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The Saint John Youth Project



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The Saint John Youth Project

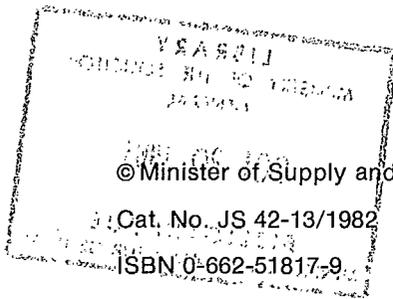
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THE SAINT JOHN YOUTH PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saint John Youth Project is a preventive youth policing project, that was established in early 1978. The activities of the project are a function of its philosophy, which recognizes that the emphasis must be on police co-operation with the community in solving crime and social problems.

The Project employs four Youth Officers, with one located in each of the four distinguishable communities of Saint John. The Youth Officers work in harmony with the home, the school, and the church. The role of the Youth Division Officer results from the pairing of the concepts of prevention and community focus of the Saint John Youth Project. Unlike other more traditional Youth Divisions across the country, Youth Officers in the Saint John Youth Project do no investigative work.

Specific programs are organized around the goals of the Project. The goals include prevention, community participation and liaising with other agencies. The first program to be implemented was the School Liaison Program, which is designed to establish a rapport between young people and the police and the juvenile justice system and in so doing, reduce juvenile delinquency.

Youth Division Officers make formal presentations on a variety of topics to classes in the School District. Informally,

Youth Officers make themselves available to students and staff and participate in extra-curricular activities.

A Diversion Program also forms a part of the Saint John Youth Project. The purpose of this program is to involve communities and individual citizens in the resolution of minor, non-dangerous offences committed by youths, and to provide an alternative to traditional juvenile justice procedures. Divertees are referred to a community-based program, where a voluntary settlement of the offence is developed by a diversion committee in co-operation with the offender and his or her parents or guardian, the victim and the community. Most diversion plans include a restitution/work agreement.

The Community Support Program emphasizes the community participation element of the Saint John Youth Project. A volunteer is matched with a young person who could benefit from the relationship and the volunteers, young people and their families, are organized into a support community around various activities. This program has had intermittent funding over the three-year period and is now the object of a further feasibility study.

Because a major goal of the project involves the development of harmonious relationships among youth-serving agencies, advisory committees have been struck to help achieve this goal.

These committees range from one co-ordinating the service delivery of youth agencies on a local basis to a committee which operates on a provincial level. The co-ordinator of the Saint John Youth Project is involved in some capacity on these committees.

The two-and-one-half year demonstration phase of the Project was jointly funded by the Federal Ministry of the Solicitor General and the City of Saint John. Since the end of this demonstration phase, the City of Saint John has become solely responsible for the cost of the Saint John Youth Project.

A number of issues can be identified from the experience of the Saint John Youth Project. In retrospect, it would have been better to develop the structures before the programs were in place. Selection criteria for the Youth Officers and training needs should have been determined in writing before the Project was under way.

The importance of good working relationships with youth serving agencies cannot be overstated. As this is a major goal of the Project, it continues to be pivotal in project operations.

A number of major issues relate to the internal operations of the Saint John Police Department itself. Youth Division Officers must be chosen on the basis of ability as well as seniority. In the past seniority has been the major criteria for assignment to the Youth Division. The rotation procedures of the Police Department have caused disruption in program activities. The Youth Division requires at least one female police officer in its organization. This need has so far proved impossible to meet because of seniority regulations. The allocation of resources is also an issue. There is a need for more vehicles and officers necessary for the development of police-community rapport in so large a geographical area.

There are a number of innovative aspects to this program that need to be underlined. The role of a Civilian Co-ordinator is an interesting component of a police-sponsored project. The

project planners provided for a Civilian Co-ordinator who could bring his own expertise to the project and report directly to the Chief of Police. The community support for the project was consciously developed from the beginning of project operations. The decentralization of the Youth Division Officers has been an integral factor of the project model and its over-all philosophy. The concept of linkage among youth-serving agencies provides for better working relationships among these groups. The specific strategy of implementation for the project has allowed a methodical, well considered development of programs. The focus of the Young Division Officer is on becoming a specialist on the community to which he has been assigned as opposed to becoming a specialist in a particular program such as the Diversion or School Liaison Programs.

Finally, the participatory nature of the Youth Division has been emphasized in its day to day operations.

There is no doubt that the Saint John Youth Project has made important inroads in the Saint John communities and in meeting its original goals. Enthusiasm has been high in the past and will undoubtedly continue to be so. The Project is a commendable approach to preventive youth policing.

(1) PURPOSE

This report documents the purpose, development, implementation and experience of the Saint John Youth Project, St. John, New Brunswick. The intent is also to provide information to groups interested in developing similar projects in their communities.

(2) HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1976, the Chief of Police of Saint John initiated discussions about the possibilities of preventive youth policing in Saint John. These discussions involved finding a suitable model for a Youth Division in Saint John. A consultant was hired to conduct a feasibility study and to develop a proposal for a Youth Division. The study defined the purpose and set the structure for the project as it is today.

The proposal for the Saint John Youth Project outlined three goals, which were--

- a) to prevent youth in the City of Saint John from coming into conflict with the law;
- b) to reduce the dysfunctional aspects of the interrelationships both between components of the criminal justice system and other social service agencies which intervene in the lives of youth in conflict with the law;
- c) to promote community participation in achieving the goals of the Saint John Youth Project.¹

¹ Demonstration Project Proposal, The Saint John Youth Project; submitted by: Saint John Police Department and the City of Saint John, 1977; pg. 1.

In addition, the feasibility study outlined the desirable structure for a Youth Division within the Police Department, specified that an Advisory Committee be struck, and provided for the position of a Civilian Co-ordinator.

It was specified from the outset that the Youth Division should integrate itself with the youth service delivery systems of the community. This was seen as an important role of the Advisory Committee, which would group representatives from appropriate government and non-governmental agencies in the youth services area. The Advisory Committee would also be an integral part of the Project's effort to promote community participation in its activities and it would provide a vital link between the police department and the community it serves.

The role of the Civilian Co-ordinator, although not specified in the feasibility study, included the functions of program designer, consultant to the Youth Division, trainer of Youth Division Officers, consultant to the Police Department and community liaison.

The position of civilian co-ordinator is an interesting departure from regular police practice in the establishment of a Youth Division. The planners of the Youth Project felt that the Co-ordinator of the Project should not have any line responsibilities within the Police Department and that he should report directly to the Chief of Police.

In addition, the Co-ordinator would have experience in social work and the Social Sciences and be able to bring his expertise to the general direction of the Project. A Staff Sergeant would be responsible within the Police Department for the Youth Division Officers under his command.

The feasibility study included a budget for the establishment of the Project which would be funded jointly by the City of Saint John and the Federal Ministry of the Solicitor General.

The study was completed and submitted in January of 1977, funding was obtained on a cost-shared basis and the Saint John Youth Project began operating in February 1978.

Staffing interviews for the Co-ordinator and Youth Division Officer positions were held simultaneously. The Co-ordinator was hired by late February 1978 and Youth Division Officers were in place by April of the same year. The Youth Division Officers were selected by a screening committee which considered experience, training, motivation, attitude, skills, familiarity with the community and grasp of the concept of preventive police work. The Staff Sergeant for the Division had been assigned earlier and participated in the interviews for the Civilian Co-ordinator and Youth Division Officers.

In the early developmental stage of the project, the Co-ordinator visited every social service agency in the community to familiarize individuals with the project and to obtain representation on two separate advisory committees. The Operational Advisory Committee included professional representatives from the juvenile justice system in Saint John to develop a diversion program; the Community Advisory Committee included individuals from social and family service agencies for the development of the focus on preventive youth policing. Both these committees were meeting by June of 1978.

In September, two papers were developed by the Civilian Co-ordinator and circulated to both committees. These two papers

formed the basis for the subsequent development of a number of programs of the Saint John Youth Project. One paper entitled "Case Disposition" outlined the diversion program and the second entitled "Prevention" addressed the issue of preventive youth policing.

As the feasibility study had already identified the need for a school liaison program as the first step in crime prevention programming, this was the first program to be implemented. By September of 1978 the School Liaison Program was in full swing.

The Saint John Youth Division, a preventive youth policing project, includes a School Liaison Program, a Diversion Program and a Community Support Program. All of these activities will be described further in this report.

(3) PHILOSOPHY

Preventive youth policing is the focal point of the Saint John Youth Project. Preventive policing recognizes that there must be a greater emphasis in police work on co-operating with the community in solving its crime problems. Through the common problem solving approach, the policeman works in harmony with the community in solving its crime and social problems. In turn the the community must become involved in assuming its responsibility for its problems.

These principles apply to the preventive youth policing work of the Saint John Youth Division. The emphasis of the Youth Division is not on investigation but rather on the community focus of the project. The Youth Division reduces its alienation from the community by the actual location of its officers in the four communities of Saint John. This decentralization of the Youth Division is the most important application of the principle of community focus. For the most part, Youth Division Officers operate out of community centers in the four communities.

Prevention includes a heightened awareness of youth-related problems in the community and a greater involvement in their resolution. The resources in individual communities are used for setting up programs in that community. In this way the community participates through the use of its resources and more often through other types of involvement in the development of programs in each area.

In a paper entitled "Prevention", written by the Co-ordinator, the facets of the community are further defined: "Inasmuch as the Youth Division is committed to prevention, it becomes obvious that it would concern itself with the home, the school, the church and the physical environment, each of which contributes to the young person's perception of him or herself and his or her environment." Youth Division Officers therefore become specialists on their own communities.

The Youth Division Officer plays many roles within his or her community, all of which result from the pairing of the concepts of prevention and community focus.

(4) PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

(a) The Saint John Youth Division

It must be underlined that the model of the Saint John Youth Division differs substantially from the more traditional approach to the establishment of Youth Divisions. Traditionally the functions of a Youth Division include investigation, charging, court appearances, referral if need be, and all matters pertaining to juveniles. Other officers in the Police Department usually do not handle juvenile matters.

The Saint John Youth Project differs in that the Youth Division Officers do no investigative work. Regular police officers will proceed normally with juvenile cases as they would with any other case. As explained in the philosophy section of this report, the Youth Division Officer offers a support role to the community as opposed to a more specialized professional role. The officers are assigned to a set area where their role is to build on existing resources within that community.

To give an idea of the setting for the Youth Division's work, the City of Saint John is a blue-collar port city with a population of approximately 110,000. This population is spread out over a large geographic area of 105 square miles. Even with a separation of this area into four separate communities, a Youth Division Officer has a large area to cover.

As the feasibility study stated, "the project seeks not only to create a much needed division within the police force, but also to integrate the Youth Division (both functionally and philosophically) into the city's various youth service delivery systems." Further sections of this report will provide a more complete view of the activities of the Youth Division within the Saint John Youth Project.

(b) The School Liaison Program

The School Liaison Program was the first program to be implemented, and began in September 1978. The objectives of the program are--

- to positively effect the attitudes of juveniles towards the police and the whole juvenile justice system;
- to increase the knowledge young people have of the juvenile justice system;
- to develop an effective working relationship between school personnel and the Police Department;
- to reduce juvenile delinquency.

The program is divided into a series of informal and formal activities. Informally, the Youth Division Officers make themselves available to students and staff through various ways. This can include participating in extra-curricular activities at the schools such as sports and dance events; patrolling of school property; participating in "rap" sessions with the students; meeting with school

principals on a regular basis; participating in in-service training for staff and having informal contact with school personnel.

On a more formal basis, a series of presentations is made to classes in the School District. It was decided early in the development of the program that the Youth Division Officers would concentrate on presentations at the grade seven level. Various studies in the United States have indicated that grade seven is a crucial time in the development of adolescents. With the onset of puberty, twelve and thirteen year olds are neither children nor adults and are making the transition between elementary school and junior high. Studies have shown that school violence and vandalism peak in grade seven. Because of the limited resources of the Youth Division, grade seven students have become the focal point for presentations in schools.

The aim is to make eight presentations to these classes during the school year. Presentations can include lectures, role-playing and the use of audio-visual presentations. Subjects include: safety, drugs, bicycle safety, policing today, the law, vandalism, shoplifting, juvenile delinquency, the Courts, motor vehicles and alcohol abuse. In addition, during the year the Youth Division Officer may include a visit to such places as the Police Station and the Family Court.

(c) The Diversion Program

The purpose of the Diversion Program is--

- to involve local communities and individual citizens in the resolution and management of minor, non-dangerous types of unacceptable social behaviours now described as "delinquent" or "criminal";
- to achieve a state of harmony between the juvenile offender, the victim of the offence and the community;
- to promote the most efficient and effective use of the juvenile justice system.

The aim of diversion is to provide an alternative to normal juvenile justice processing. Divertees are referred to a community-based program, where a voluntary settlement of the offence is developed by the diversionary agency in co-operation with the offender and his parents or guardian, the victim and the community.

To be eligible for the program, the incident must be a first offence for the young person. The offence must be a non-violent property one. After a first meeting with the young person and a home interview to obtain more specific information, a diversion committee decides what diversion options will be recommended in the case.

Because the elements of this program are more technical than those of other programs, Appendix A of this report provides a detailed account of the process and statistics of the diversion program.

(d) The Community Support Program

The Community Support Program is a program which emphasizes the community focus of the Saint John Youth Project. As stated in the Annual Report 1979-80, "All our programs have been designed to change community attitudes towards, and enlarge the community's consciousness of, youth related problems and concerns." The ultimate goal of the project involves enabling citizens to take responsibility for the quality of life in their own communities. The Community Support Program is a specific vehicle for this goal.

The purpose of the Community Support Program is "to provide an opportunity for individuals and organizations in the community to work with its young people."

The Program's objectives are--

- to provide guidance, counselling and direction to young persons;
- to facilitate young people's involvement in constructive activity during their leisure time;
- to help the young person develop more acceptable patterns of behaviour in the community; and

- to assist the family of the young person in a way that is appropriate and acceptable to them.

The essence of the Community Support Program is the matching of an adult with a young person who could benefit from the relationship and organizing the volunteer, young people and their families into a support community. The target group is seen as being youths between the ages of twelve and sixteen, whose needs are such that they cannot be met by the existing resources within the home, community organizations, the school, government and private agencies and the juvenile justice system. Besides establishing a relationship with the young person, the adult would serve as an advocate for the youth, in making sure the young person receives the services he or she needs.

There could be groups organized around various activities where interests prevail. These activities could include sports, recreation, hobbies, learning of self-sufficiency skills, vocationally-oriented counselling, citizenship programs and many others. Other programs could include crisis intervention, support work with parents, the establishment of a community crisis home project and personal services teams in the four communities. Volunteers would be screened and trained for their functions.

All of these form the basis for the development of the Community Support Program. The program began in the summer of 1979 through summer Job Corps Project funding. A project director was hired and given total responsibility for implementing the program. Eight students were hired, with two assigned to each of the four communities which the Youth Division serves. The first phase of the program involved

public relations and setting the stage for the implementation phase.

Fortunately the summer job-corps funding became a year-round project and funding was extended from September 1980 to August of 1980. This second phase of the program involved volunteers and such activities as poster contests, the development of a slide/tape show and various crime prevention activities. Funding was ended in March 1980 however and the program came to a halt.

In November 1980 further funding was obtained for a feasibility study. The study is sponsored by the federal Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Saint John Human Development Project. The objective of the study was to develop the Community Support Project into a demonstration project, independent of the Saint John Youth Project, that would be tied into the Human Development Council of Saint John. The feasibility study report is due in late January, 1981.

(e) Committee Structure

The Advisory Committees were specifically established to accomplish the second goal of the project, that is, "to reduce the dysfunctional aspects of the interrelationships both between components of the criminal justice system, and between the criminal justice system and other social service agencies which intervene in the lives of youth in conflict with the law".

The Committees were especially important in the developmental phase of the project, in obtaining public

support and in developing the specific programs of the Project.

In June 1979, because of overlap, the Operational Advisory Committee and the Community Advisory Committee were amalgamated into one committee. This committee became known as the Community Advisory Committee and later evolved into the Youth Services Council.

The focus of the council has been enlarged so that instead of centering on the Saint John Youth Project per se it now promotes communication and co-ordination among all agencies serving young people in Saint John. It encourages citizen participation, promotes public awareness of youth problems, identifies problems and gaps in services, collects and exchanges information on programs to name but a few of its functions. It also oversees the diversion program.

A very important concept in the development of the project was that of establishing linkages to various structures that would provide the project with both resources and support. At the city level, the Youth Project linked up with the Human Development Council of Saint John which is responsible for the co-ordination of the over-all delivery of human services in the city. The Youth Services Council functioned as one of four social planning Committees of the Human Development Council, the other three being senior citizens, the disabled and the family. The Human Development Council is in the process of developing community service councils in each of four geographic communities in Saint John. The Youth Division Officers are

linked to these Community Service Councils. As well, the Community Support Program for Youth is linked to the Community Services Council. At a provincial level there is a Juvenile Justice Planning Committee which has been established to promote communication and co-operation among various agencies and individuals working in or with the juvenile justice system. One of the goals of this committee is to establish local youth-oriented councils. The Youth Services Council is one of these local councils. All these committees support the Saint John Youth Project. The Civilian Co-ordinator is involved in some capacity with all of these committees.

(f) Funding

In February 1978, the Saint John Youth Project obtained funding for a two-and-one-half year demonstration phase. This funding was divided between the Federal Ministry of the Solicitor General and the City of Saint John. The Ministry of the Solicitor General's contribution covered the Civilian Co-ordinator and Secretary's salaries, crime prevention programs, staff development, mileage and evaluation cost. This totalled approximately \$130,000.

The City of Saint John was responsible for the salaries of the Staff Sergeant, Youth Division Officers, office rental and equipment, two vehicles for the Youth Division and office supplies. This amount totalled approximately \$450,000 for the two-and-one-half years.

The amount paid by the Ministry of the Solicitor General was paid directly to the City of Saint John so that the city became responsible for the total financial administration of the Project.

At the end of the demonstration phase the City of Saint John became responsible for the total cost of the Saint John Youth Project.

(5) EVALUATION REPORTS

There have two evaluation reports produced by R. Chanteloup of the University of New Brunswick, since the beginning of the Saint John Youth Project.

These evaluation reports are attitudinal surveys as opposed to full scale evaluations of the Project.

Both reports follow the same methodology. They are comprised of attitudinal information collected by way of questionnaire from the following local populations: adults, youths, police and special interest groups such as social service agencies.

The surveys measure public attitudes towards the Youth Division, youth crime, the diversion program and the need for linkages among youth serving agencies in Saint John. Policemen were also surveyed for their attitudes towards the Youth Division.

In final sections of the reports, Professor Chanteloup concludes with a Summary of Accomplishments.

In the first report he noted that:

After the first nine months of operation, the Youth Project, primarily through its Youth Division, has made the following accomplishments as discussed in this report:

- 1) A possible impact on school vandalism. Those schools involved in the Division's liaison program suffered 22% less vandalism than those schools not yet included in the program.
- 2) A possible impact on the number of juveniles charged in Family Court. Figures comparing 1977 and 1978 show a 19.6% decrease. The short lifetime of the Project requires extreme caution in drawing conclusions.
- 3) The movement of the Youth Division into the key network of local youth-oriented agencies. From here it is in an excellent position to bring about better inter-agency co-ordination and a more functional network of agencies.
- 4) The definition of the Youth Division by other youth-oriented agencies as a major resource and asset to be utilized when working with cases of young people in conflict with the law. It is the fifth most frequently contacted agency in the city and second highest-rated when advice is needed relative to youth crime problems.
- 5) The successful impact of the Division's school liaison program.²

² Chanteloup, R., Saint John Youth Project, Evaluation Report-1: 1978, University of New Brunswick, p. 32-33.

The second evaluation reported on the project after 21 months of operation. The same sources of information were used and the report compares 1978 findings with those of 1979.

It was found that the Youth Project has had remarkable success in developing a more effective network of local agencies dealing with young people. A more positive attitude towards the Youth Division was found in the Police Department than the previous year. The Summary of Accomplishments at the end of the second report included the following points:

- 1) The Youth Project has increased public awareness of the experience of its major operational component, the Youth Division... .
- 2) The Youth Project has increased public acceptance of the Youth Division as a valid and useful strategy for dealing with the problems of youth crime.
- 3) The Youth Project has increased its chances of success vis-a-vis adults and special interests, because the attitudes of these two groups toward the police have become more positive.
- 4) The Youth Project has increased both the awareness of, and interest in, diversion among local clergy, business people and those involved in social services-type jobs.
- 5) The Youth Project has been successful in encouraging various factions of the general public to accept, both generally and personally, involvement in youth crime prevention.
- 6) The Youth Project has achieved notable success in realizing its second major goal: the encouragement of a more functional network among local agencies concerned with young people.
- 7) The Youth Project has improved the perceptions of members of the police force so that a majority now feel the department is doing a good job in the area of youth crime prevention.

- 8) The Youth Project has increased the percentage of police officers who accept the idea of youth crime prevention.
- 9) The Youth Project has increased the percentage of police officers who are interested in Youth Division postings.
- 10) The Youth Project has made the Youth Division, through the School Liaison Program, the single most useful local agency for school principals who are confronted with cases of young people in actual or potential conflict with the law.³

A third evaluation study will report on the year 1980.

(6) FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Because a project such as the Saint John Youth Project is constantly evolving, changes are continuously being planned. The aim of this section is to offer information on areas of change so that this report will include more than a snap shot view of a project arrested in time.

The major modification being planned is that of changing the Saint John Youth Division into a Community Services Division. This would involve the establishment of teams for service delivery in the four geographical areas. The teams would be comprised of two constables, one civilian and six volunteers operating out of a community centre in each of the four communities. The four civilians would include a social worker, a probation officer, a Mental Health worker and a representative of the Department of education. Each team would form a resource

³ Chanteloup, R. Saint John Youth Project, Evaluation Report-2; 1979, University of New Brunswick, p. 41-42.

group pertaining to one of the four program areas: youth policing, crisis intervention, victim services and crime prevention. Volunteers could include, members of the clergy, students, retired professionals, housewives and others. The teams would be responsible for the delivery of services in the four program areas in their respective communities.

This change in direction is seen as being a three-year project. A feasibility study will hopefully be commissioned to look at the possibilities of establishing a Community Services Division as outlined.

Although this project is in the very early stages of planning, it is an indication of the direction in which the Saint John Youth Project may evolve in the next few years. It is, however, not an indication that the planned Community Services Division has received the consent of all persons involved.

(7) ISSUES

In reviewing the experience of the Saint John Youth Project during its two and one-half year demonstration phase, a number of issues have come to the fore.

The identification of these issues is especially important for those individuals who will be reading this report to gain insights from the experience of the Saint John Youth Project.

In retrospect, it would have been better to develop the structures before the programs were in place. This would include such elements as establishing the selection process of Youth Division Officers and determining training needs in writing before the Project started. Although the selection process for

the first group of Youth Division Officers was described earlier in this report, the selection criteria were never formalized or applied for the selection of later Youth Officers. Many of these matters have had to be negotiated during program operations making the process more laborious than if they had been determined beforehand.

As Professor Chanteloup's reports indicated, the importance of good working relationships with youth serving agencies cannot be over-stated. The second evaluation report indicated that the Youth Project has been instrumental in working towards this goal. This aspect of the project is one that is ever evolving and must continue to be pivotal in project operations.

A number of major issues relate to the internal operations of the Saint John Police Department itself. Youth Division Officers must be chosen on the basis of ability as well as seniority. In the past, seniority has been the major criteria for assignment to the Youth Division. This has not always been satisfactory, because of the non-traditional nature of the Youth Division's work. The accent, since the inception of the project, has been on community development and informal roles, roles with which many policemen may not always feel comfortable. For this reason, recruits to the Youth Division must have an understanding of and ability to function in a decentralized crime prevention setting. Thus, ability to perform in this environment should be the most important criteria for postings to the Youth Division.

The personnel rotation procedures of the Police Department have caused some problems in the past for the Youth Division. The School Liaison Program was seriously disrupted one year because a Youth Division Officer was transferred in December, in the middle of the program's operations. Because a certain amount of time is necessary for a new officer to become familiar and comfortable with the project, the lapse in time necessary for this to occur meant that the program might have suffered in quality during that year. One solution to this problem might be to have Youth Division positions bid for in June rather than in December. This, however, would cause union problems in the Police Department as structures in place require that rotation occur at the end of the calendar year. This issue is still being negotiated.

It has been stated by many involved in the Project, that the Youth Division requires at least one female police officer in its organization. At present the Youth Division officers are all males. From the diversion candidates that have appeared before the Committee, there seems to be an even balance between the two sexes. It is reasonable to assume that the Youth Division should reflect the mix of the community it serves. The uniqueness of the project, in terms of its preventive youth policing role, is the emphasis on developing positive relationships with young people. Because of this role model function, it becomes essential that a young person have the choice of relating to a female officer if she/he chooses. Having a female officer on staff would provide for a wider range of services in the Youth Division. The barrier to the assignment of a female officer is again the question of seniority. As policewomen have only been a part of the Saint John Police Department since the past seven years, they have not accrued the necessary experience to qualify for assignment to the Youth Division. This issue is still being negotiated.

As mentioned earlier, educating police officers on the non-traditional nature of their work is an important factor. This also should involve training policemen to deal with juvenile offenders. This issue goes beyond the Youth Division as it is the beat policeman who does the investigative work relating to juvenile offences. At present, the Staff Sergeant in charge of the Youth Division has a few hours a week in regular in-service training sessions with Saint John policemen. This is not judged to be sufficient. In the same vein, better structures must be developed to keep the Police Department sufficiently informed of the Youth Division's work.

The allocation of resources to the Youth Division is also an important issue. There are only two vehicles now assigned to the Division. As four officers are located in four different geographical areas in Saint John, two vehicles can in no way meet the transportation needs of the unit.

There is a need to double the number of officers in the Youth Division. Four officers are unable to meet the around-the-clock need for services in this type of community development work. Complaints have been received that officers are not always available for activities judged essential in their areas. Many activities occur during evenings and weekends and one officer cannot be available during all hours. With two officers working in each area, it might be possible to assure a more continued service on the community level.

The diversion program is functioning well, and should be expanded. At this point, admission criteria for the program allow for only very minor offences. However, if the program is to test its wings it is essential that the program expand its criteria. Discussion of this point would indicate that the program is ready to accept liquor and motor vehicle offences among others. There must be consensus among all individuals involved that this is indeed possible. Expansion of this program would not involve any additional resources but would follow an evolutionary approach common to this type of program.

Finally, there is a need for more basic research in to the operations of the Saint John Youth Project. Although Professor Chanteloup's attitudinal surveys have, among other things, provided a wealth of information on public acceptance and perceptions of the Youth Division, more in-depth evaluation might provide further insights to both observers of and participants in the Project. Unfortunately, it is beyond the purview of this report to be more specific about this issue.

(8) HIGHLIGHTS

As this report has so far given the historical background, description, and issues surrounding the Saint John Youth Project, this section will highlight the aspects of the project model which are particularly innovative.

The first innovative aspect of a project of this type is the role of civilian co-ordinator in a police sponsored project. As outlined in the Historical Development section of this report, the role of the civilian co-ordinator was, even from the outset,

an unusual component for the establishment of such a project. The Civilian Co-ordinator was able to bring his own experience to the project which, combined with the police setting, made the project richer in the over-all direction of the project. There is no indication that any problems resulted from the introduction of a civilian component; on the contrary the combination has proved very satisfactory.

The second aspect is that the community support for the project was consciously developed from the beginning of project operations. A good deal of effort has been spent making sure that all interested individuals were continually kept informed of developments in the project. This factor has been crucial to the survival and continued success of the Project.

The decentralization of Youth Division Officers has been an integral factor to the project model and its over-all philosophy. The decentralization approach has resulted in a continued emphasis on community development as each police officer became more familiar with his community and the main actors in it.

The concept of linkage among youth-serving agencies in Saint John as well as on a provincial basis provides for better working relationships among these groups. This was identified as one of the three major goals of the project and has resulted in dividends to the Youth Division on a day to day basis. The development of the Youth Services Council and the Human Development Council has proven to be a rational approach to both resource management and service delivery in the local setting of Saint John. The Community Support Program is also an example of this principle in practice.

The specific strategy of implementation for the project has allowed a slow development of programs resulting in a well thought out approach. This has avoided the pitfall of immediately responding to perceived needs without considering the response in terms of over-all objectives.

The focus of the Youth Division Officer is on becoming a specialist in his own community as opposed to a specialist in all juvenile problems. The temptations of taking over all youth policing has been avoided in order to return to the concepts of the community policeman unlike more traditional Youth Divisions.

Finally, the participatory nature of the Youth Division has been emphasized in its day to day operations. Unlike traditional police departments which rely on the hierarchical system, all Youth Division Officers have a say in the development of programs and the functioning of the Youth Division. This also is seen as being essential to the smooth development and operation of the Youth Division.

APPENDIX A
THE DIVERSION PROCESS
OF THE
SAINT JOHN YOUTH PROJECT

(i) Process

As in other matters, the police officer will answer a complaint and carry out a normal investigation of the incident including the completion of an investigation report where appropriate. The investigation officer does not make a recommendation concerning diversion. The investigation report will proceed through the appropriate channels.

(ii) Crown Prosecutor

When the investigation report is received by the Police Department, a file number will be given to the case and the Family Court Officer will take these Family Court cases to the Crown Prosecutor. The Crown Prosecutor will process the investigative reports and identify where a formal charge could be laid. These cases are then brought to the attention of the Youth Division.

(iii) Criteria

When the Youth Division receives the cases, the criteria for the diversion program are applied to the cases by the Staff Sergeant. The criteria for diversion are objective with discretion on the part of the Staff Sergeant. The offence must be a non-violent property offence and there must be sufficient evidence to support the prosecution. The young offender and his or her parent or guardian must agree to the diversion alternative. Those cases which are to proceed to Family Court are returned to the Family Court Officer for processing; those cases which have been selected for diversion are returned to the Family Court Prosecutor for approval.

iv) The First Meeting

The young person and his parent or guardian are then given an appointment at the Youth Division offices on the following Wednesday. Present are the Staff Sergeant in charge of the Youth Division, duty counsel or a lawyer representing the young person, the youth and his parent or guardian. The diversion program is explained and discussed. The young offender must admit responsibility for the offence and waive the right to trial before he is accepted into the diversion program. An opportunity is provided to the young person to discuss his or her options privately with the lawyer present. If the young person decides to enter the program, the parents or guardian will be asked to sign an agreement which includes a "release of information" statement giving the Youth Division authority to obtain information about the young person and his or her family. If she or he chooses not to participate in the program, the case will be returned to Family Court.

v) Home Interview

A Youth Division Officer, who works in the community where the youth lives, will then be assigned to the case, and will arrange a home interview at the convenience of the family involved. The officer will then obtain the basic information necessary to the case including how the young person is doing in the community. The officer will contact the victim to see if she or he is interested in becoming involved in the program. The involvement includes agreeing to diversion, meeting with the young person and allowing the young offender to work for him or her in compensation for the offence. All of these findings are then reported to the Diversion Committee, a week after the parties involved have agreed to diversion.

vi) The Diversion Committee

Committee Members include: the Staff Sergeant in charge of the Youth Division, the Civilian Co-ordinator of the Project, a representative of the Volunteer Bureau, a social worker, a probation officer and a representative of the community in which the young person lives.

The purpose of the Diversion Committee is to prepare an individualized diversion program for each candidate under consideration.

Diversion option include: restitution, restitution plus monetary compensation to the victim, referral without restitution, referral with restitution or no action.

vii) Follow-Up

Once a plan for diversion is agreed upon, if the victim agrees to participate, the Youth Division Officer will supervise; if the victim does not participate and a community placement is found, a non-police member of the committee will supervise. The supervisor will be responsible for making sure that the terms of the restitution-work agreement are respected by all parties involved.

viii) Referral

For those cases where there is a need for continuing intervention, a referral to a community service agency will be made. This referral is voluntary and does not effect the disposition of the case within the juvenile justice system. The agency will then decide the extent and quality of their involvement with the young offender and will provide feedback to the Diversion Committee.

ix) Termination of Contract

Because of the six-month limitation period on summary convictions, the whole diversion process must be concluded within six months. During the process the Youth Division has the right to return the young person to court if--

- the young person fails to complete the restitution-work contract;
- the young person demonstrates a poor attitude in his or her work;
- while undertaking a restitution-work program, the young person is charged with another offence.

Upon successful completion of the restitution-work contract, a "Restitution-Work" Program form is completed by whoever is supervising the restitution. The matter is thus terminated and no further justice processing will occur. In certain cases diversion candidates are brought back to the Youth Division Office for positive reinforcement after completion of restitution.

x) Statistics

As the Diversion program began in June 1979, statistics for that year reflect a seven-month period. During that period, 56 young offenders met the criteria, and six of these chose to proceed to Court. The average age was 13 and the average grades were seven and eight. Forty-two of the offences were for theft under \$200, nine were for mischief, one attempted theft, two false pretences and two for setting fires.

The average time lapse between the offence and the beginning of the diversion process was 19 days, and the average time lapse between the offence and the end of the restitution program was 45 days.

Five youths were returned to Family Court in 1979 for a new offence after completing a diversion program.

Preliminary statistics in 1980 indicate that there are 120 youths diverted. As the Family Court caseload for that year was 450, the Program was therefore able to divert approximately 20% of young offenders in Saint John.

