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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Report: #2024-INFO-81
Date: November 29, 2024

Subject:

Community Awareness Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence 2024

Recommendation:

Receive for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the inaugural Community Awareness Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), which was held at Durham Region Headquarters in Whitby on Saturday, September 21, 2024.

2. Background

2.1 Intimate partner violence (IPV), also known as spousal or domestic violence is a prevalent form of gender-based violence. It refers to multiple forms of harm (including physical, economic/financial, sexual, spiritual, emotional/psychological abuse) caused by a current or former intimate partner or spouse.

2.2 At the April 26, 2023, Durham Regional Council meeting, a [delegation](#) comprised of representatives of Violence Against Women (VAW) responding agencies highlighted the increasing prevalence of IPV and femicide in Durham Region, and resource constraints to address growing needs. The presentation also highlighted the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations, which are [86 recommendations](#) for preventing and responding to IPV that were made following the coroner's inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew County in September 2015. The presentation highlighted the following recommendations: formally declare IPV as an epidemic and call on the Ontario

Government to do the same (Recommendation #1); and encourage that prevention of IPV be integrated into every municipality's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (Recommendation #10).

- 2.3 A [motion](#) was approved by Council to implement Recommendations #1 and #10 of the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations. The most recent reports relevant to the Region's implementation of these recommendations include:
- a. [2024-A-9](#) Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan Update.
 - b. [2023-A-15](#) Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan Update.

3. Community Awareness Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence

- 3.1 The Community Awareness Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence was organized collaboratively by eight Violence Against Women (VAW) responding agencies, in partnership with the Region of Durham. These agencies operated the fundraising components related to this event. They include:
- a. Bethesda House
 - b. Herizon House
 - c. Luke's Place
 - d. Safety Network Durham
 - e. The Denise House
 - f. Victim Services Durham Region
 - g. Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham Region
 - h. YWCA Durham
- 3.2 This event helped to address the growing need to increase public awareness of IPV and Gender-based Violence (GBV). It also highlighted services and supports available for survivors, as well as galvanizing community support and collective action against IPV.
- 3.3 A coordinated approach was employed with support from the Region of Durham, with event details, registration, and communication efforts. VAW agency run fundraising initiatives were managed through a platform administered by CanadaHelps (see Attachment #1 for Event Poster). Participants registered individually or as groups for the 2.4 km walk, which began and ended at Durham Region Headquarters. For those unable to participate in the walk, donations and on-site activities provided further means of involvement.
- 3.4 The event commenced with an Indigenous opening ceremony led by Susan Byrne-Osso, a Crisis Intervention Counsellor with Victim Services of Durham Region and Vice President of Bawaajigewin Aboriginal Community Circle. Opening remarks

were delivered by Durham Regional Chair John Henry, Riley Spigarelli (Manager, Safety Network Durham), and Vanessa Falcon (Executive Director, Herizon House). They emphasized the escalating IPV and femicide cases in the region, the urgent need for resources, and the value of community-driven efforts in addressing IPV.

- 3.5 Leaders of the partnering agencies led the walk, carrying a banner symbolizing solidarity and the shared commitment to end IPV.
- 3.6 The event featured educational displays from various VAW organizations, offering valuable information on support services. Sponsors of the event included Clarington Toyota, Elm Law, Kloss Family Massage, LCG Law, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Ontario Power Generation, and Sorbara Law. Additionally, the event received significant in-kind contributions from local businesses and institutions, including:
 - a. Ice Cream Kingdom (ice cream)
 - b. Algoma Orchards (apples)
 - c. Sobeys, South Ajax (granola bars)
 - d. Tim Hortons, Westney South Ajax (coffee, tea, Timbits, and gift baskets)
 - e. Ontario Tech University (gift baskets)
 - f. Womens Fitness Clubs of Canada, Ajax (bags and vouchers)
- 3.7 The event attracted over 200 participants, including members of the public, community partners, sponsors and elected officials. Over \$40,000 was raised by the VAW response agencies through their fundraising efforts. The walk was a vital step toward amplifying community efforts to tackle IPV and the supporting organizations that provide critical services to survivors.
- 3.8 The Planning Committee, comprised of representatives from the partnering organizations, continues to meet regularly post-event. The committee is focused on evaluating the event's impact, identifying areas for improvement, and planning for the Second Annual Community Awareness Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence in 2025 (date TBD).

4. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 4.1 This report aligns with the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
 - a. Goal 2: Community Vitality:
 - 2.2 Enhance community safety and well-being.
 - 2.3 Influence the social determinants of health to improve outcomes for vulnerable populations.

- 2.4 Support a high quality of life for all through human services delivery.
- b. Goal 4: Social Investment:
- 4.1 Revitalize community housing and improve housing choice, affordability and sustainability.
 - 4.2 Build awareness and community capacity to address poverty.
 - 4.3 Demonstrate leadership in poverty prevention.
 - 4.4 Expand access to existing life stabilization programs.
- c. Goal 5: Service Excellence:
- 5.1 Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The inaugural Community Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence was a success, uniting members across the community to raise awareness and advocate for change. As the prevalence of IPV continues to rise, the need for increased services and resources remains critical. This walk served as an important platform for community supporters and organizations to come together to address IPV in Durham Region.
- 5.2 Regional staff from the CAO's Office (Community Safety and Well-Being Secretariat), Health and Social Services Departments as well as members of the Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC) of Durham continue to work together to develop a Community Action Plan. This document will outline key actions that could be taken to address IPV and GBV in Durham Region, as part of the [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan's](#) Victimization priority risk factor.
- 5.3 For additional information, contact: Kiersten Allore-Engel, Manager, Community Safety and Well-Being, at 905-668-7711, extension 2321.

Attachments

Attachment #1: Event Poster

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE

Community Walk to End Intimate Partner Violence

This event is more than just a walk; it's a powerful demonstration of our community's commitment to ending intimate partner violence. Together we are raising vital funds, advocating for policy changes, supporting survivors, and educating everyone on how to prevent intimate partner violence. Participate by forming a team, raising funds, donating, or spreading awareness. Join us in making a difference and keeping our communities safer.



Saturday, September 21, 2024



10 a.m. Rally, 11 a.m. Walk



**Durham Region Headquarters
605 Rossland Rd East, Whitby**

Purchase your tickets now, or create a team, and let's unlock hope, transform lives and a build a legacy of positive change. Together, we are the difference makers.



BETHESDA HOUSE



safety network
DURHAM



Luke's Place



YWCA
DURHAM



Herizon
house
the first steps towards hope.



The Denise House

Register Now!

<https://loom.ly/o9xpXW8>

