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TORONTO POLICE SERVICE RECOGNIZED FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Attorney General Highlights Cooperation Between Government And Police

HAMILTON — Attorney General Michael Bryant presented the Toronto Police Service with an award for their outstanding assistance to victims and witnesses of gun violence today. The Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) Victim Assistance Committee Award, which is sponsored by the Ontario Victims' Services Secretariat of the Ministry of the Attorney General, was handed out at the OACP annual awards luncheon in Hamilton.

“The Toronto Police Service’s Victims of Gun Violence Crisis Response Program makes a powerful difference for people whose lives have been shattered by gun violence,” said Bryant. “It is one of a number of partnerships that has helped foster a closer relationship between my ministry and police services across Ontario that’s making our communities safer.”

The program ensures that victims and witnesses of gun violence, as well as their families and the broader community, receive immediate specialized support services to help them cope with their experiences.

It’s one of many victim services that the McGuinty government, police and communities are delivering together to enhance public safety.

“Working collaboratively is the best way to preserve and enhance public safety,” said Armand La Barge, outgoing president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and Chief of York Regional Police. “I am pleased that government, police, and Crown prosecutors continue to work closely together on many issues such as combating gun violence.”

Other examples of the collaboration and partnerships between the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ontario police services include:

- Implementing a \$51-million package of initiatives to help police and prosecutors get criminals with guns off the streets. This includes establishing a state-of-the-art provincial operations centre to allow for highly co-ordinated investigations and prosecutions of guns and gang-related offences, and increasing the number of police and prosecutors assigned to the Toronto Guns and Gangs Task Force

- Establishing bail blitz teams, consisting of police, Crown prosecutors and duty counsel working together to expedite the bail court process at certain sites for criminal cases, including those involving guns
- Using the Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act (Civil Remedies Act) to seek forfeiture of proceeds and instruments of unlawful activity, to prevent them from being kept and used for unlawful activity, and to compensate victims
- Developing and putting into action a coordinated and provincewide approach to combat Internet crimes against children, including child pornography and Internet luring.

Bryant also paid tribute to La Barge for his service to the OACP.

“Chief La Barge has made an exceptional contribution to the OACP as its leading voice,” said Bryant. “We are fortunate to have had the benefit of his example of dedication, conviction and professionalism. It has been a great pleasure to work with him in this role.”

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