

*To decrease the number of young persons involved in criminal activity.*

# REACHING OUT TO OUR COMMUNITY

## Community Services

Constable Tanya Calvert

2008 brought new life and new beginnings to our dedicated safety programs. St. Thomas Police eagerly awaited the official opening of the new Mitchell Hepburn Public School in October. It didn't take long to adopt the new Mitchell Hepburn Public School to our family of safe schools and by the end of the year, officers were regularly visiting classes with messages for every grade level.

Our Safety Patroller Program launched a new look in September with new high-visibility vests. The Canadian Automobile Association retired the old orange patroller vests as studies showed that the combination of neon yellow with reflective tape produced greater visibility for drivers. All vests were replaced to ensure maximum visibility and maximum safety. The Safety Patrollers continue their great work assisting pedestrians around participating school zones!

The 911 educational material delivered to all grade one students in St. Thomas was given an overhaul with the introduction of a new program called "Im-



**Constable Greg Bryant**

patient Pamela Calls 911". The program has mass appeal and is delivered by a story about a girl named Pamela who learns how to identify what an emergency is and proper use of the 911 phone system. The new program is well liked by all the students and was a super success story after a grade one student properly called 911 for help when her little brother began choking. The motto of the lesson; ALWAYS call 911 in an emergency!

2008 brought many changes to the Community Service Office at the police station. After nearly six years as the Community Service Officer, it is time for me to return to general patrol. As this will be the last time I submit a year-end report for this office, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the many people who have cared and shared along

the way. Thank you to the staff and administration from all the public, separate and private schools in St. Thomas. I could not have enjoyed my visits with the students if it wasn't for your warm welcome and willingness to accommodate. I am ever grateful for your appreciation of a safe environment and your daily dedication to, not only teaching your subjects but also, creating a fun, caring, equal opportunity atmosphere for students.

Special thanks to the Thames Valley District School Board and the London District Catholic School Board who were instrumental in coordinating programs such as Race Vs Drugs and Risk Watch Injury Prevention. Because of the Boards' commitment to reducing injury and creating a safe environment, police are able to connect with students and build relationships within the community that would otherwise never be.

In April of 2009, the position of Community Services Officer has been turned over to Constable Greg Bryant who continues to deliver the many programs of the Community Service officer in our elementary schools in St. Thomas.

## Community Resource Officer

Constable Jason Geddes

Constable Geddes's goal is to facilitate crime prevention and foster positive relationships between the police and youth.

The Community Resource officer's mandate focuses on two distinct areas - our High Schools and Beat Patrol. This officer works closely with the uniform branch, in particular the Adopt-A-School officers and the drug enforcement unit. In the high schools, the mandate is to enhance communication between school officials, students, parents, and the police; this officer also maintains regular foot and bicycle patrols in the downtown core and in other areas where such a presence is required, enhancing dialogue with merchants and the general public.

The majority of time is devoted to the four high schools and one alternative school, mentoring, counselling and speaking with students on police related matters as well as participating in extra curricular events, parent council meetings and liaising with the teachers, support staff and administration.

### Safegrad Celebration Program

Safegrad is an initiative aimed at reducing harm due to drug and/or alcohol use for both students and those who may be affected by their choices.

Safegrad came about as a way of addressing community concerns about teen alcohol use, impaired driving, increased drug use, poor sexual choices, vandalism and violence at celebrations throughout the school year, especially at prom and graduation.

Organizations represented on the Safegrad Committee include our Police Service, Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit, Thames Valley District School Board, Sexual Assault Centre, Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada, Centre for Addiction and Mental Illness to name a few. For more information on Safegrad, visit [www.safegrad.com](http://www.safegrad.com).



**Constable Jason Geddes**

### R-Safes Committee

R-Safes is a road safety committee involving the police, fire, EMS, public health, and the Ministry of Transportation. The objective is to decrease injuries related to road safety. The R-Safes Committee coordinated a youth/parent drug information forum hosted at Parkside Collegiate Institute. The focus in 2009

is educating the public on new provincial legislation regarding distracted driving and impaired driving.



**R-Safes Grad display at Parkside.**

### Lectures for New Drivers

Constable Geddes provides lectures for young drivers at DJ's Driver Training. This prepares them for the responsibility of safely operating a vehicle. Other lectures include Grade 9 Orientation Open Houses at our local high schools. This provides insight into what to expect for their first year in high school.

### Talbot Teen Centre

The Talbot Teen Centre is for youths ages 12-18. Constable Geddes has established a rapport with staff and the young people that frequent the centre. The youths have assumed a great deal of ownership and responsibility for the Centre.

### Specific Incidents Addressed

**Issue:** *students loitering around downtown businesses. (loitering and drug issues)* **Solutions:** some business owners allow police to act as agents and enforce trespass charges; patrols by uniform officers; schools monitoring student absenteeism.

**Issue:** *Pinafore Park loitering and drug use* **Solution:** New bylaw implemented regarding loitering in the wooded lot; Old clothes assignment of officers; two students expelled for trafficking; numerous students charged/suspended for loitering and/or drug use; Park and band shell regularly patrolled by uniform officers.

Impaired driving and CDSA (drug) presentations to educate students.

Grade 9 orientation information sessions attended by police to explain the adopt-a-school and community resource officer position.

Schools and police worked together to stop organized fighting that was filmed and put on the internet involving students from various schools and secret venues.

Assist with school issues including behavioral issues, assaults, threats, weapons (knives), bullying, students suspected to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol and advice calls.

The two most popular and readily available drugs of choice for high school students are marijuana and oxycontin. Education through police presentations and the Safe Schools Act allow school and police to work together to combat drug use.

Wooded lot off Sauve Ave targeted as a hang out for students to use drugs. School and police attended the area and cleaned it up. City officials removed a bench that had been taken from the ball diamond.

Graffiti continues to plague the city and is monitored by school staff and police for possible suspect information. Often students will doodle in class and draw pictures and later spray their work on businesses and homes. Good communication between teachers and police assist identifying possible suspects.

The internet chat rooms seem to be an easy way for kids to threaten or bully one and other. St Thomas Police are educating students and parents regarding Facebook and the dangers of chat rooms.