

NO: R192

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REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **September 30, 2013**

FROM: **Crime Reduction Strategy Manager**

FILE: **7450-30**

SUBJECT: **Rakhi Project – Public Education and Awareness Campaign**

RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager's Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the 2013 Rakhi Project that supports the objectives of the Surrey Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (SCADA).

BACKGROUND

The Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy (CRS) contains 106 recommendations that are focused on reducing crime and aligning the perceptions about crime with realities, all to improve the quality of life for Surrey residents and visitors.

The CRS includes directions focused on increasing integration between stakeholders involved in community safety and crime reduction and includes a specific recommendation under the "Reality and Perception of Crime" strand related to prioritizing actions to address the needs of the most fearful and most vulnerable first. The Strategy lists priority crimes that are to be its primary focus. One such area of crime is:

"Domestic Violence: To reduce victimization in relation to domestic violence while increasing levels of reporting and prosecution."

DISCUSSION

Crime reduction is a problem-solving approach to addressing crime, which includes the development of partnerships, the use of evidence-based decision making, and the development of creative tactics that focus on addressing the root causes of crime. Partners include community groups, service agencies and Departments from every order of government.

The following is an excerpt from a 2010 report written by the B.C. Coroner's Service (BCCS) entitled, "REPORT TO THE CHIEF CORONER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA - Findings and Recommendations of the Domestic Violence Death Review Panel":

"In 2008, the BCCS conducted a statistical review of 605 homicides, which occurred in British Columbia between January 2003 and August 2008. Of these 605 homicides, 73 were due to domestic violence committed by a current or former spouse, common-law spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, or other romantic partner of the victim."

In a follow-up report entitled "Domestic Violence Prevention and Reduction in BC" completed by a collaborative group of researchers, policy makers, clinicians, and service providers, hosted by the Centre for the Prevention & Reduction of Violence (CPRV) within the Justice Institute of BC's Office of Applied Research, Katherine Rossiter reviews domestic violence prevention and reduction initiatives in BC between 2000 and 2010 and makes the case for primary prevention strategies that address the root causes of crime and promote strategic investments in children and families.

In January 2013, the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence (which was established in March of 2012 within the Ministry of Children and Family Development) hosted a meeting at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey. The meeting brought together key stakeholders to continue advancing the development of a three-year provincial plan to address domestic violence. As part of this process, a Public Consultation Background Paper titled, "*Addressing Domestic Violence in British Columbia*" became available, and served as the background for an online questionnaire focused on six themes related to domestic violence in B.C. The information gathered through the questionnaire served to inform the three-year plan. The report titled "Government Taking Action on Domestic Violence Progress Report" was released in March 2013 and can be found at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/podv/pdf/progress_report.pdf

Surrey's Actions in Relation to Domestic Abuse

The City of Surrey has been a leader in the area of stakeholder development on the issue of domestic abuse. A highlight of the City's actions has been the formation of the Surrey Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (SCADA).

SCADA's 3 priority goals are:

- Education specific to prevention of domestic abuse;
- Improved networking and collaborative working relationships among service agencies and stakeholders; and
- Continued dialogue between partners with a view to developing common goals.

A SCADA conference has been held annually since 2009. A conference planning committee has been established, which serves a two-year term and is comprised of representatives from a variety of community partner organizations. Each conference is planned to provide up-to-date research and training opportunities for service providers, to broaden networks and to facilitate the sharing of resources and tools to assist service providers in their day to day work. The conference typically attracts in the order of 150 participants, specifically focussing on domestic abuse.

It was recognized after the initial conference in 2009, that a complimentary public education campaign was needed to broaden the reach in relation to messaging around domestic abuse. In

2010, the concept of “Rakhi” emerged as a new way to engage and educate the public on this important issue while also serving to raise funds in support of the Surrey Coalition Against Domestic Abuse.

The Rakhi Project– A Public Education Focus

Rakhi is a traditional Indian ceremony honouring the relationship between brothers and sisters and involves the tying of a Rakhi bracelet by a sister on her brother’s wrist as a symbol of love and respect. The Rakhi Project combines this message and takes it a step further in creating awareness around the issue of domestic abuse.

The goal of the Project is to give the community an avenue to take a visible and unified approach to raising awareness around the issue of domestic abuse and to help break the cycle of abuse for women and their children, who often directly witness domestic abuse. The men who wear the purple Rakhi bracelets vow to stand against domestic abuse.

The 2013 Rakhi project included new partners, including Ending Violence Association BC (EVA BC), The BC Lions Football Club, Surrey Neighbouring Faiths and the City of Surrey’s Welcome and Inclusive Communities (WIC) Youth Team. These new partners served to broaden the campaign to a wider range of citizens (e.g., youth and multi-faith).

2013 Project Sponsors and Partners

The following organizations provided sponsorship to the 2013 project:

- DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
- OMNI Television
- Surrey RCMP
- Fruiticana
- Save On Foods Group
- Ending Violence Association of British Columbia (EVA BC)
- BC Lions Football Club
- The Province Newspaper
- Karen Lipsett-Kidd (bracelet designer)
- Sambhali Trust (bracelet production)
- City of Surrey, Crime Reduction Strategy

Local Surrey artist, Karen Lipsett-Kidd, created a new bracelet design to reflect the meaning of the Project. The artist sourced and confirmed a partnership with an organization in India called the Sambhali Trust. The Trust manufactured the bracelets for the 2013 project. The Sambhali Trust was founded in 2007 and engages women in the Rajasthan Region of India in manufacturing operations to assist in breaking the cycle of poverty that exists in that region. The Trust provides the women with opportunities to access education and skill development and provides work that assists them with financial independence.

The 2013 Project was conducted between June 25 and August 21, 2013. The braided purple Rakhi bracelets were sold for \$5 each through businesses in Surrey, including the following:

- Fruiticana
- Save On Foods Group
- Surrey RCMP

- RCMP UBC Campus Police
- Surrey City Hall
- DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society
- OMNI Television
- The NOW Newspaper
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University Bookstores
- KEYS: Housing and Health Solutions
- Surrey Women's Centre
- Crystalworks Vancouver
- Granville Island

Project Launch

The 2013 Rakhi Project was launched by means of a media event held at Surrey City Hall that included speeches by City representatives, representatives of the BC Lions, a representative of EVA BC and a representative of OMNI TV.

Media in attendance at the launch included OMNI television, CBC television, Global television and the Province Newspaper.

Other Outreach Initiatives

A soft launch of the 2013 project was organized in combination with DIVERSEcity's Community Resource Society's DIVERSEcity Awards. As well, a Rakhi booth was set up at the Fusion Festival that was held on July 19th and 20th, 2013 at Holland Park in Surrey City Centre.

Local Media

With the Province Newspaper as a sponsor, two full page articles with photos, as well as banner advertisements were published in the June 25 and July 26th, 2013 editions.

The Rakhi promotion poster was published in the Surrey NOW at no charge.

A list of web links related to the 2013 Rakhi project is provided in Appendix "A" attached to this report.

Social Media Initiatives

Prior to and during the 2013 project, the City's New Media Team sent out 29 tweets and created 14 Facebook posts. The following is a list of the results of this work:

From June 1 – August 31, social media resulted in:

- 223 entrances to surrey.ca from Facebook (30% of entrances to page);
- 178 entrances to surrey.ca from Twitter (24% of entrances to page); and
- 97 views on Surrey Rakhi Project YouTube video.

From June 1-August 31, the Rakhi Project page on Surrey website had the following stats:

- 749 entrances;
- 1090 pageviews;
- 973 unique pageviews; and
- An average time on the page of 2 minutes and 40 seconds.

Marketing Materials and Promotion

Posters, brochures and advertisements on electronic billboards were utilized to further promote the 2013 project.

A new brochure was developed to educate the public on:

- recognizing the signs of domestic abuse;
- tips on how they can help friends and family members who are experiencing domestic abuse; and
- a list of community resources that can be tapped into for support.

Rakhi Project Wrap Up

The 2013 Rakhi Project wrapped up on August 21, 2013, the official Rakhi Day. To conclude the campaign and create a final buzz about the Project, an impactful video was released that captures the essence of the Rakhi Project; the love and respect between brothers and sisters. The video was distributed to the public through social media with positive feedback.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATION

The Rakhi Project assists in achieving the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly scope action item SC11, which identifies the Crime Reduction Strategy and the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents as the foundations for building a safe community.

CONCLUSION

The City of Surrey is a recognized leader in its approach to crime reduction and community safety by way of its Crime Reduction Strategy. Both SCADA and the Rakhi Project are a response to the Strategy's recommendations related to addressing priority crimes, and increasing public awareness and engagement to reduce crime, improve community safety and ensure a safe, vibrant and healthy community for all.

Colleen Kerr
Crime Reduction Strategy Manager

CK/mc

APPENDIX A

- MEDIA Web Links for Rakhi 2013

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/story/2013/06/25/bc-surrey-domestic-violence.html>

<http://m.news1130.com/2013/06/25/surrey-launches-rakhi-project-targeting-domestic-violence/>

<http://www.surreyleader.com/community/213335701.html?mobile=true>

<http://www.surreyleader.com/community/213335701.html>

<http://thelinkpaper.ca/?p=30466>

<http://www.bignewsnetwork.com/index.php/sid/215429163/scat/71df8d33cd2a30df>

<http://www.vancouverdesi.com/tag/rakhi-project/>

<http://www.theprovince.com/news/Lions+back+Rakhi+Project+Surrey/8719870/story.html>

<http://www.theprovince.com/Surrey+Rakhi+Project+combat+domestic+violence+gets+backing+from+Lions/8718644/story.html>

<http://www.theprovince.com/news/Program+confronts+domestic+abuse/8574615/story.html>

<http://esmirmilavic.wordpress.com/2013/06/22/rakhi-project-surrey-continues-the-fight-against-domestic-violence-video/>

<http://www.vancouverstar.com/index.php/sid/215429163/scat/535f27099a41ff22/>

<http://www.surrey.ca/community/13203.aspx>