

Crime Prevention Pays: Why Stopping Crime Before It Happens Saves Us All

By Anjana Dooling
for Crime Prevention Ottawa

It seems like a simple concept: if you do the crime, you do the time. Many of us like the balance of this cause and effect equation—people who commit crimes get arrested and go to jail. But does it really work to stop crime? We often forget an important piece of the puzzle that comes before the crime is committed: namely, the work of organizations like Crime Prevention Ottawa that mobilise governments, law enforcement, communities, schools, parents and children to prevent crime from happening. Preventing crime actually saves us more than we realize.

We are all the victims of crime when we pay for it. For an average municipality of 900,000 people, the estimated annual costs of crime to victims and the public is more than \$1.3 billion. Taxpayers pay more than \$270 million mostly from municipal taxes for policing and \$81 million for corrections from federal and provincial taxes.

It's a staggering amount of money when you think about how investing in crime prevention can help our pocketbooks. Studies confirm that \$1 invested now in crime prevention, for example parent training or stopping a young person dropping out of school, avoids \$7 for increased incarceration. A dollar for enriched child care

saves \$17 in criminal justice costs. This compelling case—that crime prevention pays—has been chosen as the theme of Ontario's Crime Prevention Week, which takes place November 1–7, 2009.

Still not convinced? In Canada it costs almost \$100,000 to put a young person in jail for 1 year. In that year, far less money could see that young person: swim twice a week for 30 weeks; skate once a week for 15 weeks; play basketball in a league once a week for 26 weeks; participate in fencing or karate for a season; participate in a drop-in program 4 hours per week for 40 weeks; and, learn to sail and act, gain computer, first aid, and leadership skills. Also, all equipment and supplies could be provided, as well as a bus pass, bicycle and helmet for transportation.

It's not just about the numbers, says Vern White, Chief of Police with the Ottawa Police Services. "The minute you start feeling like your community is safer and that crime is going down, things get better," Chief White states.

Crime Prevention Ottawa (CPO) contributes to crime reduction and enhanced community safety in Ottawa. November 1–7 is Crime Prevention Week. Check CPO's website at www.crimepreventionottawa.ca.

Spooky Manor Park

By Robert Todd

Creaking stairs; the rustle of clothing in an empty room; a voice at the end of a long, dark hallway—Jeepers creepers! Ghosts make good movie fodder and ghost-hunting shows are a staple on cable TV. However, the closest that most of us might get to a haunted house is the inflated castle at Mayfair. Has anyone seen ghosts in Manor Park?

It turns out that we had an unexplained happening some 17 years back. Early one morning in June 1992, items of furniture started flying across the living room of three residents of an apartment on St Laurent Blvd. just north of Hemlock. This disturbing experience continued with loud thumping that started at the back door of their upper floor flat. Not long after, walls started moving, pictures fell, plants tipped over and a vase dropped on the floor. Mildly disturbing, wouldn't you say? They thought so, as did the police officer who witnessed the results of the disturbance.



What caused this noise and upset?

Environment Canada told a curious Ottawa Citizen reporter that there had been neither strange weather nor tornadoes that night; no earthquake either. And, since it was June, it was unlikely to have been caused by wandering spirits from nearby Beechwood Cemetery—or was it?

Someone contacted a seasoned professional, a local astrologer with a passion for 'unearthing the truth'. She took less than a minute to divine that the place suffered from a polter-

geist. Bothersome and annoying, poltergeists seem attracted to adolescents and their stressful states. (Can this explain their messy rooms?) So, what ya gonna do? Call PolterBusters? Since this X-files incident, nothing further has happened; at least nothing has been whispered!

Is Manor Park haunted? That night, there were a few localized thunderstorms. Someone who was not asked at the time has an explanation more in keeping with the laws of physics: something about the wind in the trees, or in the satellite dishes, or something. "The truth will save you, Scully. I think it will save both of us." Cue the closing sequence. Fade theme music and titles to black. Boo!

Police launch redesigned website

As part of Crime Prevention Week, Ottawa Police Services launched a new, easier to navigate, visitor-friendly website on Monday, November 2. Check: (www.ottawapolice.ca) for details.

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