

# Chief's Verbal Report

Dec. 18, 2023

Good evening Members of the Board and thank you. The holiday season is near, so I want to start my verbal report on a positive note.

This past Friday, one of our service's favourite events of the year took place - the CopShop! This great initiative is led by our members and Carlingwood Shopping Centre. It aims to make the holidays brighter for children who might not otherwise receive gifts. On this special day, 25 kids were paired with police officers, embarking on a memorable shopping spree armed with \$200 gift cards. The children were picked up in police cruisers and enjoyed a pizza lunch before choosing presents. I saw some pictures of the event.....Both our members and the kids had smiles on their faces.

Speaking of having a positive impact on our community – Our Service, along with our partners Shoppers Drug Mart and Citron Hygiene, once again collected personal hygiene products for women. Some women in the community can't afford these products, especially with the increased costs this year. The *Purse Project* started in 2016 and has donated over 8000 purses filled with necessities to women in local shelters. All collected items were delivered to local shelters, such as Youville centre, St. Joes Women Centre, Emily Murphy Non-Profit Housing Corporation and La Maison d'amitié.

As the holidays roll in, we have again partnered with MADD Canada to conduct our RIDE stops throughout the city. The persistent problem of impaired driving remains a concern in our community. Just last week from Thursday night to Monday morning there were 27 drivers charged with impaired driving related offences. This year we have stopped and charged 845 impaired drivers. We urge everyone to make the right choices and don't drive impaired.

This month, we welcomed a dynamic and diverse new class of 29 recruits. The Command Team and I met with these new team members before their entrance into the Ontario Police College. It was evident that this group represents a vast array of skills and backgrounds. Among these recruits are individuals with the ability to communicate fluently in multiple languages some of which include: Creole, Punjabi, Amharic, Dari, Korean and German. The diversity of backgrounds and experience in this class enhances the capabilities of our police service, enabling us to better serve and connect with our residents. We wish them luck as they go to OPC in the new year.

On Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, members of the Respect, Values, and Inclusion Directorate participated in a symposium at the National Art Gallery to recognize the collective work that has been done in Ottawa to support the International Decade for People of African Descent that was proclaimed by the United Nations. The theme of the International Decade is "People of African descent: recognition, justice and development". The event was organized by June Girvan of the Ubuntu Collective Ottawa in partnership with Black History Ottawa and Black Scene Ottawa. The Police Service was recognized as one of several local signatories that has taken action to support the proclamation. RVI Supt. Dave Zackrias and EDI Director Paola Jani were presented with recognition certificates for the Ottawa Police Service, Ottawa Police Association, and the Ottawa Police Services Board.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, the Ottawa Police Service collaborated with several partners to host our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Human Rights Learning Forum that had the timely theme "A Journey of Healing and Restoration." A diverse group of people from the community joined us in networking that featured Ottawa's Guiding Council for Mental Health and Addictions, the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution, Forgiving ForRestoring Canada, and Dr. Hicks who provided the presentation from her international peacebuilding work focused on dignity as a basic birthright. During these challenging times, we learned the importance of building peace within, between, and among – in order to build safer and stronger communities together.

We have seen a significant rise in shoplifting. Retail crime and violence associated with it are becoming a bigger issue for businesses in Ottawa. The year-to-date results have risen by 50% resulting in over 10,000 offences. Our Service is working with businesses to harden their properties through cameras, security guards and store design. In a special effort, local retailers, Ottawa Police and Crown representatives launched "Project Scrooge" this month to proactively target high-occurrence locations and profile offenders who are shoplifting everyday. This concentrated effort helped us to identify, apprehend and prosecute violent and repeat retail criminals who negatively impact our communities safety. Most subjects arrested, if qualified were released and referred into the Diversion Program. This program is used to rehabilitate and prevent recurrences.

In November, the Service formalized the creation of a centralized Adult Pre-Charge Diversion (APCD) unit following a one-year pilot. The priorities of the Unit are to foster strong social agency partnerships and provide processes for people who commit a minor offence to be diverted away from the criminal justice system so they may benefit from alternatives to traditional police intervention.

As part of this response, the OPS plays a significant role. If an individual meets the criteria for being diverted rather than criminally charged, they are connected with the

Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa who then determine sanctions, or if social or public health services can be provided. Participating service providers can then work together to provide supports and services for diverse community members – including Inuit, Indigenous and Metis – under Restorative Justice Programs that reflect their culture and perspectives.

This initiative is part of OPS' ongoing commitment to align with the City of Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan while helping to reduce or eliminate minor criminal activities in our community and, instead, offer opportunities to address root cause issues. I'm happy to report that 208 people have been referred for diversion programming since October of 2022.

Before I get to a commendation letter, I want to take a moment to thank former Chair, Dr. Gail Beck for her short but very impactful time as the Chair of the Police Service Board. Many people pass judgements on the Ottawa Police Service without properly informing themselves on the reality of our work. Dr. Beck engaged in a program of meeting our members and understanding the true complexities and challenges of our work. With that education, she led the Board and the Executive team through the Strategic Planning process that resulted in a very solid plan for the future. It is a legacy that she will leave with us to ensure the OPS delivers for our communities. Thank you Dr. Beck for your commitment to the OPS and the City of Ottawa.

This from our complainant and victim, she writes, "I have recently had the pleasure of interacting with Detective Chris Evraire and I wanted to share my experience with you. I am very active on social media and share thoughts on a myriad of issues. During this time, I amassed a decent sized following on Twitter (X). However, with that following comes a lot of negative activity as well. In October of this year, I was made aware of disturbing and threatening comments on my social media.

I immediately reported these comments, as I feared for my family's safety. The first time I spoke with Detective Evraire, he was empathetic, kind, and above all, did not "victim blame". He took my report seriously and spoke with me at length about moving the investigation forward.

Since that initial conversation, Detective Evraire has checked in on me several times and keeps me up to date on the investigation. It is no secret that I have been publicly critical of the Ottawa Police Service in recent years. I feel very strongly about the responsibility that police officers have within our society, and the need to ensure that they are above reproach.

It is fair to say that, as a result of events over the past few years, I had lost faith and trust in the Ottawa Police Service. Detective Evraire changed that. His engagement with me and his dedicated and tireless investigation of threats against my family have given me confidence that there are amazing officers working within the Ottawa Police Service.

Detective Evraire has single-handedly helped to begin restoring my confidence in the Ottawa Police Service.”

Joyeuses Fêtes à chacun d'entre vous.

J'ai apprécié le soutien et le leadership que vous avez offerts comme membres de la Commission. J'espère que vous aurez l'occasion de profiter du temps passé en famille et avec vos proches.

Je tiens aussi à remercier tous les membres de nos services d'urgence partenaires qui vont travailler tout au long des Fêtes à garder notre collectivité en sûreté.

On behalf of the Ottawa Police Service, I wish every one of you a happy holiday.