



P.O. Box 124,
Fort Frances, ON
P9A 3M5

June 20, 2022

Dear Municipal Councillors,

We are writing today to ask for your help in supporting Rainy River District Safe Communities. The committee has always drawn members from many different areas of the community and has included town councillors, representatives from EMS, OPP, the Northwestern Health Unit, DSSAB, Riverside Health Care, Rainy River District School Board, The Northwest Catholic School Board, CN Police Services, Treaty Three Police Services, The United Native Friendship Centre, Rainy River District Women's Shelter of Hope, RR District Victim Services Program, owners and managers of businesses that serve the local area, and more. Safe Communities also partners with these organizations to bring safety programs and services to the communities it serves.

Safe Communities has a long history in the Rainy River District. Beginning as the Rainy River Valley Safety Coalition in 1994, the goal was to be recognized as the "safest community in Canada". The group was very successful and in 2002 was chosen by the World Health Organization as a location to hold the 11th annual World Health Safety Conference that saw 250 delegates from 23 countries attend and gained recognition as a safe community from the WHO that same year.

The list of successful programs and initiatives Safe Communities have convened is lengthy and varied. Some of the topics the Safe Communities Team has taken on are, substance abuse education, overnight camps to teach youth the risk factors associated with crime and victimization, participation in Project Safe Hallowe'en where 4,000 glow sticks were distributed to daycares and schools along with instruction to keep safe while Trick-or-Treating. The SIDNE program (Simulated Impaired Driving Experience) that educates youth in the dangers of impaired or distracted driving, the PARTY program (Prevent Alcohol Related Trauma in Youth), a one-day injury awareness and prevention program for youth age 15 and older that is vital in the community effort to reduce death and injury in alcohol, drug and risk-related crashes and incidents. Passport to Farm Safety, car-seat safety clinics where new parents are taught how to choose and use a safe car seat for infants and young children, the "Kiss-and-Ride" program which addressed the safety concerns of children crossing busy roads to get to school.

The First Responder Community Youth Program would especially be hard hit due to lack of funding. Participants in this program are involved in many community events and safety initiatives such as AEDs that are installed in community spaces like the library, providing first aid for the Canadian Bass Championship, the Dragon Boat Festival, Canada Day festivities, Pow Wows, sandbagging, helping out with the PARTY and SIDNE programs and many more. The program has received international recognition in JEMS (Journal of Emergency Medical Services), the International Journal of Injury Prevention, and served as a pilot project for several high schools in the USA. The MEDIMAN mannequins used for First Aid training and the equipment for the SIDNE program would no longer be insured due to lack of funding.

The Substance Abuse Prevention Team (SAPT) was brought under the umbrella of Safe Communities when provincial funding came to an end in 2014. The Team continues to provide programs that educate and prevent drug abuse. Drug abuse in the Rainy River area has reached crisis level. There is a renewed energy about the team and since February we have grown our members to 28 from our previous 16. The team held a BBQ in Rainy Lake Square on May 17, 2022 and distributed care packages to the homeless

and addicted. Planning for more events continues as the illicit drug problem grows in our communities. While much can be done by donation from the agencies involved in the team, resources grow thin from all sides, and the team cannot educate our young people on the dangers of drug abuse.

In closing, we just want to say that we hope that you will see the positive effects of having a dedicated group of individuals that are looking to keep the entire Rainy River District safe.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chad Buist', with a stylized, flowing script.

Chad Buist,
Chair, Safe Communities

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Joan MacLean', with a stylized, flowing script.

Joan MacLean
Co-chair, Safe Communities