

Media Release

Local community partnership initiative receives international recognition

'Connectivity Waterloo Region' receives award from International Association of Chiefs of Police

For Immediate Release: November 4, 2015

Waterloo Region, Ontario – Representatives from almost 30 community agencies sit around the table that makes up 'Connectivity Waterloo Region,' and although they all bring something different to the discussion, the belief all partners hold in common is that early intervention can help people and impact the broader community. *Connectivity* is a collaborative, community-based response to the 80% of calls for service to police which are not criminal in nature.

The group meets weekly, and operated in both Kitchener and Cambridge, to discuss cases where assistance from community support services may improve a situation or assist an individual in getting the resources they need to succeed. It is designed to connect individuals and families at acutely elevated risk to the appropriate services and supports within 24-48 hours. The process is one which each member is committed to and offers backing from their respective organizations.

The **International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)** acknowledged the effective collaboration of the program on Monday, October 26th at its annual conference, by awarding the **2015 IACP/Motorola Solutions Webber Seavey Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement** to the Waterloo Regional Police Service in partnership with Langs Health and Wellness Centre and Carizon Family and Community Services.

This prestigious award, which recognizes public servants who have identified a need in the community and took action to address it, is presented to only three unranked recipients from the 44 applications received from around the world this year. Chief Bryan Larkin accepted the award in person and spoke with great pride and appreciation at this morning's Police Services Board meeting.

"The success of this program speaks to the impact of partnerships, innovation, and hard work," said Chief Bryan Larkin. "We are extremely proud of the significant effort that has gone in to this program and we know the dedication - both behind the scenes and around the connectivity table - is making a difference in our community and improving the safety and wellbeing for many individuals living in Waterloo Region."

There are currently two situation response tables – one in Cambridge hosted by Langs Health and Wellness Centre, and the other in Kitchener, hosted by Carizon Family and Community Services. The partner organizations, which support the discussions and identify the response, come from areas such as health, education, justice, mental health assistance, family supports, police, and community services.

"It is not only a significant honour to be recognized, more importantly it is a true example of the success that can be achieved when agencies come together to work in partnership," said Gary Desborough, Board Chair of Langs. "The result is a more timely, integrated response to the immediate needs of individuals who need to be connected to services."

In appreciation of the recognition, and to promote the effectiveness of the program, **an event is being held on Friday, November 6 at the Victoria Park Pavilion in Kitchener at 9 a.m.** Representatives from partner organizations will be available for media interviews.



"This award recognizes the impact of a creative and innovative approach which has resulted in enhanced communication and cooperation among member agencies with a view to improving services to families and individuals in our community," said Vivian Zochowski, President, Board of Directors, Carizon Family and Community Services.

Connectivity Waterloo Region has been in operation since January 2013 and began and represents the power and possibility of effective collaboration. To view a video about the program, click [here](#).

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