



Newsletter

Creating a community where children and youth are *safe, valued and heard*.

Welcome to the first Child Witness Centre Newsletter for 2019! We thank you for joining us on the path to supporting children and youth who are victims or witnesses of abuse or violence, and their families, in Waterloo Region, Guelph and Wellington County.

For children and youth who find the courage to disclose abuse in Waterloo Region, our support begins at the start of an investigation through the Waterloo Region Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) where young victims, and their families, are supported and connected to the resources needed to help them begin to heal. When charges are laid through the investigations in the CYAC or through other police units in Waterloo Region, Guelph and Wellington County, children, youth and their families are supported through the criminal court process.

These young people, and their families, need specialized and tailored support that is ongoing and available every day. Last year, we supported 1,396 children and youth as well as more than 1,000 parents and caregivers.

Demand for our services continues to rise.

To those of you who are already walking the journey with us, please know that we appreciate your continued support. And to those readers taking their first steps towards helping to create a community where all children and youth who are victims or witnesses of abuse or crime are empowered towards strong futures, thank you!

You can make a positive difference in the lives of these young people by donating today at www.childwitness.com!

With Gratitude,

Laura Muirhead

Executive Director

P.S. Stay tuned for our next newsletter which will provide a more fulsome review of our year through our 2018-19 Community Report!

4,200 Grade 8 Students Hear Inspiring Messages



The Child Witness Centre welcomed more than 4,200 Grade 8 students, and their teachers, to the 16th annual Youth Symposium which features some of Canada's top speakers sharing personal stories about goal setting, community citizenship, healthy dating and more. This day-long event was held on April 16th for Guelph and Wellington County students and for the first time ever expanded to include two days for students from Waterloo Region, April 17th and April 18th.

"Our goal in offering this program is to expose Grade 8 students to a variety of perspectives and topics that focus on the opportunities and challenges facing them as they transition into high school – which is such a key time in their development," -Laura Muirhead, Executive Director of the Child Witness Centre.

As Stu Saunders, one of our guest presenters, said: ***"You will not find this calibre of program anywhere in Canada for this age group."***

"I feel inspired to be an even better person than I am now." -A Student

"The speakers present on many levels – the kids pick up valuable messages, but there is so much for teachers too, which can be taken back and incorporated into individual classrooms and schools to spread the message even further." -A Teacher

Eleven speakers shared their stories across the three days, including:

- **SCOTT HAMMELL:** A four-time Guinness World Record holder for stunts including World's Highest Blindfolded Skydive and World's Highest Suspended Straightjacket Escape, Hammell speaks to the importance of challenging yourself to do the unthinkable and the rewards that come with being tenacious in the pursuit of personal goals. Scott is a graduate of K.C.I. high school here in Waterloo Region.
- **BECKY KELLAR-DUKE:** Olympian Becky Kellar-Duke competed in the first four Olympic Winter Games in which women's ice hockey was included, winning one silver and four gold medals. Kellar-Duke spoke about the roles that goal setting and self-determination played on her road to the Olympics.

- **RICK OSBORNE:** Once one of Canada’s most-wanted criminals, Osborne spent almost 25 years in 33 different penitentiaries for crimes involving assault, weapons and narcotics. He shared with students how victimization early in his life led to involvement with street gangs and how he decided to change the trajectory of his life – earning his B.A. in Psychology from Queen’s University and dedicating his life to supporting others.
- **GUELPH POLICE SERVICE/WATERLOO REGION POLICE WITH SEXUAL ASSAULT/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TREATMENT CENTRE:** Students heard from trusted experts on topics that include healthy dating, cyberbullying, human trafficking and consent.

The Child Witness Centre hosts the annual Youth Symposium with the following goals:

- Share with students’ information that is relevant and supports their overall social, physical, emotional, mental health and wellbeing.
- Educate students on tools and strategies that will help them develop resiliency and empower them to strong futures.
- Support youth by equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to embrace life’s opportunities and challenges.
- Challenge students to make a difference in the world.
- Utilize different presentation approaches to address a variety of learning styles.
- Support the teachers in their work with their students.

The dates for the 2020 Youth Symposium will be published in Sept 2019.

The Co-operators Annual Charity Golf Tournament



On June 13, the 25th Annual Co-operators Charity Golf Tournament was held at the Ariss Valley Golf and Country Club, and Child Witness Centre was fortunate to be chosen as the recipients of funds raised

from this awesome event. The golfers, the volunteers and the amazing team from The Co-operators had an absolute blast, despite the gloomy morning weather that came with occasional rain and wind.

The day included a BBQ, a putting competition, and ended with a fantastic dinner reception, all of which was accented by a strong sense of doing good for your community. During the reception, a former client, shared her experience of trauma from back when she entered 9th grade and how she felt supported through our court preparation program. "Child Witness Centre was my safe space in a shattered world," she recounted to the crowd of 150 people. Her story is heartfelt and candid, and the dinner guests were receptive, giving a standing ovation when she finished.

Next was the cheque presentation. For our organization, that relies on the majority of its budget coming from non-government sources, every event, donation, and ounce of awareness goes a long way. But when the cheque was revealed our team was speechless. Through their own generous giving, along with donations from sponsors and partners, The Co-operators Annual Charity Golf Tournament raised **\$129,000!**

It costs approximately \$1,000 to support one child or youth and their family through the criminal court process, which means 129 young people will now be supported towards strong futures because of the overwhelming kindness and generosity of The Co-operators and their sponsors and partners. This money was raised in Guelph and Wellington County and will stay there! We supported 232 young people in Guelph and Wellington County last year.

There are almost no words to capture how grateful we are to be chosen as the 2019 recipients of this record setting amount of money, but if we had to choose one it would be: Hope. Hope that the young people we support through the criminal justice process can move beyond their experience as victims and have healthy, fulfilling futures. This donation has inspired a fresh, stronger feeling of hope for these young people and their families who need support!

Know Your Rights As a Victim

We have been supporting children and youth who are victims or witnesses of crime and their families since 1983. Foundational to our work is the Canadian Victim Bill of Rights which ensures that victims are awarded certain fundamental rights throughout the criminal justice process. More specifically Victims have the right to information, the right to participation, the right to seek restitution and the right to protection. Each and every day, we advocate on behalf of the young people and families we support, provide them with the information they need and ensure that their voices are heard through the process. If you or someone you know is a victim of crime, knowing where to access this information is vital.

CANADIAN VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS



The rights of victims of crime need to be considered during every stage of the criminal justice process...



... by police, prosecutors, courts, review boards, corrections, and parole boards.



The CANADIAN VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS

will give victims of crime a:



Right to information

Ask for information about the justice system, victim services, and the progress of their case.



Right to participation

Present a victim impact statement and give views on decisions that affect their rights.



Right to seek restitution

Restitution orders must be considered and can be enforced through civil courts.



Right to protection

Consideration of the security and privacy of victims, and reasonable and necessary protection from intimidation and retaliation.

Disclaimer: This infographic is not intended as legal advice.

Young People are our Future - Let's encourage, support and guide them!