

Toronto Community Housing



Violence Reduction Program Update – Q1 2024

Item 7

June 3, 2024

Community Safety Advisory Sub-Committee

Report: CSAC:2024-08

To: Community Safety Advisory Sub-Committee ("CSAC")

From: Acting Senior Director, Community Safety Unit and
Acting Director, Programs and Partnerships

Date: April 15, 2024

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress and performance of the Violence Reduction Program ("VRP") for Q1 2024 from both Programs and Partnership ("PAP") and the Community Safety Unit ("CSU").

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the CSAC receive this report for information and forward it to the Tenant Services Committee ("TSC") for information.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

At its meeting of June 27, 2019, Toronto Community Housing's Board of Directors directed staff to operationalize the Violence Reduction Program ("VRP"). This report provides an update on activities and performance of the VRP.

BACKGROUND:

The VRP has been developed with the objective of enhancing the safety and security of tenants residing in Toronto Community Housing (“TCHC”) properties. This initiative was launched in response to the disproportionate incidents of violence at TCHC properties, which are primarily rooted in poverty, addiction, mental health issues, and street involvement among the tenant population.

The VRP adopts a comprehensive approach that encompasses enhanced enforcement activities through the deployment of dedicated, on-site CSU staff, close collaboration with the Toronto Police Service (“TPS”), and the implementation of economic development programs and community and social support measures in partnership with the City of Toronto (the “City”).

The VRP recognizes the need for a multifaceted response that can address the underlying social and economic issues that give rise to violence in these communities. Through the collaborative efforts of TCHC, TPS, and the City of Toronto, the VRP aims to improve living conditions and quality of life for TCHC tenants, while also fostering a safer and more secure environment for all residents.

Programs And Partnerships VRP Update:**Integrated Safety Coordination Teams (“ISCT”)**

Programs and Partnerships staff continue to attend monthly integrated Safety Coordination Team (“ISCT”) meetings with stakeholders including Toronto Police Service, Toronto District School Board, and the City of Toronto. Recently, all six ISCT teams met for an engagement session focused on youth violence trends, seeking to identify areas for improvement within the ISCT process. Additionally, Programs and Partnerships staff are actively supporting the Toronto Office to Prevent Violence (“TOPV”) in planning a gun violence prevention conference that will take place in Q3 2024.

Integrated Team Meetings (“ITM”)

Programs and Partnerships staff participate in internal TCHC Integrated Team Meetings (“ITM”) across all program sites. Staff continue to seek to implement a standardized process to incorporate supplement information

gathered at ITMs with data from other sources, including partners at TOPV. The aim is to identify and intervene in situations to prevent violence, employing social development, prevention, intervention/interruption, and response/recovery approaches effectively.

Program Realignment

Programs and Partnerships VRP is currently undergoing a realignment of portfolios, with emphasis on preventing gun violence and de-emphasizing the factors contributing to tenant vulnerability. This realignment aims to align the work of Programs and Partnerships more closely with the operations of the TOPV. As part of this process, partnerships, initiatives, and responsibilities in communities with chronic vulnerability are transitioning to Regional teams and the Programs and Partnerships' Complex Tenancies team. Comprehensive plans are being put in place to ensure a seamless transition without resource gaps. Eagle Manor and Dunn Ave are two pilot sites affected by this transition. Please refer to Attachment 1 for Q1 2024 VRP supporting data.

Community Safety Unit VRP Update

CSU Staffing Update

In February, the Community Safety Unit underwent a service-wide redeployment resulting in staff moving into permanent positions within the VRP. Currently, there are two open positions within the VRP, being filled with patrol staff as per operational requirements, and five vacancies due to secondments and leaves. This redeployment has brought about greater consistency among VRP officers. The VRP is comprised of a high percentage of junior officers, who are actively familiarizing themselves with the communities they serve.

While twelve VRP positions remain on hold, the Mobile Community Engagement and Response Team ("MCERT"), part of CSU, continues to be deployed, serving as a modified delivery model for pilot sites that require concentrated efforts from CSU, in collaboration with internal and external agencies.

CSU Update in High Needs Communities^[1]

VRP Special Constables continue to attend their weekly Integrated Team Meetings ("ITM") in Dan Harrison, Bleecker/Wellesley, Moss Park, Regent

^[1] Including Broader Dan Harrison

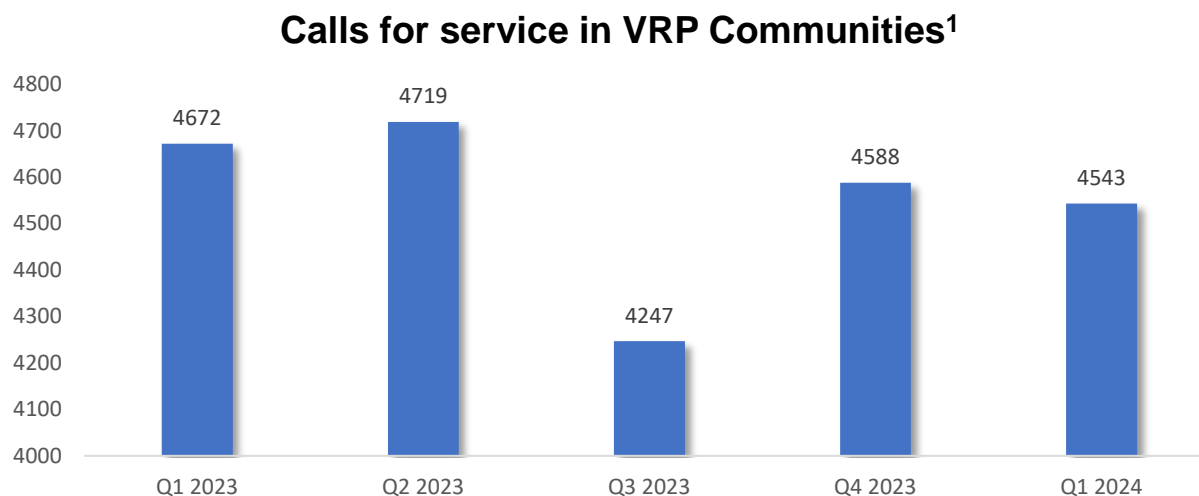
Park, Lawrence Avenue East, and monthly ITM for 2195 Jane Street. The VRP CSU continue to collaborate with external and internal partners in the community and efforts are underway to strengthen collaboration with Toronto Police Services (“TPS”) Divisional Neighborhood Officers, ensuring effective and coordinated community policing. The MCERT team remains actively engaged in both the VRP and high-risk communities as needed, enhancing flexibility in CSU responses.

CSU Performance Measurement And Analysis (Q1 2024):

CSU Calls for Service in VRP Communities

A detailed breakdown of calls for service and actions taken in VRP Communities during Q1 2024 is provided in Attachment 1, Tables 2 and 2a, with pilot sites shown separately in Table 2b. Note, the data shown for this quarter is only up to March 25th due to Records Management System (“RMS”) switch over.

Compared to Q4 2023, there was a decrease of 45 calls, particularly in Neighbour Disputes, False Fire Alarm and Parking incidents. Compared to Q1 2023, there was a decrease of 129 calls, mainly due to reductions in Neighbour Disputes, Welfare Check and Parking incidents.



¹ One call may have multiple incidents reported.

Figure 1: Calls For Service in VRP Communities Q1-2023 to Q1-2024

Crime in TCHC’s VRP Communities (Property and Persons)

Attachment 1, Table 2c provides a detailed breakdown of crimes against persons and property in VRP communities, including seniors, family, and family pilot sites. Note, the data shown for this quarter is only up to March 25th due to RMS system switch over.

Crimes against Property

Compared to Q1 2023, there was an increase of 23 incidents (14%), driven by reported Thefts and Mischiefs. Additionally, there was an increase of 12 incidents compared to Q4 2023 primarily due to increases in reported Mischief incidents.

Crimes Against Property in VRP Communities

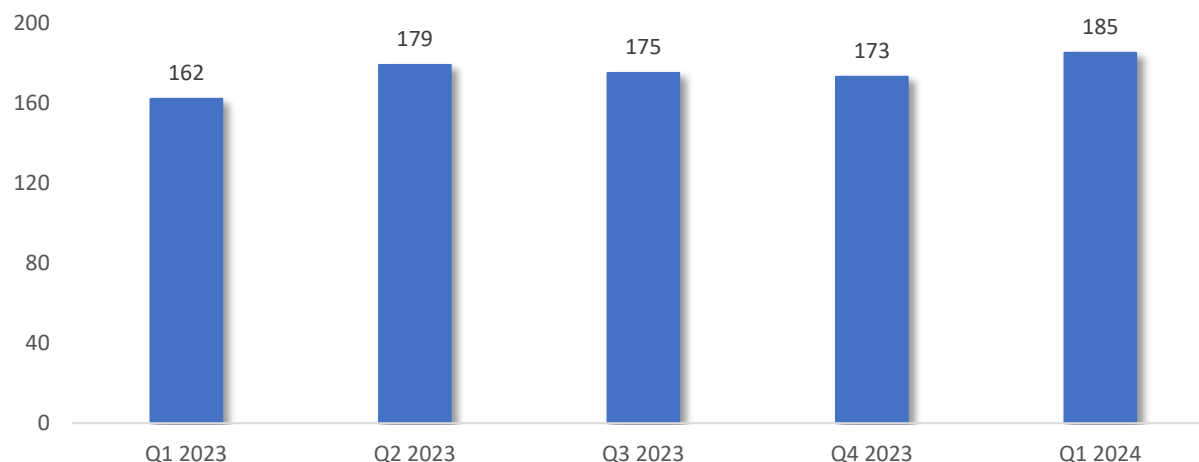


Figure 2: Crimes Against Property in VRP Communities Q1- 2023 to Q1-2024

Crimes against Persons

Following a decrease last quarter, crime against persons increased by 11 incidents (18%), primarily driven by increases in reported Robbery, Homicide and Assault incidents. However, there were 18 incidents less than the peak observed in Q2 2023.

Crimes Against Persons in VRP Communities

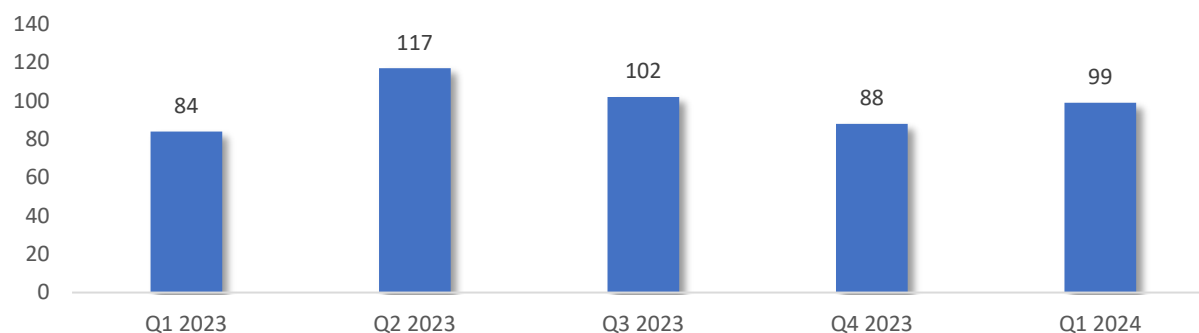


Figure 3: Crimes against Persons in VRP Communities Q1- 2023 to Q1-2024

We continue to work with the City of Toronto on mapping shooting incidents in TCHC Communities, data is expected to be available for the Q4 2024 VRP report.

Crime Prevention Efforts

CSU remains committed to reducing and preventing crime on TCHC properties, particularly within the VRP sites, utilizing safety audits incorporating Crime Prevention through Environmental Design ("CPTED") principles to inform recommendations aimed at fostering a safer environment. 22 safety audits were conducted in Q1 2024.

Efforts to enhance collaboration with TPS Divisional Neighborhood Officers and the active involvement of the MCERT team in both the VRP and high-risk communities are anticipated to contribute to additional crime prevention through effective and coordinated community policing.

CSU patrols serve as proactive measures to deter crime and build relationships with tenants, site staff, and stakeholders. Patrols, conducted on foot or mobile totalled 1,430 in Q1 2024, including joint efforts with Toronto Police. Patrol schedules are contingent on VRP CSU officer availability, TPS availability, and community needs.

Special Constables, Field Intelligence Officers ("FIO") and Community Safety Advisors ("CSA") participate in integrated community meetings with site staff to discuss crime trends and reporting, and to customize response strategies for individual communities. In addition, Special Constables, CSA's and FIO's attend intelligence sharing meetings along with Toronto Police and other agencies to exchange information and collaborate on crime prevention strategies.

CSAs prioritized engagement activities to improve communication and address safety issues within communities. These initiatives include community events, presentations, critical incident response, safety meetings, tenant management meetings and tenant visits. However, there was a decrease in engagement activities at the VRP sites due to resource and tracking challenges, as outlined in Attachment 1 Table 2.

VRP initiatives are aimed at fostering safer communities, by building collaborative relationships with TCHC/ TSHC tenants, youth, seniors, staff, labour partners, city of Toronto, and other local organizations. For detailed information on Q1 2024 for Violence Reduction Program Initiatives for Programs and Partnership and CSU, refer to Attachments 2 and 3 respectively.

In collaboration with regional teams, TCHC's Legal Services Division plays a critical role in crime prevention and intervention by issuing eviction notices, including N6 (illegal acts), N7 (health and safety) and N5 notices for antisocial behaviours such as interfering with others, damage to property, and overcrowding. These notices underscore TCHC's commitment to maintaining a secure living environment for all tenants. Refer to Attachment 1, Table 2 for a detailed breakdown of notices for eviction.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:

With twelve CSU VRP positions vacant and on hold as directed by the Board, existing front line patrol staff within CSU fulfill these duties as needed.

While serving current VRP sites and five pilot sites, maintaining coverage poses challenges as officers may be called to respond to priority calls or critical incidents throughout the City, potentially leaving any VRP locations unattended or underserved, leading to possible increases in anti-social activities.

SIGNATURES:

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Acting Senior Director, Community Safety Unit

AND

"Arsema Berhane"

Arsema Berhane
Acting Director, Programs and Partnerships, Operations

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Supporting Data (Q1 2024)
2. Q1 2024 Violence Reduction Program Initiatives led by Programs and Partnerships.
3. Q1 2024 Violence Reduction Program initiatives led by CSU.

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Item 7 – Violence Reduction Program Update – Q1 2024
 Public CSAC Meeting – June 3, 2024
 Report #: CSAC:2024-08
Attachment 1

Table 1: Q1 2024 Breakdown of Community Services Coordinators (“CSC”) Activity

Measure	Programs and Partnerships – Violence Reduction Program	Cumulative
	Q1	2024
Number of successful referrals to agencies or programs (mental health, education, employment, etc.)	166	166
Number of safety related initiatives supported, led, or initiated (community safety meetings, audits, etc.)	24	24

The Q1 2024 report reflects the activities of the Centralized team. Previously, activities were compiled regionally.

Table 2: Actions taken in VRP Communities (including broader Dan Harrison) (Q1 2024)¹ (does not include data from pilot sites)

VRP ACTIVITY	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Jan-24*	Feb-24*	Mar-24*	Q1 2024*
Request for Service (dispatched or on-site requests)								
Calls for service (**) - VRP (note: one call can have multiple incidents reported below)	4672	4719	4247	4588	1702	1539	1302	4543
Crime on TCHC Property								
Crimes Against Property - VRP	162	179	175	173	58	64	63	185
Total Crimes Against Person (CAP) - VRP	84	117	102	88	38	33	28	99
CAP- Serious Violent Incidents -VRP	26	49	46	41	19	13	13	45
CAP- Other Incidents - VRP	58	68	55	47	19	20	15	54
Reactive Work/Intervention								
Arrests VRP	101	82	100	85	55	35	36	126
Tenant Arrest	18	19	26	17	5	10	9	24
Non-Tenant Arrest	75	58	68	64	46	25	24	95
Not Specified	8	5	6	4	4	0	3	7
N6 & N7 issued by Legal (evictions for H&S and Illegal Acts)	19	29	16	13	11	3	5	19

VRP ACTIVITY	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Jan-24*	Feb-24*	Mar-24*	Q1 2024*
Wellness check (Assist Resident - Check Welfare) - VRP	270	257	200	179	71	46	51	168
Mental Health Act - VRP	18	20	27	19	7	2	5	14
Narcans Administered - VRP	2	2	2	4	0	2	1	3
Trespass Incidents -VRP	316	232	186	273	129	114	90	333
CCTV (FOI, Legal, OU. TPS) - VRP (vast majority are for TPS)	139	157	151	107	53	58	47	158
VRP Proactive Work								
Safety Audits - All TCHC	10	33	31	30	11	10	1	22
Patrols - VRP	3272	2750	2456	1764	449	499	482	1430
Patrols CSU mobile/Foot/Initiated/focused	3217	2702	2416	1715	438	488	475	1401
Patrol - Joint CSU and TPS - VRP	55	48	40	49	11	11	7	29
Engagement Activities (***)- VRP	207	230	249	269	57	50	59	166
Referrals of vulnerable tenants - VRP	11	9	5	22	2	7	3	12
<p>* Data only up to March 25 0700hrs due to RMS system switch over.</p> <p>** Calls for service are reported by counting distinct CORA report numbers generated whenever a call for service is received, when officers on site respond to complaints and incidents and generate a CORA report, or otherwise entered by the dispatcher as a call for service.</p> <p>***Engagement activity data excludes activities initiated or participated in by Special Constables.</p>								

Table 2a: Calls for Service by VRP Community (Q1 2024) – Pilot sites shown separately.

VRP Calls For Service (note: one call can have multiple incidents)						
Community	Portfolio	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024*
Bleecker/200 Wellesley	Family	1041	999	791	1043	985
Dan Harrison / William Dennison	Family	492	488	372	517	615
Dan Harrison / William Dennison	Senior	41	36	42	34	21
Edgeley Village	Family	82	124	94	81	78
Edgeley Village	Senior	24	36	38	34	20
Flemingdon Park/Glenyan Manor	Family	153	117	105	71	73
Flemingdon Park/Glenyan Manor	Senior	29	21	34	13	24
Islington/St. Andrews	Family	67	69	70	61	51
Jane/Falstaff	Family	443	514	389	516	512
Lawrence	Family	672	627	787	739	766
Lawrence Heights	Family	347	299	247	251	209
Lawrence Heights	Senior	13	11	7	10	12
Moss Park	Family	731	714	632	646	676
Regent Park/Gerrard River	Family	475	547	498	500	418
Regent Park/Gerrard River	Senior	12	21	17	14	7
Victoria Park/Chester Le Blvd	Family	50	96	124	58	76

*Data up to March 25 0700hrs due to RMS system switch over

Table 2b: Calls for Service by VRP Pilot sites. (Q1 2024)

VRP Pilot sites - Calls For Service (note: one call can have multiple incidents)							
Community	Development	Portfolio	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024*
Centennial Apartments/O'Connor Dr	Centennial Apartments	Family	71	121	121	156	115
Centennial Apartments/O'Connor Dr	O'Connor Drive	Family	36	28	38	46	35
Dunn Ave	Dunn Avenue	Family	246	170	125	150	135
Eagle Manor	Eagle Manor	Family	183	127	92	199	163
Flemingdon Park/Glenyan Manor	Flemingdon Park	Family	154	117	105	71	73
Yorkwoods Village	Yorkwoods Village	Family	131	86	65	105	117
*Data up to March 25 0700hrs due to RMS system switch over							

Table 2c: Crimes against Persons and Property in VRP – Shown separately for Family, Senior and Family Pilot Sites (Q1 2024)

Crimes against Persons and Property (Family)	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024*
Total Crimes against Persons	82	116	96	87	96
<i>Less Serious Violent Incidents</i>	56	68	53	46	53
<i>Serious Violent Incidents</i>	26	48	43	41	43
Total Crimes against Property	156	167	164	169	182
*Data up to March 25 0700hrs due to RMS system switch over					

Crimes against Persons and Property (Senior)	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024*
Total Crimes against Persons	2	1	5	1	3
<i>Less Serious Violent Incidents</i>	2	0	2	1	1
<i>Serious Violent Incidents</i>	0	1	3	0	2
Total Crimes against Property	6	12	11	4	3
*Data up to March 25 0700hrs due to RMS system switch over					

Crimes against Persons and Property (Family Pilot Sites)	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024*
Total Crimes against Persons	20	21	27	26	22
<i>Less Serious Violent Incidents</i>	12	14	12	13	12
<i>Serious Violent Incidents</i>	8	7	15	13	10
Total Crimes against Property	30	25	26	34	32
*Data up to March 25 0700hrs due to RMS system switch over					

Table 2d: Proactive Work in VRP Revitalization Communities (Q1 2024)

Revite Proactive Work	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q4 2023	Q1 2024 *
Patrols CSU mobile/Foot/Initiated/focused	658	621	586	402	209
Patrol - Joint CSU and TPS - VRP	0	2	0	1	0
Engagement Activities - VRP	29	59	69	60	42
Referrals of vulnerable tenants- VRP	4	7	5	15	10

Note: These stats represent the communities of Lawrence Heights and Regent Park. *Data up to March 25 0700hrs due to RMS system switch over

Table 1: Q1 2024, Violence Reduction Program Initiatives led by Programs and Partnerships

Initiatives
Attended Community Police Liaison Committee meetings in Yorkwoods Village and Edgeley Village Driftwood, where resources were shared, and updates provided on TCHC initiatives to deliver community programming and improve lighting.
In partnership with the City of Toronto and the Boys and Girls Club, supported a team of community leaders to launch Changing Lanes, a youth-led community initiative that brings workshops, counselling, and programs to Yorkwoods Village.
Brought a group of youth from Edgeley Village Shoreham on a tour of McMaster University and a workshop on education and sports.
Initiated a collective response to tenant concerns at Downsview Acres. Partners include Engagement, Active Living, Community Safety Unit and Toronto Police Service.
Partnered with Engagement to open the iHelp community space in Kipling Mount Olive, starting with a drop-in program with 23 Division Neighbourhood Community Officers. VRP and Engagement have been conducting community consultations to get tenant feedback on the operation of the space and to determine the type of programming the community wishes to have available.
Entered into partnership discussions with Jane Neighbourhood Alliance Services to bring its youth violence prevention programming to 5 Bellevue.
Initiated partnership with Engagement, Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation, Toronto Police Service and TCHC tenants to take a collective approach to preventing violence in the area of the Dan Harrison Complex and William Dennison Apartments.
Staff vacancy in the Morningside Coronation community has been filled. VRP is supporting programs in the local community space, named our space. Programming includes a restorative justice program. Staff have also begun identifying and supporting those at risk of involvement in violence.

Initiatives
VRP staff developed a community development framework for the under-development iHelp Centres, focusing on tenant engagement and training.
VRP continues to connect East Region tenants to employment opportunities through its partnership with Access Employment.
Partnered with Engagement to provide resources and support to vulnerable families in the East Region.
Initiated a resident-led safety network in Kingston Gallloway. Responsibility for the network will be coordinated between tenants and the East Region.
Established a safety network for the O'Connor Drive community. Next meeting is scheduled for May 2024.
Completed problem analyses to identify causes of violence in several VRP communities. Lessons from the problem analyses will be applied to planning future programs and initiatives.

Reporting for Q1 2024 reflects activities of the Centralized team. Previously, activities were compiled regionally.

Table 1: Q1 2024, Violence Reduction Program Initiatives in Q1 2024 that CSU participated in. (Many are co-hosted with other business units within TCHC such as Development, Operations and Programs and Partnership.)

Q1 2024
Building Community Partnerships January 27 - Jane-Finch Gives Back - CSU members attended and donated gift cards, boxes of new toys, winter clothing and baby food. Mayor Chow and Ms. Jamaica were in attendance. February 24 - Grandravine Community - Vigil and prayer walk with community members. March 17 - Scarborough Youth Event at the Scarborough Civic Centre March 27 - Valia Easter Food Basket Give Away March 28 - Danzig Easter Food Basket give away.
Safety Education 22 January - 931 Yonge Street - Safety Outreach Meeting 11 March - 1901 Weston Road - Community meeting with TPS, local City Councillor and tenants.

Community initiatives provide CSU Staff with the opportunity to engage with tenants in a less formal manner. This interaction facilitates connections between staff and community members who may not typically interact. Such exchanges enable officers to obtain valuable information regarding community issues that tenants might not necessarily report through service calls, thereby identifying underlying problems within the community that may otherwise go unreported to our staff.