

Kudos to the community's front-line workers

By Sarah Sobanski

It is important to remember our front line workers – the heroes that continue to protect our ways of life. Area first responders – men and women of the North Hastings Fire Service, Hastings-Quinte Paramedic Services and the Bancroft OPP detachment – risk their lives for our safety every day. Area secondary responders – men and women of North Hastings Children's Services, Maggie's Resource Centre of North Hastings and others – work every day to defend the rights of everyday people in everyday ways. Whether it be fighting flames; or murderers; or saving someone whose rights were taken because someone else decided to drink and drive; or helping a family break the cycle of domestic abuse – Canadians have a lot to be thankful for. Bancroft and surrounding area first and second responders have been working very hard to collaborate for the betterment of our community.

In August, Hastings-Quinte Paramedic Services's chief Doug Socha told *Bancroft This Week* the services had been actively participating in studies with the provincial government to help research wellness concerns for paramedics. In other words, investigations were ongoing, and continuing into the stressors that impacted the mental health of emergency responders like PTSD. Taking mental health into account – when the vast majority of front-line responders of previous generations were expected to grin and bear it – was huge. It was the first step in opening the conversation for other area emergency responders.

Fast-forward and North Hastings Children's Services announced its North Hastings Family Support Team, which will collaborate with area first and second responders to help families transition from making a call to the OPP, to gaining access to the support they need after reporting a crime like domestic assault. It will also work to make resources available to struggling families to work towards crime prevention.

The formal announcement of the support team came at the celebration for the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan. The plan focuses on crime reduction and prevention for prevalent crime in the community – which detachment commander for the Bancroft OPP Tim Spence suggested is domestic violence crimes. The plan reached out to partner with community groups to work towards solutions for area crimes.

Accomplishments like these can't happen without incredible dedication from community members who care about the area – where each of our many loved-ones sleep.

As we come out of crime prevention week, and we celebrate our veterans and their sacrifices, it's important to remember those who sacrifice for this community every day. It can be as simple as giving up one's time to volunteer as a member of the auxiliary groups for any of the previously mentioned organizations, or for the organizations themselves, and it can run a spectrum all the way to the heartbreaking truth that some people had to give their lives so we can continue to live the way we do.

Go out of your way to give a smile, or a thank you, to those who quietly serve this community. We couldn't do it without any of them.