

Chief's Verbal for February 26, 2018

SIU Investigation

I know that Board members are aware of the SIU investigation currently underway in Westboro. As the SIU announced last night, our officers responded to a call for service at a grocery store for a man with a weapon. During the response an officer involved shooting occurred. One man is deceased. No OPS members were injured.

This is a difficult incident for everyone involved. No one wants to see a friend or loved one hurt and no member of our police service wants to be involved in this type of situation. We expect this to take time. It's important we allow this process to take place.

While this SIU investigation is underway, a separate investigation on the incidents that occurred inside the grocery store is being conducted by Ottawa Police. Supports have been put in place for all members involved in this incident both through the chain of command, the Ottawa Police Association and peer support. I will provide you with updates as I am able.

Arrest in bank robbery

In late January, a man walked into an east end bank with a note indicating he had a gun. That robbery set off a police response that I want to highlight as an example of how we work as a team. As soon as Robbery Unit detectives were notified they sent out an alert to Frontline Officers. A team of officers including Sergeant Walter Duhme, Constables Cornelius Posine, Patrick Alden, Andrew Thompson and Gurprit Dhaliwal converged on the area. With the assistance of Robbery Detective Cst. Jim Kusiewicz they located the suspect and arrested him. They were supported by our CommCentre and the OPSOC. The money was recovered and returned to the bank. It was exceptional teamwork and I want to thank all those involved.

Gun Violence Suppression

I also want to update you on the gun violence suppression strategy our Service is engaged in. This issue continues to be a service wide priority. Since the start of the year we have seized 10 crime guns. Compliance checks and proactive police visits to problem areas and addresses continue.

Our targeted response to the increase in shootings we saw at the start of the year remains focused on the individuals responsible. Several investigations remain underway and we will continue to send a clear message that this kind of activity isn't acceptable to our community. At the same time, we are continuing our partnership with community groups and agencies on the implementation of the Ottawa Street Violence and Gang Strategy.

Enforcement alone is not the answer. We must continue to work with the community to help identify those committing violence and to dissuade those who may be attracted to a lifestyle of gangs and criminality

Opioids

We continue to focus on the increase of opioids and drug overdoses in our community. 2017 saw approximately 30 opioid overdoses per month, the largest number of opioid overdose-related emergency department visits to date. At the end of January we also saw an increase in serious overdoses at the two local supervised injection sites in Ottawa. This is a serious public health issue that we expect will continue. Our Drug Unit continues to find opioids and Fentanyl as it conducts investigations and seizes drugs.

We have also made Naloxone available to all trained Frontline officers. The OPS issued kits have already been used three times by OPS members. Additionally, our school resource officers continue to partner with public health, all four school boards, Rideauwood Addiction & Family Services and Maison Fraternité to ensure that students and parent groups have consistent and accurate information regarding substance use prevention, especially opioids and naloxone in schools. We are also watching for the predatory drug trafficking occurring outside supervised injection sites that we saw late last year. This type of activity garners complaints from residents, businesses and the operators of these facilities and we are aware of the issue.

We continue to maintain strong relationships with the operators of these sites. We all share in the goals of helping the most vulnerable in our community and keeping people safe.

YAC invited to present at the United Nations

I next want to mention a recent achievement by the members from our Youth Advisory Committee. YAC co-chairs Sabrina Teklab and Briana Fayad were invited to present at the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York City in January. This global forum was an opportunity to highlight the collaborative work being done with our YAC team, and while there, they were invited to be part of the World Urban Youth Councils Network. The highlights of the presentation included an outline of how YAC is structured and governed, how youth-led initiatives are implemented, and the breakdown of the four key pillars to youth and community safety: Protection, Prevention, Partnership and Disengagement & Reintegration. The work these young people do is very important to our success as a service. This was a great opportunity to present, on a world stage, the excellent work we are doing together.