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Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators

CCMTA-Police Partnership Award
2006 Submission

“Not Ready To Go”

Sergeant Devin Kealey (1815)
Constable Julie Mahoney (66)

*This nomination is supported and endorsed by
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Project Identification and Analysis

The Toronto Police Service is committed to ensuring the safe and orderly flow of traffic on City roadways, as well as protecting the safety of all road users, including drivers, passengers, cyclist and pedestrians. In support of this commitment, the Service has identified traffic safety as a Service priority.

The Service has a comprehensive traffic safety strategy involving the components of education, awareness and enforcement, which constitute the framework for achieving the goal of making the streets of Toronto as safe as they can be for all road users.

A critical initiative of this strategy is the enforcement of drinking and driving offences and includes the long standing, and high profile RIDE Program. In addition to the key enforcement piece of this initiative, education and awareness, especially focused on high school students, is fundamental to the reduction of incidents of this nature.

In 1990, the Toronto Police Service, in partnership with MADD Canada, produced an anti-drinking and driving video called “Missing You”. For over 10 years “Missing You” was shown to thousands of young people across the country in an effort to reduce incidents of death and injury from motor vehicle collisions which involved drivers who had consumed alcohol.

The “Missing You” video became dated and in the spring of 2004 Sergeant Devin Kealey (1815) and Police Constable Julie Mahoney (66) of TPS, Traffic Services, approached MADD Canada about partnering to produce a new impaired driving video. MADD Canada was again willing to assist the Service and early discussions were held to outline the scope, areas of responsibility and identification of a collision that involved impaired driving.

Although alcohol consumption continues to be the predominant cause of driver impairment, an increasing number of incidents have involved drivers impaired by drugs.

Nationally, in Canada, the rate of police-reported drug offences increased by 42% between 1992 and 2002, largely due to a rise in the cannabis possession rate, which nearly doubled (96%) for the same period of time¹. Locally in Toronto, a 2003 study revealed that the reported use of cannabis by adults had increased from 14% in 2001 to 15% in 2003².

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) publishes an annual public opinion survey on key road safety issues. The 2002 edition of The Road Safety Monitor indicated that Canadians felt that incidents of driving after the use of illegal drugs was second only to drinking and driving on the list of the most important road safety issues facing them today. Further, the survey revealed that in the previous twelve months, 17.7% of drivers reported driving a vehicle within two hours of using prescription, over the counter or illicit drugs³.



Studies have suggested that 4% to 12% of drivers killed or injured in motor vehicle collisions around the world had cannabis in their systems⁴. A British Columbia study, published in 2002, examined 227 fatally injured drivers and found that alcohol and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which is the main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis, were the two most frequently found drugs. Further examination revealed that drugs alone were found in 9% of the drivers while alcohol and drugs were found in 11% of the drivers⁵.

It would appear that Canadians have adopted an increasingly relaxed and permissive attitude towards the possession and use of small amounts of cannabis. Greater incidents of impaired driving, due to drug use is inevitable.

After reviewing numerous collisions, a horrendous crash involving drug use, that claimed the lives of five young teens and seriously injured 11, including two adults, was chosen to be profiled. The circumstances leading up to the collision began when 14 friends, returning from a party to celebrate the end of the school year, became involved in a multi-vehicle crash on a straight stretch of highway just outside of Perth, Ontario. The teens were heading home in a four-car convoy when one car pulled out to pass and struck a pick-up truck, which was towing a trailer and heading in the opposite direction.

The subsequent chain of events left Stan Thomson, 18, Alan Siew, 17, Dustin Record, 17 David Rider, 16, and Homoyoun Chaudry, 17, dead. The two occupants of the pick-up truck, Max Beyour, 27, and Tim Cole, 35, were seriously injured. To this day, the surviving victims and all of the families and friends are still dealing with the effects of the collision.

The driver who caused the collision was a 17-year-old young offender. He was charged and eventually convicted of five counts of dangerous driving causing death, three counts of dangerous driving causing bodily harm and was sentenced to one year in custody.

This June 1999 collision remains one of the most horrific crashes in modern Canadian history.

SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIPS

The development of a video is not a new approach to a road safety issue. Nor is the topic of impaired driving a new one. The change in focus, however, of the stimulant and of the target audience, demonstrates recognition of a real and growing menace in our society; the dangers of young people driving while under the influence of drugs. Through collaborative partnerships, a ground breaking education and awareness tool was developed.

The partnership between the Toronto Police Service and MADD Canada is a long standing one. Along with the making of the “Missing You” video, MADD Canada has donated equipment to the Toronto Police Service to be used in the fight against drunk driving. They continue to provide funding for RIDE spot-checks, with their volunteers attending to show support for this enforcement activity. MADD Canada members



participate with TPS officers in making presentations on anti-drinking and driving messages. Again, MADD Canada demonstrated their commitment to road safety by partnering with the Toronto Police Service to provide the necessary funding for this project. This video is currently available on the MADD web site.

Partnering with the Ontario Provincial Police was helpful on two fronts. The OPP had investigated the event and possessed invaluable technical data, as well as insight into the events leading up to the collision. More importantly, the OPP had forged a close relationship with the survivors and with the families and friends of the deceased.

It was a relationship which the Toronto Police Service was able to successfully build upon, thereby gaining the trust and confidence of these civilians in the integrity of the project. Their resulting taped interviews were powerful. The interviewees conveyed the project's message with genuine emotion and clarity.

Partnering with the RCMP resulted in the production of a French language version of the video. Funding was provided through their National Drug Strategy. The video is included on their web site and receives national exposure.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, (CACP), was instrumental in ensuring that the video would become the centerpiece for presentations on impaired driving nationwide. The video was made available through the Traffic Safety Programs Catalogue, a web site managed by the RCMP in partnership with the CACP.

The finished video, entitled "Not Ready To Go", is 20 minutes in length. The video is hard hitting and is aimed at educating youth and caregivers across the country about the real consequences of getting behind the wheel while impaired by alcohol or drugs. The video includes sobering remarks from the investigating police officers, and heart wrenching commentary from the injured survivors, the families and friends of the deceased victims, and their teachers.

The video features two poignant songs, the first, "Not Ready To Go", is performed by the Trews, and the second, "Time", is performed by Chantal Kreviazuk. The video concludes with a montage of photographs, supplied by family members, of sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, who have all lost their lives or have been injured as a result of incidents of impaired driving.

The impact and importance of this initiative was apparent during a preview screening of the video for the families, friends and individuals involved in the production of the video. This screening was held in Kanata, Ontario. It was followed by a formal media launch of the video at the Toronto Police Service Headquarters.

The Toronto launch, which was attended by TPS Chief of Police Julian Fantino, and involved all the key partners, including the victims' families, the surviving victims of the collision, dignitaries and many of the road safety partners of the TPS. The launch resulted in extensive coverage from the media. It was clear from the comments of the attendees that the video had successfully conveyed a very powerful message.



On May 17th, 2005, at the National Press Theatre in Ottawa, the video was screened at a national media launch. The event was attended by Senator Major LeBreton, TPS Interim Deputy Chief of Police and member of the CACP Traffic Committee, Gary Grant, RCMP Chief Superintendent and Vice-Chair of the CACP Drug Committee, Raf Souccar, and MADD Canada President, Karen Dunham.

Over 1,500 copies of the video have been produced and distributed across the country to law enforcement agencies. A further 97 have been purchased or distributed to a variety of community groups, agencies and organizations across Canada, the United States and Europe, through MADD Canada.(6).

This ground breaking video speaks to an emerging trend that is presenting itself in our communities more and more each day. The message is current and topical and as with the original “Missing You” video, it is envisioned that “Not Ready To Go” will be the cornerstone of impaired driving awareness presentations for years to come.

In 2005, all front line members of the TPS were directed to view the video. Further, in 2005 and 2006, the TPS in partnership with MADD Canada, delivered the “Not Ready To Go” presentation to approximately 16,400 students at forty high schools, two school showcases and at the University of Toronto (Scarborough Campus). In addition, presentations were made by the TPS to approximately 2000 members from a variety of organization in the corporate community.

The “Not Ready To Go” video has been covered in the media and in law enforcement publications. It was awarded a Silver Shield, in the documentary category at the 16th annual Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Video Association (LEVA) conference and has received accolades from many of those who have viewed it.

Clearly, the message is being delivered to all who watch it and will ultimately have a positive impact on the safety of all road users in Canada.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Impaired driving still remains the leading criminal cause of death in Canada and thousands of people are killed or injured on our roadways nationally each year. The Toronto Police Service and our partners are cognizant of the direct and indirect costs to society, estimated to be in the billions: Notwithstanding, the incalculable cost of the senseless loss of a life.

The Toronto Police Service, by strategically partnering with other stakeholders in road safety, was able to create, develop and distribute the “Not Ready To Go” video. The “Not Ready To Go” program has quickly become the new policing standard for impaired-driving educational initiatives targeting young people.



This educational initiative is a collaborative interaction of the police community with that of a non-profit, grassroots organization. It demonstrates the commitment of the involved stakeholders towards making Canada's roads the safest in the world.

¹ Toronto Police Service 2005 Environmental Scan page 45.

² Toronto Police Service 2005 Environmental Scan page 45.

³ The Road Safety Monitor 2002: Drugs and Driving. Ottawa: Traffic Injury Research Foundation.

⁴ Cannabis and Driving FAQ's, Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) 2003.

⁵ Cannabis and Driving FAQ's Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) 2003.

