



Above: Community response staff sergeant Rudy Pasini gives the police update as CPLC chair Deb Devgan looks on. Below: P.C. Erin Carter gives a presentation on the MCIT.

## Youth, mental health, gala on 51 Div. CPLC agenda

**Duncan McAllister**

The 51 Division community police liaison committee (CPLC) met on March 9.

The meeting kicked off with a presentation on Toronto's mobile crisis intervention team, or MCIT, units by nurse Ellen Marchildon from St. Michael's hospital and P.C. Erin Carter.

The mobile crisis intervention team is a partnership program between St. Michael's hospital and 51 and 52 Divisions. The program partners a mental health professional and a police officer who respond

to 911 emergency and police dispatch calls involving emotionally disturbed persons.

The MCIT patrols were begun in 2000. Carter has been on the beat since the beginning and has "a great deal of passion" for her work.

Even though there are four different MCIT units covering the city, as one resident advised, "I've never heard of you guys." Marchildon admitted that MCIT could do with more public awareness.

The MCIT regularly deals with calls related to homelessness, substance abuse, and admissions to hospital. But, noted community response staff sergeant Rudy Pasini, "Being homeless doesn't necessarily mean that you're mentally ill."

One of the MCIT's biggest limitations relates to the Mental Health Act, which delineates the police's powers to deal with a situational crisis as opposed to a mental health crisis.

Pasini updated attendees about recent local incidents involving robberies, gang members and drugs. He also touched on officers' concerns about the March "day of rage" protests, as similar events had resulted in the torching of a dozen police cars in Montreal.

Pasini added that the distracted driving campaign



had been quite successful for the division—the city's second-highest total of 800 tickets, 300 of which were to drivers talking on cell phones, were handed out during the blitz.

The opening of 51 Division's lobby museum was well attended, and there was "great interest" in the volunteer appreciation night, where several CPLC members were honored for their service to the community.

Pasini went on to report that crime is drastically down in Regent Park, and that the Division plans to roll out initiatives to prevent future violence in April.

CPLC chair Dev Devgan announced that this year's gala will be held Nov. 10 on Queen's Quay. She also hinted that a new sponsor has signed on for the big night.

Gene Lincoln, community health worker at Regent Park community centre, announced that the division's annual youth and police basketball game is likely to be held in St. Jamestown in August. It's "always a good opportunity to demystify each others' perceptions," says Devgan.

Lincoln is also organizing an employment seminar to be presented by members of Toronto's trade unions to inform youth about a career in the trades.

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