engaged over 300 Calgarians that would otherwise not have received valuable information on crime and safety topics. 2015, 2016 and beyond will bring new and exciting workshop topics in response to need and interests identified by Calgary communities.

Communities and their residents are always seeking information about topics that can affect them. These workshops increase the likelihood that residents will report crime because they are made aware of its impact and are more mindful of how to reduce or prevent crime and increase safety. Through this



engagement they are becoming better resources to the Calgary Police Service as well as to their neighbours. By working with the Federation in offering these workshops at a City-wide level, we are reducing the demand for presentations at an individual community level. These workshops benefit larger audiences and provide an opportunity to distribute valuable information to larger community groups.

The Calgary Police Service and the Federation of Calgary Communities recognize the safety and well-being of communities is a collective enterprise and that engaging Calgarians in both the Calgary Police Service and within their respective communities is the best way to ensure vibrant and safe neighbourhoods. The partnership is mutually beneficial to communities and the Calgary Police Service by providing resources and crime prevention education city-wide. The Calgary Police Service simply cannot reach and teach everyone, and with a shared mutual goal of preserving quality of life to Calgarians, we acknowledge that the combined effort is essential to help communities achieve vital and safe neighbourhoods while improving the ability of the Calgary Police Service to better serve the community at large.

I look forward to our continued partnership and new future endeavors with the Federation of Calgary Communities.