

Community Education and Access to Police Complaints Demonstration Project (CEAPC)

October 2005

Have you had a negative interaction with police?

In March of 2005 Scadding Court Community Centre in partnership with over thirty¹ other agencies launched the **Community Education and Access to Police Complaints Demonstration Project (CEAPC)**. The primary goal of this two year demonstration project is to ensure that the police complaints system is accessible and available to the specific needs of community members, particularly those from marginalized communities. In addition the project provides opportunities for members of the general public to learn more about their rights when dealing with the police and the justice system. Staff from the various partner agencies provide support in documenting and filing a complaint, information on the process and what to expect once the complaint is filed, and language translation where needed.

The project originated from the recognition that people who have had negative experiences with police were reluctant, or did not know how to access the police complaints system. This in itself was an observation that many activists in the community had been making since the early 1970's. Throughout the 70's and 80's various amendments were made to legislation which was met with varying levels of approval by those concerned about the issue. The most recent changes came under the Ontario Tories in 1997, which streamlined various bodies into a simpler (many would

¹The partner agencies are: African Canadian Social Development Council, Alexandra Park Community Centre, Alexandra Park Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Atkinson Co-Op, Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Canadian Arab Federation, Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto, Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre, Delta Family Resource Centre, Fort York Food Bank, Hispanic Development Council, Hong Fook Mental Health Association, Jamaican Canadian Association, Jane/Finch Community Legal Services, Jane/Finch Concerned Citizens Organization, Justice For Children and Youth, Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services, Midaynta Association of Somali Serving Agencies, New Experiences for Newcomer Women, Ontario Council Of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Regent Park Resident Council, Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, South Asian Family Support Services, South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, South Asian Women's Centre, St. Christopher House, St. Stephen's Community House, Streethealth, Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Police Accountability Coalition, Toronto Police Services, YMCA Youth Intervention and Outreach Services

argue less effective) system. In 2003 the Ontario Human Rights Commission released its report into the detrimental effects racial profiling, in that report the recommendation was made to have the greater civilian involvement in the police complaints system. In June 2004 Attorney General the Honourable Michael Byrant mandated The Honourable Patrick Lesage Q.C. to review the current police services

While many in the community welcomed the governments' willingness to review the legislation there has always been the recognition that any legislative changes would be ineffective without support mechanisms to assist individuals wishing to access the complaints system. Therefore in April of 2003 SCCC began discussions with then Chief of Police Julian Fantino about developing these supports for people wishing to file a complaint under the current system.

Staff in 17 of the partner agencies² have been trained to support individuals throughout the complaints system. In addition material is being developed in sixteen different languages on the police complaints process, newcomer rights when dealing with the police and hate crimes. CEAPC has also developed five workshops covering the following issues:

The Police Complaints Process

Designed to provide information to community members about the police complaints process, this workshop discusses how to file a complaint, where to file one in a safe and supportive environment that is not a police station, and what happens to a complaint once it is filed.

Hate Crimes

Distinguishing between discrimination and hate crime, this workshop provides information on how to identify hate crimes and what to do if you or someone you know is a target of a hate.

² The intake partners are Alexandra Park Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Canadian Arab Federation, Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre, Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre, Fort York Food Bank, Hong Fook Mental Health Association, Justice For Children and Youth, Midaynta Association of Somali Serving Agencies, Scadding Court Community Centre, South Asian Family Support Services, South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, South Asian Women's Centre, St. Christopher House, St. Stephen's Community House, Streethealth, Toronto Community Housing.

Youth Criminal Justice Act/Youth Rights

This workshop is intended to help young people identify and dispel common myths surrounding the Youth Criminal Justice Act and will provide them with information on their legal rights and responsibilities.

Information For Parents Whose Children Are Involved With The Law

This workshop is intended to help parents and guardians identify and dispel common myths regarding the Youth Justice Act, while providing information on their legal rights and responsibilities. It also identifies and discusses ways you can help your child through the system.

Immigrant And Newcomer Rights And The Police

This workshop will provide information on legal rights, responsibilities and options that immigrants and newcomers have when stopped, questioned and searched by police officers.

For more information on the project and its services, contact Leila Sarangi, CEAPC Project Coordinator at (416) 392-0335 ext 233 or one of the sixteen partner agencies listed above.