University of Windsor

Scholarship at UWindsor

2006

The nature and impact of police/mentoring relationships on the attitudes and behaviours of youth.

Cathy Knowler
University of Windsor

Recommended Citation

The Nature and Impact of Police/Mentoring Relationships

On the Attitudes and Behaviours of Youth

By:

Cathy Knowler

B.Ed., University of Windsor

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Through Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Education at the

University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2006

© 2006 Cathy Knowler

NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-
exclusive license allowing Library
and Archives Canada to reproduce,
publish, archive, preserve, conserve,
communicate to the public by
telecommunication or on the Internet,
loan, distribute and sell theses
worldwide, for commercial or non-
commercial purposes, in microform,
paper, electronic and/or any other
formats.

AVIS:
L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive
permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives
Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver,
sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public
par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter,
distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans
le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres,
sur support microforme, papier, électronique
et/ou autres formats.

The author retains copyright
ownership and moral rights in
this thesis. Neither the thesis
nor substantial extracts from it
may be printed or otherwise
reproduced without the author's
permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur
et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse.
Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de
celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement
reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian
Privacy Act some supporting
forms may have been removed
from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne
sur la protection de la vie privée,
quelques formulaires secondaires
ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included
in the document page count,
their removal does not represent
any loss of content from the
thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires
aient inclus dans la pagination,
il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of police mentoring relationships with youth on their attitudes and behaviours toward authority figures. The data was collected through a Case Study of the Essex Ontario Provincial Police Cop Camp. A random sample of 15 youths was studied. The participants were chosen by their teacher and their VIP officer because they showed some leadership potential but needed some discipline in that area. The counsellors of the camp were all O.P.P. officers who volunteered their time in order for the camp to be able to function. The participants of the camp were interviewed before and after their camp experiences, were asked to keep a journal and their parents were interviewed one month after camp was finished. In general, the results indicated that there was an impact on the youth created by the close relations they made with their counsellors who were police officers for the O.P.P. Their attitudes towards the role of the police officer were positive, and the participants all gained leadership skills while working under the strict expectations of the officers at the camp.

<u>Acknowledgments</u>

I wish to express my gratitude to the following people without whose support and contribution this thesis would not be possible. Thanks to Dr. C. Beckford for serving as my advisor on my committee and his continued support and patience. I would also like to say thanks to my internal reader Dr Ian Crawford and Professor Larry Wilson my external reader. My gratitude goes out to members of the OPP especially Sergeant Brian Knowler for all of his insight about the VIP Program and Cop Camp, and retired Staff Sergeant Frank DeBresser, and Mrs.Eleanor DeBresser for their editing and insight. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp Committee for allowing me to conduct my case study at the 2005 camp and the students and their parents who participated.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

"The people and services in our community that have prepared and informed us have given us ideas, direction, and options that we will use for the rest of our lives in helping us to make the world a better place. We think the best way to thank them is to follow their example, remember their words, and feel confident that the choices we make will be the right ones for us and for our community". (Grade Six student from H.B.McManus School, 2001).

Background

The concept of providing police/youth mentoring relationships is a relatively novel approach in Ontario education. The legislated collaboration between police officers and educators working together in the classroom first came about in 1984 with the introduction of the VIP (Values, Influences and Peers) program. VIP was the first formal mandated program delivered in Ontario classrooms by teachers working with the Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police services. The program was a joint venture between the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services.

The VIP program focuses on Grade 6 students and its main objectives may be summarized as follows:

► To help students make informed choices related to the law;

► To inform students of their rights and responsibilities;

1

▶ To enhance student self esteem (Values, Influences and Peers, 1996)

In addition to the VIP program several other initiatives based on police mentorship and role modeling have been introduced in Ontario's public schools in recent years. These programs target Elementary and Secondary school students. All of these programs are approved for classroom use by the Ministry of Education. In Windsor and Essex County, the following initiatives are used in schools:

a) *Secondary School Liaison Program.* Almost every high school in Ontario has a police officer assigned to the school. The officer will have a visible presence in the school on a weekly basis, hopefully more. The officer will often be the first responder to an incident at the school or may even be stationed there during the course of the school day. This officer also handles requests for in-class speakers, presentations at the school, crime prevention programming, and assists with activities like prom and graduation planning.

b) *Party in the Right Spirit (PITRS).* This is a joint venture of several community agencies in Essex County, including representatives from all police services in the county. PITRS is a one day workshop that targets prom and graduation committees and supervising teachers, and explains the basics of the law as it pertains to alcohol, parties, liability, and driving. The object of the exercise is not to scare the students in attendance, but to influence them to make informed and responsible decisions and, as a peer leader, to carry these messages back to their schools. Liaison officers are asked to stay involved with the school's plans for safe celebrations.

2

c) *Ontario Students against Impaired Driving (OSAID)*. This is a province wide program dedicated to empowering students to combat impaired driving. There are several secondary schools in Essex County that have an OSAID chapter where police officers are actively involved in presenting and planning their activities.

d) *Essex Cop Camp*. This is a one-week summer camp held at Cedarwin Camp in Harrow, Ontario. Youth ages 11 and 12 from across Essex County attend this camp, where the counsellors are O.P.P. police officers. The campers are graduates of the VIP program who have displayed leadership and teamwork attributes but appears to need some work on perfecting these skills. Financial need is also a consideration. Participating students are selected by their classroom teacher in conjunction with school officers in hopes that they will benefit from the positive influences of the officers. It is this camp that this research will focus on in investigating what or how police mentoring relationships have an impact on the attitudes and behaviour of youth.

Statement of Problem

It is a commonly held belief among scholars that student values can be swayed while in their formative stages (Fine, 1991). It is important to reach students before they become too heavily immersed in peer pressure and other strong influences.

Until comparatively recent times there were few student/police mentoring programs in Ontario schools. In the last two decades great strides have been made in

3

creating programming that introduce students to the concept of a police officer as a mentor and role model at a young age. This mentor relationship is then used to positively influence the student when it comes to crucial aspects of their lives – peer pressure, decisions about using controlled substances and intoxicants, bullying, violence, and other socially unacceptable behaviour.

Programs such as the initiatives approved and presently being practised in Ontario schools reinforce responsible citizenship, positive social behaviour, and values considered by our society to be desirable. Teachers have the extra burden of being aware of and choosing appropriate instruction techniques to provide for the fact that changes have taken place in the society that include diverse social, family, racial, and ethnocultural backgrounds. Programming that includes police officers in the classroom helps to address these issues and helps students learn to be tolerant of each other (Ministry of Education and Training/Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services, 1996).

"To live harmoniously and successfully in society, students need to appreciate, understand, and respect the different values, perspectives, and life experiences of Ontario's diverse population." (Ministry of Education and Training/Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services, 1996, p.2).

Students must also be given the opportunity to live in an environment that fosters positive self esteem. With the breakdown of the family structure in today's society, it has become more and more the responsibility of the school and community to provide such an environment. This positive self esteem is a crucial aspect to our students functioning

4

as responsible, caring members of society (Ministry of Education and Training/Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services, 1996). "People who feel good about themselves are more likely to interact with others in positive ways and to respect the values and laws of their society. When children have developed the feelings of self respect and self worth that they require to function independently, they are better equipped to cope with negative influences and pressures from others" (Ministry of Education and Training/Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services, 1996, p.2). As stated in the *Values, Influences and Peers Resource Guide,* "Each child is a unique individual with physical, intellectual, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual dimensions. These dimensions develop through a process that is identifiable and somewhat predictable and that can be traced from infancy to childhood, then adolescence and on to adulthood. This development may be either fostered or impeded by the child's environment" (Ministry of Education and Training/Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services, 1996 p.2).

Since teaching a child about values and morals is more complex than just telling them the differences between right and wrong, it is imperative that they have many opportunities to interact with positive peers and adults in their environment. This view is the basis of the programs that develop police/youth mentoring relationships.

Much effort has gone into these programs in an attempt to build youngsters with strong moral character who are prepared to live independently in a society often fraught with moral dilemmas. Are these programs meeting their objectives?

The study sought answers to the following key questions:

1. What impact do school programs that involve a mentor relationship between

5

students and police officers have on a student's values, attitudes and behaviours?

2. How important is the Cop Camp in deterring potentially at risk behaviour among the youth who attend?

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the impact of police mentoring and the relationships of police and the youth of Ontario. To address this relationship, the research was centered on a Case Study of the Essex County Cop Camp 2005.

Educational Relevance

The significance of this study will be to determine if there is any merit to the experiences of children interacting with police officers in a positive way. Not only is the teaching of how to be a well-rounded citizen a part of school curriculum, but it is human nature and appropriate behaviour that adults model behaviour for children to follow. Through an effective teacher's actions, students model the values that are acceptable in school, and in society. Children watch, learn and duplicate what they see adults do. Since, in this day and age, children are drawn to what they see in the media, and see their lessons acted out by superstars, it is more important than ever to have "real" people entertaining their minds with lessons of integrity (Wright, 2001). It is through a child's participation in society, namely interacting with their families, peer groups, and dealing with authority, that their values are developed. This is why an educator and a police officer form a perfect partnership in helping parents create a safe environment in which a child can understand his/her world (Wright, 2001). There seems to be an increase in the number of students whose needs are not being met in the home, so it is more important

6

than ever that the teacher use the resources available to do the job of parent, counsellor, advisor, big brother or sister and nurse. The notion of community policing provides such resources through the many programs that deal with youth character development.

Definition of Terms

Police mentoring relationships- relationship whereby a police officer takes on the role of a mentor, usually with regards to a youth, to pass along the positive attributes of honesty, loyalty, dedication to law and justice, fairness, equality, etc.

Authority figures- with regards to youth, any person who is in a position to have influence on, and set limits for, activities. This can be in almost any realm including home, school, community, sports, etc. *VIP officer-* an officer assigned to a given school for the purposes of teaching the VIP program. The officer works with the teacher to deliver the curriculum.

VIP- an acronym for the program "Values, Influences and Peers" developed by the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. It is taught to grade six students in a classroom setting.

Ministry of Education and Training- forerunner of the current Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education administers the system of publicly funded elementary and secondary school education in Ontario, in accordance with the directions set by the provincial government. The Minister of Education, through the Ministry: issues curricula, sets requirements for student diplomas and certificates, and provides funding to school boards for academic instruction and for building and maintaining schools. The minister may also set policy for student assessment, which is then carried out by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). The Ministry is also responsible for creating legislation and guidelines for colleges, universities, and apprenticeships.

Ministry of Solicitor General and Correctional Services- forerunner of the current Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is committed to ensuring that Ontario's communities are supported and protected by law enforcement and public safety systems that are safe, secure, effective, efficient and accountable. The Ministry's responsibilities fall into the following categories:

7

Correctional Services

- establishes, maintains, operates and monitors Ontario's adult correctional institutions and probation and parole offices;

- has jurisdiction over adult offenders under parole supervision,

- provides programs and facilities designed to assist in offender rehabilitation.

Public Safety and Security

- maintains the physical and economic security of Ontario by co-ordinating public safety initiatives among municipal, fire and emergency services organizations within and outside of Ontario; and

- delivers programs and fosters partnerships to minimize or eliminate hazards to persons or property through public education initiatives, emergency measures, scientific investigations, coordination of fire safety services and the coroner's system.

Policing Services

- oversees policing services throughout Ontario, including the O.P.P. (OPP); and

- licenses, regulates and investigates the activities of private investigation and security agencies/individuals in Ontario.

Formative stage- an early period of life where a child is susceptible to alteration by development and experience.

Peer Pressure- Peer pressure comprises a set of group dynamics whereby a group of people in which one feels comfortable may override the individual's personal habits, inhibitions or idiosyncratic desires to impose a group norm of attitudes or behaviors.

Controlled substances- a substance set out in Canada's Controlled Drug and Substance Act. Most notably includes traditional 'recreational' drugs – marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hashish, hallucinogens, depressants ('downers'), stimulants ('uppers')

Intoxicants- any substance that has the ability to substantially alter the body's chemistry or biology to produce effects of intoxication (i.e. most traditionally, alcohol or drugs)

Bullying- Bullying is a dynamic of unhealthy interaction. It is a form of repeated aggression used from a position of power. It can be physical, verbal, or social.

Adolescence- The period of transition between childhood into adulthood. This happens from 13 to 20 years of age.

8

Youth- In this paper, youth refers to children who are 12 to 20 years of age.

Community policing - Community Policing is the delivery of policing services, resulting from a community and police partnership that identifies and resolves issues in order to maintain social order

Youth character development- Programs designed to promote personal growth and cultural awareness in order to prevent destructive behaviour in youth, develop self esteem and problem solving skills.

Proactive policing- policing activities that involve officer actively going into the community to address issues as opposed to waiting for calls for service to come to them

Substance abusers- people who are addicted to various harmful substances. Not necessarily traditional alcohol or drugs (but this is most common); can also include things like solvents or alcohol in a non-drinkable form (i.e. mouthwash or aftershave)

Government task force- a specialized team created by government at any level to research and create solutions to a specific issue perceived as problematic

Learning, emotional and behavioural disorders- refers to mental health issues that affect adolescence (i.e. anxiety, depression, attention deficit disorder, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, autism, schizophrenia and learning disorders).

Stimulus response- The old way of thinking of educators that a child's behaviour is based on the stimulus that they are provided with.

Choice theory- formally known as control theory, states that the only person responsible for a child's behaviour is the child himself

At-risk students- Minority and disadvantaged students who may be at risk of failing or dropping out of school due to their lack of motivation or support.

Quality world- a key concept of Choice Theory which is a small, specific world that is the core of our lives because in it are the people, things and beliefs that we have discovered to satisfy our needs best

Safe Schools Act- the Safe Schools Act was passed in 2000, becoming part of the Education Act.
It can be divided into two sections:
• PART ONE – Description of the initiatives schools must undertake to keep
a school safe
– Code of Conduct
– Police–School Board Protocol
• PART TWO – Procedures that govern student discipline

Youth Criminal Justice Act- the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) replaced the Young Offenders Act in 2003. Essentially, the Act outlines the necessary legislative requirements for dealing with young persons (under the age of 18) who end up in the criminal justice system.

Alternative measures- steps that are taken when dealing with young persons who are charged with a criminal offence. Alternative measures are processes other than putting youth through the 'formal' justice system of arrest, court and trial. They can take various forms, from volunteer work to financial reimbursement to enrolment in substance abuse/anger management programs.
Probation services- the arm of the criminal justice system that deals with individuals who are given probation as part of a criminal sentence. Responsible for monitoring and counselling these individuals.

Public confidence in policing- the amount of confidence that a police service is given by the members of the public that service serves and protects

Foot patrol- rounds made on foot by police officers; usually associated with a given 'beat' i.e. an area that officer works all the time. Generally considered a more intimate form of policing than officers patrolling in cruisers and responding to the radio.

Storefronts and mini stations- a concept whereby smaller police stations are set up in municipalities or neighbourhoods that are further away from main stations. Usually staffed on a regular basis by officers familiar with the concerns and problems of that area.

School resource officer- a police officer dedicated to an individual school who acts as point of contact for that school. The officer instructs classes, acts as a source of information for legal and police matters, and assists with planning safe school activities.

Geographic assignment of officers- the assignment of officers by specific geographic areas; usually called beats or zones.

Citizen engaged neighbourhood crime prevention activities- crime prevention activities that involve the citizens of a given neighbourhood as opposed to those that are directed entirely by the police. Examples include Block Parent and Neighbourhood Watch.

Crime rates- statistics that reflect the preponderance of certain crimes in a given area. Collected by the federal government in what are called UCRs, or Uniform Crime Rates. This keeps the statistics on a similar grounding across the country.

Force- the application of physical force by a police officer to achieve compliance with laws or lawful directions

Criminal conduct- actions which would be considered, by the majority of the population, to be illegal

10

Lawlessness- a state of existence in which there are no laws and no visible signs of authority

Street culture- a culture normally associated with hip-hop music, clothing, and lifestyle

*Gang lifestyle-*a culture associated with membership in a gang; i.e. loyalty to a certain specific group, usually involved in semi-legal or illegal activities

Conventional lifestyle- what the majority of Canadian citizens would consider a normal lifestyle; i.e. living in conformity with laws and social norms

Delinquency- the state of living without due regard for authority, usually associated with youth

Fairness of process- equal treatment for all persons, usually related to government or legal processes

Police conduct- action taken by police officers

Unfair police targeting- actions taken by police officers motivated by a characteristic of the target individual or group. Commonly referred to as 'racial profiling'

Support agencies- most commonly refers to social service agencies. For example, Children's Aid Societies, mental health agencies, addiction treatment facilities, etc.

Roll call- activity held at the start of a police officer's shift. Attendance is taken, any pertinent issues from the previous shifts are discussed, and training issues are addressed.

Law enforcement partners- refers to any agency that works with the police towards a common goal. Examples are social agencies, other enforcement agencies, other emergency service providers, and schools.

Problem oriented policing- involves police and community working together to address underlying factors in a community that lead to crime.

Police managers- supervisors of other police officers. Most commonly, officers with the rank of Sergeant or Staff Sergeant.

Broken homes- the notion that a home becomes ruined once a married couple with children break up their relationship, resulting in divorce.

Police Services Act- an Ontario provincial law that outlines the powers, responsibilities, equipment, and discipline guidelines for all Ontario police services and their officers

Background checks- an investigation into a person's background, usually looking for any previous criminal offences or involvement with police

11

O.P.P. - abbreviation for the Ontario Provincial Police. The O.P.P. is the largest police service in the Province of Ontario, employing approximately 6000 officers and 1000 support staff. The O.P.P. is responsible for policing mostly rural areas of the province and almost all of the northern regions.

Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp- A youth camp that is organized by the O.P.P. detachments in Essex County, Ontario. The camp brings forty youth together for a week to develop leadership and teamwork in the attendees. The counsellors and administrators of the camp are all O.P.P. officers.

Platoons- a common name for units of police officers that share the same schedule and geographic area of operation. Platoons can range from a few officers in small areas to thirty or forty officers in large metropolitan services.

Marine unit- a policing unit that has responsibility for law enforcement on water ways

ERT- short form for Emergency Response Team. This is a specialized O.P.P. unit consisting of regular officers who receive advanced training in hostage situations, search and rescue, high-risk prisoner escort, dignitary protection, and crowd control Officers are most commonly dispatched through pagers they carry at all times.

Motorcycle unit- a police officer who carries out his or her duties by motorcycle. Most commonly used for traffic enforcement and control and high-visibility public relations events such as parades or motorcades

Patrol unit- common name for one or two police officers operating from a cruiser. This is now the most common form of deploying police officers.

Canine unit- a specialized police unit consisting of a highly-trained dog and its handler. The dog is usually trained in one or more disciplines of: drug detection, tracking for lost parties or escaped suspects, detection of gunpowder/explosives, or detection of bodies. Most police dogs are also aggression trained, i.e. they will protect their handler and will attack a suspect if commanded to do so, with the intention of stopping a threat that suspect presents.

Drill practice- practice of highly structured marching, done in a large formation. This is taught to police officers as a holdover from policing's early military roots and is now mostly for ceremonial occasions.

Children's Aid Society (CAS) - Canadian child welfare program. Their legal mandate is to protect children from harm.

12

13

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There are 3 domains in which a child is motivated to become a sound moral figure in society. Those domains are reviewed while asking the following questions:

1. What can the family do to motivate youth?

Kidder and Rogers (2004) state that family has the main responsibility to nurture youth but social structures and processes also have a great effect. The fact that there is a need for more positive and proactive attention to adolescents is well recognized across the world. There are currently no formal Canadian policies on youth development. General opinion is that formal policies are needed because youth is a group where death rates have not declined in recent years. This indicates that youth are not getting the message about the risks in their environment (Kidder and Rogers, 2004, p.3). The federal government should be taking the lead in organizing a comprehensive youth policy, working with provincial and municipal governments, including all necessary agencies such as health, schools, etc.

"Healthy adolescent development is crucial as adolescents take on more responsibility for their actions and make more decisions for themselves. These decisions are more complex and can have life-altering consequences" (Kidder and Rogers, 2004, p.5). The goal of adolescents is to become independent citizens in society. In order to gain independence there are several things that must take place. They must adjust to sexual maturation, establish co-operative relationships with their peers, prepare for a vocation, and establish intimate relationships. They will also develop a core set of values and beliefs, establish a personal identity, and prepare for adult social roles. During adolescence, the brain is still

14

forming, and some things previously learned are being re-evaluated (Kidder and Rogers, 2004). There are many things that adults can do to assist adolescent development. They are to encourage exploration, mentor basic life skills, and guide rehearsal and extension of new skills. Adults also need to protect adolescents from inappropriate punishment, teasing or disapproval, and provide a rich and responsive environment. These things should be done by parents, educators, health providers, community groups, and any other entity in a position to affect youth. A lack of this protection can lead youth into conflict with authority, especially the police.

Many factors determine developmental strengths and weaknesses of youth. These include: developmental age and stage, family status, gender, whether they are in or out of school, ethnicity, a culture of youth in their community, and sexual orientation. Research shows that some youth are more vulnerable to anti-social behaviour than others. Youth in foster care, homeless youth, pregnant or parenting adolescents, aboriginal youth, immigrant and visible minorities, and youth involved with the justice system tend to be more at risk. Due to the fact that all of these types of youth are highly present in society, it is important to have as many stakeholders as possible involved with their process of socialization. It is also very important to realise that youth culture changes very rapidly; so too should any attempts to assist them. Adolescents have a strong need for peer relationships and affiliation. However, this need for affiliation can lead to negative behaviour, which can again lead to conflict with authority, while positive peer relationships can assist youth with reaching developmental goals. It is in this stage of life that our youth need consistent messages from adults.

15

Since physical health is an important factor in development, another concern is an adolescent's physical health. More national action is needed on physical fitness, health and obesity. It should be noted that mental health issues related to obesity are as dangerous as physical concerns. Another related issue that families must deal with is that at this age, youth seem to take many risks. "Risky behaviours include smoking, excessive drinking, engagement in bullying and failure to use seatbelts" (Kidder and Rogers, 2004, p.10). Youth get mixed messages on sexuality and relationships from the media. Girls associate sex with romance and love, whereas boys get a message that they don't need to take responsibility for birth control or the potential consequences of sex. It is a combination of the media influence and many adult's old fashioned or hesitant attitudes toward youth sexual education and development that is dangerous to youth. Youth experience stress and anxiety as adults do, and it is during these formative years that youth are more likely not to be treated for such anxieties. Youth have varying levels of connectedness to family and school. Attention needs to be focused on educating parents to assist youth in developing this connectedness mentally. For this, youth people and parents need the co-operation of all sectors of society. This is one of the reasons why part of the agenda at the Cop Camp includes regular physical fitness and activity, as well as sessions on peer pressure and risky behaviours.

Smoothing a Brutal Transition, by Carol Goar, is an article that appeared in the Toronto Star of October 28, 2005. It discusses the plight of adolescents who spend their youth as wards of the state and then suddenly, at the age of 18, find themselves cut off from the safety net that has supported them. Some of these new adults are eligible for some support until they turn 21, but most are simply left to cope on their own, and as one

16

would expect, a disproportionately large number drop out of school. They become substance abusers, unwed parents requiring social assistance. Some become street kids and may wind up in jail or dead. One problem is that the number of youth this happens to is very small; so small it is more or less a non-issue for most of the public. A government task force recently released a report on what could be done for these adolescents to help ease the transition into adulthood. Among their findings were: extending financial support for these individuals until they reach age 24, and increasing their payment amount (the current monthly payments are about half the amount of the national poverty line,) requiring all child welfare agencies to implement uniform training and preparation for youths who will be in this situation. They also advocate starting welfare payments at age 14, extending medical-related benefits to age 24, and offering cash incentives to those individuals who wish to pursue higher education. However, even proponents of these changes readily admit that "none of these measures make up for the absence of a supportive parent" (Goar, 2005, p. A26).

2. What can schools can do to motivate youth?

Rademacher, Callahan, and Pederson-Seelye (1998) argued that teachers need to teach students how to comply with classroom skills: "Successful rule compliance in the classroom, on the job, and in the community – should be part of every teacher's comprehensive classroom management system. It should serve as a systematic instructional process to guide students toward the self-discipline and co-operation necessary for successful performance in the classroom, on the job, and in community-related settings" (p.284). This learning to comply is a life-long skill that all kids need in

17

order to be a valuable part of society. It is imperative that rules be clear, concise, and consistent, along with the consequences for breaking the rules, in order for every member of the classroom to be capable of understanding them (this includes kids with special needs such as learning, emotional and behavioural disorders as well as those with mild to moderate retardation). This variety of citizens is a microcosm of what you'll find in adult society. This is known as the model of "collaborative problem solving" (Rademacher et al., 1998, p.255). This is same model that community policing should have. The guiding principle behind any classroom rule should be: show respect, develop good work habits, and care about others, as students should be doing in the 'real world.'

Glasser (1997) argued that we need to change our way of thinking as educators by changing our system from "Stimulus Response" to "Choice Theory". It is important to motivate students so that they want to learn. There may be 5 million students who, at a very young age, give up in school because they are unmotivated. "If they don't make the effort to become competent readers, writers and problem solvers; their chances of leading even minimally satisfying lives are over before they reach the age of 17" (Glasser, 1997, p.597). At risk students all have relationship problems. "These relationship problems all say a variation of "I don't like the way you treat me, and, even though it may destroy my life, your life, or both of our lives together, this is what I am going to do about it" (Glasser, 1997, p.599). Choice theory, (formally known as control theory,) teaches that the only person responsible for a child's behaviour is the child himself. "Choice theory states that we are driven by four psychological needs that are embedded in our genes: 1. the need to belong, 2 the need for power, 3 the need for freedom, and 4 the need for fun" (Glasser, 1997, p.599).

18

A key concept in Choice theory is the idea of a "quality world". "This small, very specific, personal world is the core of our lives because in it are the people, things and beliefs that we have discovered are most satisfying to our needs"(Glasser, 1997, p.599). When we store pictures of people into our "quality world" it is because we care for them and they care for us. They have proven to satisfy our needs and therefore we trust and want to learn from them. If an authority figure does not fit into a person's quality world, then there is no way that someone will learn from him or her. It is evident that teachers who have not become a part of a student's quality world, and are therefore not reaching them, begin to coerce and boss that child into doing what the teacher wants. "Leaders never boss. We follow them because we believe that they have our best interest at heart" (Glasser, 1997, p.600). In order for authority figures to be a part of a youth's quality world they must never coerce or boss them. Instead they need to lead. The Essex County Cop Camp delivers this opportunity for youth to put these "cops" as leaders into their quality world.

Adelman and Taylor (1983) state, "A significant number of adolescents seem much more motivated by the excitement and sense of competence and self determination which stems from certain peer interactions, (including gangs and the drug culture,) than anything the teacher can offer by way of programming" (p.384). In order to help these wayward students, it becomes the job of authority figures to understand the motivation of youth. It is important to know the role this motivation plays for the correction of such antisocial behaviours. If a child has feelings of anxiety and fear towards school, it will begin to have such negative impacts on a child such as an intrinsic fear of failure. "These cognitive and affective perceptions can lead to coping strategies in the form of avoidance

19

behaviour towards activities and areas where the individual can function successfully, even though some of these may involve socially inappropriate behaviours" (Adelman and Taylor, 1983, p.384).

Kohn (1993) says that the reason that some youth act out is due to the fact that they have little or no say over what they do. This feeling of powerlessness can lead to antisocial behaviours. As quoted by Kohn (1993), John Dewey stated in his Democracy in Education, "The essence of the demand for freedom is the need of conditions which will enable an individual to make his own special contribution to a group interest, and to partake of its activities in such ways that social guidance shall be a matter of his own mental attitude, and not a mere authoritative dictation of his acts" (Kohn, 1993, p.9). Although limits on the amount of control a child is allowed are up to the adult, they need to make a commitment to allow the evolution of a child's control by providing them with guidance and opportunities. They need to supply the child with the right safe environment and resources to make informed decisions. "The teacher's role is to be a facilitator. This doesn't mean making it unrealistically smooth or easy, but rather to stimulate learning by making problems more complex, involving and arousing" (Kohn, 1993, p.15). At first, students may resist being responsible for making decisions about what goes on in their classroom because for their entire lives they've been told what to do, when, and how to do it. By giving youth some control, we are raising natural risk takers and decision-makers. This again influences the Cop Camp agenda, where the organizers allow the youth to carry out activities that push their limits and force them to rely on each other for support (like a session of indoor rock climbing."

20

School Social Bonds, School Climate, and School Misbehaviour: a Multilevel Analysis by Eric A. Stewart (2004) documents a study grade ten students. The research examined how school misbehaviour is affected by individual and school level characteristics. The outcome was that social networks at school play a role in reducing misbehaviour. Individuals who are integrated in social institutions like school are less likely to deviate from social norms. Closer ties to teachers and peers create closer ties to school, and students with well-defined educational goals appear more committed to school overall. Students with positive peer pressure, involved family, high marks, and high income families are less likely to deviate in their behaviour. School size and location are added factors in bad behaviour. Both urban and rural schools produced students with varying degrees of misbehaviour. The Cop Camp was well received by the participants as they showed more appreciation for their responsibilities and respect for authority figures.

Kidder and Rogers (2004) state that students with positive school experiences are less likely to take harmful, even deadly risks. Also revealed was the fact that older youth have more negative attitudes towards school than younger adolescents. It is difficult to balance the needs of maturing youth with safe and effective schools. The fact that youth frequently come into conflict with authority is no surprise, (minority status may increase the odds of this). Often this conflict may be due to lack of activities for youth. The researchers believe what is needed is: increased awareness and activities for youth, not relying solely on community policing, appropriate sanctions for youth both criminally and at school, and improved social factors that are leading to youth conflict with the law (Kidder and Rogers, 2004). It is a well accepted theory that youth engagement in

21

activities that focus outside the self lead to a decrease in alcohol consumption, smoking, recreational drug use, risky sexual practices, violent behaviour, delinquency, crime, emotional problems, school failure, and dropping out of school. Such activities have been shown to increase self-esteem, physical activity, school performance, and commitment to friends, families and communities. Educators and others who work with youth also have a role to play. "When youth encounter an 'inappropriate disapproval, teasing or punishment' in community institutions it can negatively impact on their development and reduce their engagement with the community. For example, when school personnel employ methods of communication that run counter to developmental priming mechanisms (such as sarcasm), adolescent development is challenged. When schools respond to adolescents with behavioural or learning disabilities (such as attention deficit disorder) with exclusionary tactics, it also impedes development for these challenged students. These same concerns emerge in other environments, such as community health services and social and recreational programs" (Kidder and Rogers, 2004, p.14).

Colman and Otten (2005) discuss two new pieces of legislation in Canada, one provincial (the Ontario *Safe Schools Act*,) and one federal (the *Youth Criminal Justice Act.*) They argue that there is a basic problem with these two new pieces of legislation: the provincial Safe Schools Act is punitive whereas the Federal Youth Criminal Justice Act allows for leniency, creativity, and rehabilitation. The Youth Criminal Justice Act emphasises restorative justice, including the compensation of victims. Within the Safe Schools Act, punishment is the norm unless there are mitigating factors against punitive measures. The Youth Criminal Justice Act focuses on other avenues besides punishment.

22

This is the essential conflict between the two Acts (Colman and Otten, 2005.) This

conflict causes confusion for victims, offenders, parents and educators. Under both acts,

for the same offence, a student could be expelled from school yet not be charged under

the Youth Criminal Justice Act. This creates several problems: disruption in learning,

school systems appearing too harsh and vindictive, and the school response positively

making justice look weak. Expulsion likely results in no further educational

opportunities or rehabilitation, so administrators may be reluctant to use it even when

warranted. Under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, police have much more discretion to

use warnings, cautions, referrals, etc, including measures in conjunction with the school

system (Colman and Otten, 2005).

      With the Safe Schools Act, there is no motivation for students to admit

wrongdoing or contribute to resolution. Within the Youth Criminal Justice Act, youth

taking responsibility for their actions is one of the key parts that lead to alternative

measures. These measures must be fair and proportional to the crime. Ironically,

however, this may damage youth because due to this proportionality, often treatment

can't be ordered (i.e. for drug use, psychological testing can be used to assess these

individuals)

      The Safe Schools Act has little accountability to community, as it takes offenders

and puts them into the community with no support during suspensions. The Youth

Criminal Justice Act is accountable to the community. The Safe Schools Act has no

accountability to the victim. The Youth Criminal Justice Act allows the victim to help

determine the consequences and can get information on the offender, whereas the Safe

Schools Act has no process in place for release of information to the victim. This leads to

23

potential problems with liability and confidentiality. It is important for schools and police to develop protocols for times when both laws collide. The problem is that different police services handle the Youth Criminal Justice Act differently. Schools must shift focus away from retribution towards rehabilitation and reintegration (Colman and Otten, 2005, p.299). This is an area where police mentoring programs like Cop Camp can play a big role.

Echoing the sentiments of Colman and Otten is an article from the Windsor Star of November 1, 2005, written by Windsor Star staff and entitled *NDP Rips Safe Schools Act*. This article points out that one of Ontario's three major political parties, the New Democrats, believe that the Safe Schools Act has been a failure over its four years of life. Their position is primarily based on the fact that students who are expelled from school under the Act are left with no alternatives or rehabilitative processes, essentially leaving them on the streets. NDP leader Howard Hampton went so far as to call the Safe Schools Act a "Gang Recruitment Act" (Windsor Star, 2005, p. A1) and stated "You don't just throw them out on the street and say, 'To hell with you.' You have to work with them." (Windsor Star, 2005, p.A4) Hampton also points out that in the first year of existence of the *Safe Schools Act*, 2001-2002, the number of suspensions in Ontario climbed 40% to just over 24,000, and has stayed at that level since. A local Essex County school board official interviewed stated that "I believe it's time that the act be reviewed...The act is so one-size-fits-all...and I don't know if that's necessarily going to serve our school communities the best" (Windsor Star, 2005, p.A4). Alternative solutions are therefore required and police mentoring programs have shown some promise.

24

Glover (2002) states that violence in schools is a very prominent issue. This is emphasized by recent school shootings. Schools are expected to be safe places for youth, and when they are not, people want action. Currently, there is no single solution to school violence problems, but community policing is one possibility. There are three strong reasons to have community policing in schools. "First, current literature in the field predominantly promotes community policing with regard both to its conceptualization and to its practicality. Secondly, the primary problem associated with community policing in general has been its implementation. The main issue in schools has been overcoming a general resistance to the presence of police/law enforcement. Thirdly, the benefits of community policing in schools presented in the literature this far outweigh its disadvantages" (Glover, 2002, p.4). The two main components of community policing are community involvement and problem solving. "Community policing is a philosophy, a management style, and an organizational strategy that promotes pro-active problem –solving and police-community partnerships to address the causes of crime and fear as well as other community issues" (Glover, 2002, p.5). The School Community Policing Partnership Act of 1998 gave many reasons why police are needed in schools. They may be summarized as follows: a high number of crimes are committed in schools; there is a strong need to make schools safer and to assure safe passage for children to and from school, and the need for a proactive problem solving approach to school safety problems. There is also the need for an expanded support system for schools, and the need for a school-law enforcement partnership resulting in collaboration designed specifically to meet the needs of the school community.

3. What can the community (focusing on community policing) do to motivate youth?

The notion of community policing covers all aspects of how the community helps a child grow and develop into functioning citizens. Hopkins, Hewstone and Hantzi (1992) list the objectives of police officers in schools. They are:

"1. To make a contribution in helping young people to understand and accept principles of good citizenship and social responsibility;

2. To foster crime prevention in schools, youth clubs and other educational context;

3. To develop a broader understanding of the role of the police and of the parts played by other institutions, such as the courts and the probation service; and finally,

4. To offer guidance on the safeguards young people should take to protect themselves and others from danger in the streets, in the home, in the country and at play" (Hopkins et al., 1992, p.204). The focus of a liaison officer in the schools is to improve both the image youth have of such authority figures, as well as strengthen the relationship between the two groups. It is the hope of police that positive impressions of the school liaison officer will transfer to all members of the police department. Although the amount of direct contact between individual youth and their school liaison officer may not be high, they do definitely have opinions on in-school officers. Most students surveyed said they liked their school liaison officer more than police officers in general; therefore, it is important that the liaison officer does leave the youth they deal with a positive image of all cops in the service. After all, he is a representative of that service. Due to the fact that youth look more at the tone of their interaction with police than the ultimate result, as well as the fact that outside of school, contact is usually officer driven

26

due to suspicion, it is imperative that the community policing movement be strong in the goal of winning over some youth's idea of cops being "out to get them" (Hopkins et al., 1992, p.218). This is part of the rationale behind having the regular Essex County OPP school officers as the primary counsellors at Cop Camp – they represent already established bridges to the youth who attend the camp.

Brooks (1994) states, "A number of children, many with ADHD and learning disabilities, are at high risk for developing long-lasting problems affecting many areas of their lives, including their social relationships, academic and later professional success, tolerance of frustration and failure, and self esteem" (p.545). It is the job of the parents/teachers to teach these children the coping skills they will need in order to overcome diversity. There are 3 realms that build resilience in a child:

1. The child themselves (self-esteem, temperament);

2. The family; and

3. The environment (school, community they live in - it is here that community policing fits in).

In order for a child to be a master of this domain, they need to have a happy temperament, including higher self-esteem and confidence. In order to foster self esteem in a child, there needs to be:

1. Proper family climate where there is warmth, love, clear and consistent structure, and fair limits; and

2. Social environment – a child's extended family and social agencies can provide support that is absent in the home. "A child can prove to grow up resilient even if they have only one supportive adult in their lives" (Brooks, 1994, p.546).

27

In today's society, increasingly effective programs are in place to provide support and nourishment for youth and provide a place that brings out the unique strengths of even our toughest children. One such program is Cop Camp.

A fundamental part of self-esteem is a respect and caring for others. "Children who have high self esteem feel competent and worthy; they feel good about their ability to make a difference, to confront rather that retreat from challenges, to learn from both successes and failure, and to treat themselves and others with respect"(Brooks, 1994, p.547). Cop Camp fosters all of these abilities for children and sends them home having experienced most of these things. Children with high self-esteem have coping strategies when dealing with pressure situations, whereas a child with low self-esteem doesn't have such skills. They rely on behaviours that may be inappropriate in the eyes of society, behaviours that do not prove respect for others or themselves, in order to cope with pressures (e.g. Quitting, avoiding, cheating, clowning, bullying, denying or making excuses) (Brooks, 1994, p.547). "If children are to develop a sense of ownership and pride, it is essential to provide them with ample opportunities for assuming responsibilities, especially those that make them feel that they are making a contribution to their home, school or community environments" (Brooks, 1994, p.550). The Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp is an example. This experience provides for such growth by mandating team chores, focusing on teamwork, keeping bunks and equipment neat, and maintaining a daily log of activities where they are responsible for safety, (i.e. Check each other's equipment at the rock climbing event). "The experience of making a positive difference in the lives of others builds self respect and hopefulness and serves as a powerful antidote to the feeling of defeat and despair" (Brooks, 1994, p.550). "These kinds of

28

"contributory activities" provide concrete proof to at risk children that they too can be successful, that they are capable, and that they can earn respect. "An essential ingredient of high self-esteem is the belief that one has some control over what is occurring in one's life. To acquire this attitude, children need the opportunities to learn the skills necessary for making sound decisions and for solving problems. They also need opportunities to apply and refine these skills, especially in situations that have an impact on their lives" (Brooks, 1994, p.550). Cop Camp provides: opportunities to talk about effective decision making skills, talk about peer pressure, opportunities for team leadership positions, and healthy competitions, for example, the 'evidence hunt' where the students need to solve problems together.

Zhao, He and Lovrich (2003) say that in the late 1980's, public confidence in policing was eroding. By the late 80's /early 90's, there was a change in the focus of community policing. The change was in two main areas:

1. Reorienting police strategy and activities; and

2. Reordering police priorities.

The three main functions of policing are:

1. Crime control;

2. Order maintenance; and

3. Service provision.

Community policing gives greatest attention to maintaining order and service provision. "Typical COP programs, such as foot patrol, storefronts and mini-stations, school resource officers, geographic assignment, and citizen-engaged neighbourhood crime prevention activities, are specifically directed toward the order maintenance and

29

service provision functions and secondarily address crime-reduction goals for offences like theft and burglary" (Zhao et al., 2003, p.701). Crime control strategies of the 60's and 70's quickly became outdated as populations grew and crime rates increased. It was evident that police would have to change some of their ways to continue operating. Three primary factors driving change were:

1. Environment and expectations about crime services changed;

2. The need for new priorities for police functions to address causes of crime, and;

3. The need for a link between the above two things.

The level of organization and activities that police carry out should address the root causes of crime and not just pay lip service to community policing. There is a landmark theory about crime from the early 70's called 'Broken Windows' that states if a given neighbourhood experiences broken windows and other petty crime/mischief that is not effectively dealt with, it demonstrates that no one has control of the environment. Perpetrators became emboldened by this lack of response and their crimes increase in frequency and severity until the neighbourhood is lost. On the other hand, if someone was to take ownership and have the minor problems taken care of, the major ones do not have a chance to gain a foothold. This view led to large-scale move to tackle underlying causes of crime (Zhao et al., 2003).

Since policing is one of the few occupations where force can be used, and freedoms deprived, traditionally crime control has been top priority for most police officers. Community policing is just a mask to manipulate public opinion and make the police look like they are striving for change, without really changing how they do business. Another view of community policing is that "community policing really entails

30

little community empowerment; rather it emphasises community co-operation. In most

community policing programs, the community is expected to be the ears and eyes of the

police, dutifully providing information about crime and criminals, and is urged to rally to

the support of the local police force on important occasions" (Zhao et al., 2003, p.705). In

conclusion to the above article, the authors point out that, despite community policing's

rise in the 90's, traditional crime control remained the priority of major police forces.

One school of thought by James Forman (2004) says, "Public Safety turns, to a

great extent, on what the young do and what is done to them. This is a group most likely

to engage in criminal conduct, to be victims of crime, and to be targeted by police, the

state creates and reinforces attitudes of hostility and opposition. This has negative

consequences for public safety, because oppositional attitudes can increase lawlessness,

and make it less likely that citizens will provide information to law enforcement" (p.2).

In this article, the model of police officers, as 'warriors' is discredited, i.e. police vs.

youth. Youth have a strong reason to be involved in community policing. When they

participate in such activities as group deliberations in neighbourhoods or schools, they

have a higher respect for the legal process and see the fairness in it. Community policing

is not just the activities involved, but a way of policing in an organized level. It is

evident that if youth are absent from community policing initiatives; they will not be as

effective as they could be, to fulfill their role in community policing. This is an

important consideration when faced with the fact that most police officers are generally

detached from youth (Forman, 2004, p. 17). Informal contacts with police have proven to

be as important as formal meetings. In fact, youth are the age group most likely to be

disrespected and illegally searched by police. Traditionally, young people have been

31

deemed threats by police, not assets. Even when other areas of a city are being considered less dangerous, and crime rates have dropped, youth are still looked at as a threat. The media often paint adolescents as rapidly worsening criminals and killers, and the actual threats have become exaggerated. They expound that the majority of crime committed by teens is done by young males. Young people do worry about crime, especially street crimes where they could be victimized, and the majority of them hold criminals in low regard. The reason for this is that youth are the group that is at a high risk of being victimized (Forman, 2004).

Also problematic is the fact that many youth are influenced by both "decent" and "street" culture (Forman, 2004, p. 35). Communities and individuals can have this 'street' and 'decent' qualities in them. Even gang members can be torn between gang lifestyle and an accepted conventional lifestyle. Police are the most visible symbol of authority and have great potential to influence 'decency' vs. 'delinquency'. Even good kids, when exposed to groups that cause problems can start to be resentful of authority, and this resentment leads to less and less desire to support and co-operate with police, even pushing good kids into delinquency.

Again, most people are more worried about fairness of process and having a chance to be heard when dealing with the police, than the results. Community Policing can help by ensuring the fairness people want. "Many young adults will be concerned about crime and police conduct, and the community policing model must be capable of addressing both" (Forman, 2004, p.39). Schools and other places where youth meet are excellent starting points for those involved with community policing. "Schools have their own stake in protecting students from both crime and unfair police targeting, as

32

students are especially likely to fall victim to crime while going to or from school" (Forman, 2004, p.40). As long as youth are viewed as non-conformists and not included in community policing, it is falling short of its potential, hence the attempt of the Cop Camp to empower youths and show them, at a young age, that they have a stake in crime prevention and the processes of justice.

Singer and Singer (1984) suggested that the uniform makes a difference depending on the social context. Their research says that the newer style uniform is more favourable than the older military style. Uniforms do lead to anxiety in some youth, who associate one police officer in uniform with all others. In the U.S most school liaison officers wear plain clothes because they find that the students are more comfortable approaching them. In conclusion, this article implicates that the police uniform gives the perception of professionalism, competence and reliability.

Working with Police to Help Children Exposed to Violence, a collaboration by Osofsky, Rovaris, Hammer, Dickson, Freemen, and Aucoin (2004) recognizes that exposure to violence has profound effects on kids. Violence can be seen at school, home, and in the neighbourhood. The police are in a unique position to recognize and help kids prone to violence. In relation to youth crime and disorder in schools, the article states that, "top problems in 1995 included drug abuse, gangs, alcohol abuse, weapons in school, assault, and teen pregnancy"(Osofsky et al., 2004, p.595). The effects of violence start in infancy/toddler stage of life. Exposure to family violence can lead to a lack of trust and relationship forming. Adolescents get hit hard by exposure to violence. Successful collaborations are effective because of the relationships that are built between individuals and the mutual trust that develops over time" (Osofsky et al., 2004, p.597).

Police need to work with support agencies for a full picture of the effects their actions have on youth. Educating police officers on dealing with traumatized youth has to be creative and innovative for it to be effective. It is important for school liaison officers to be aware of signs and symptoms of youths who have been or are still exposed to violence. Research found that presenting information at roll call makes it part of the workday for police officers, as opposed to a separate training session, which are often poorly attended and met with boredom and apathy (Osofsky et al., 2004, p.599). Responses to violence prevention have to be creative and innovative to all stakeholders. This involves respect for all, by all. Any law enforcement partners need to be aware of, and adaptable to the ongoing and changing demand of law enforcement.

Thurman, Giacomazzi and Bogen (1993) say that "The key to solving social problems is the co-production of order" (p.554). Police alone can't maintain order – the public must be involved in solving crime and related issues. "Brief, co-ordinated police interactions with youth from economically disadvantaged sectors of the city offer an important starting point for developing better ties between the police and the community they serve" (Thurman et al., 1993, p. 555). The public must be involved because many processes that enable crime and disorder are beyond police control. When referring to youth/police programs, it is apparent that plain clothed officers put youth at ease, especially for those who view the uniform as intimidating. Later in the week of Cop Camp, officers wore uniforms to help kids make the connection with police. This was done at the Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp. The police/counsellors were in plain clothes for the first 5 days of camp, then on the last day when the police display was set up; the counsellors were in their uniforms. This seemed to shock the kids; some even said that

they weren't aware of the fact that the counsellors were cops. For example, after a few days with the counsellors, the campers felt comfortable enough to treat the adults like they were their older sibling. One such example that was noted by the researcher was a young boy who was obviously seeking male attention that was lacking due to the absence of a male role model at home. This camper singled out a male counsellor and idolized him. Once the officer appeared in uniform this child stood in awe of his authoritative stature. It was difficult for this boy to realize that his new friend was also a powerful person in authority. This intimidation soon disappeared when the officer placed his wide-brimmed Stetson police issue hat on his subordinate new acquaintance. When adult advisors stayed consistent (no staffing changes) there was closer bonding and more confidence shown by the campers. It was also found that youths made closer bonds with the younger officers. The young campers related better to chaperones that played and ate with them and showed a general interest in their well-being.

Benson (1991), states that policing of a minority group needs understanding of that group's history, culture and social characteristics. Problem oriented policing takes the above factors into account. Generally, routine police response to calls can't address underlying causes. "Police managers have begun to analyse crime problems with a view to developing new, more efficient approaches to dealing with the fundamental problems related to crime. A very significant new approach is called problem oriented policing" (p.3). Problem oriented policing involves police and community working together to address underlying factors in a community which are leading to crime. The benefits are that it accounts for the culture of the community, involves the community at large, and targets specific issues. An open mind is the key to analysing community problems. There

35

is a need to review all information available, including past responses, resources available, mood of the community, and any unique characteristics of the local citizens. Responses should include as many stakeholders as possible, especially influential leaders or elders. Multiple responses should be used. Approaches must be realistic and measurable for evaluation purposes. Both process and results should be evaluated with predetermined criteria. There is a need for continued support from the community. Police must accept and understand factors that influence the community in order to be effective, and the community needs to understand and accept police roles and responsibilities. There are two views:

1. Reducing crime shows effectiveness of police and improves relations; and

2. Alternatively, a pre-existing positive relationship is a prerequisite to reducing crime by encouraging public involvement in crime problems (Benson, 1991).

Police should have answers to any obstacles or objectives raised by community to ensure support of any community policing endeavours, and ideally, police would attend council or tribal meetings to explain any proposals. Influential leaders should be included on the core committee, as should a strong facilitator. There needs to be open, ongoing dialogue between community and police to have a full understanding of all problems, even obscure ones. It is important for police to realise that a problem may be different among different group members and its seriousness viewed differently by the police and the community.

As Kidder and Rogers (2004) say, "Youth is recognized as a pivotal period in development where social programs and supports can make a dramatic difference in life trajectories" (p.3). The federal government does already have some interest in health,

36

which was well developed in the 1970's. Although more is needed, below is a list of what is already in place.

1. YouthNet Satellite Program, YouthNet
2. Youth Mobilization Project, Smartrisk Foundation
3. Youth Engagement in Health Research and Policy, Social Program and Evaluation Group, Centre for Health Services and Policy Research
4. Building Community Capacity in the Development of Healthy Public Policy and Programming for Youth: A School-Based Youth Empowerment Approach, CAHPERD

Kidder and Rogers (2004), state that any national youth policy needs to make social inclusion in decision making a priority. Youths are often systemically prevented from being full, participating citizens. Independence and autonomy can help lead to full citizenship and should be promoted. High numbers of youth never participate in organized programming of any kind. This is because they do not have the perspicacity to realize that their input may be a valuable contribution for future decision makers. Increased involvement would lead to an increase in their feelings of participating in a democracy. Trying to relieve kids of responsibility has actually shut them out at a time when they should be involved. Adults need to be educated to see and recognize the ability that youth have to self-develop and correct negative behaviour and nurture desirable skills.

Culbert (2004) states in the February 28th issue of the Vancover Sun that 'Asset Building' is a concept that is growing across North America, especially through positive interaction with the community. The concept's focus is kids encouraging other kids to volunteer and get involved. The community can play a role by accepting youth and being open minded to them. "Street-racing car thieves. Drug- smoking break in artists. Graffiti-writing, loitering kids with attitude. Foul-mouthed skateboarders…They may be

37

the unpleasant images that some adults have of teenagers, be it because of movie plots, newspaper headlines or fear of youngsters hanging around the corner store. How to break those stereotypes will be the focus of an inaugural national conference to be attended by youths and adults from across Canada who believes teens have more to offer society---and that society, in turn, must show them a bit of respect. A lot of adults think of us as brats, but we've got to do this conference to prove them wrong. It is really important that adults can look at us positively and be supportive of what we want to do and listen to what we have to say. Kids feel inferior sometimes" (p. 2).

Gabe Gonda (2005) discussed an innovative police mentoring program run by the Toronto Police Service. He argued that "Even poor kids who aren't destined to earn NBA (Nation Basketball Association) millions can use basketball to improve their lives. That's the lesson of Five-O, a 10-year-old youth basketball program run by Toronto police. Five-O isn't just another inner-city good news story. It has become a rare bridge between underprivileged teenagers and police at a time when those groups are more than ever adversaries in the city's low-income, high-crime areas" (p.B1) Most of the youth involved in the program are considered at-risk. They are generally kids from dangerous neighbourhoods, broken homes, even homes where criminals reside. Officers involved are all on volunteer time and feel that it is rewarding for them, as well, as it gives them a chance to interact with these youth from somewhere other than the seat of a cruiser or at a crime scene. This program is an overwhelming success, with 120 teens playing on elite travel teams, and several hundred younger ones playing in junior house leagues. The retired officer who started the program also related that he often used basketball as an entry point into tough inner-city neighbourhoods where the game was played and

38

followed with a passion and that officers currently still working the street are beginning

to use the program to build street contacts and make inroads with youth who are in a

position to offer them assistance with their work. Aside from providing a chance to

interact informally with police, the officers are also trying to teach the youth leadership,

sportsmanship, even grace in defeat and humility. Overwhelmingly, they want to get the

point across to the youth that it is not "…us vs. them" (Gonda, 2005, p.B4).

A Discussion about At-Risk Youth

In Ontario schools, there has been a movement to label students "at-risk" of

achieving, and focusing on implementing appropriate programming in order to meet the

needs of these students so they can experience success. According to both the At-Risk

Working Group and the Program Pathways Work Group, an at-risk student is perceived

as:

- Elementary students who are demonstrating limited knowledge and skills of the
  curriculum for their grade level;

- Secondary students who are studying at the basic level;

- Secondary students who are earning marks in the 50s and 60s and who have not
  grasped the foundations to be successful; and

- Students who have poor attendance rates and are therefore disengaged from
  their studies.

"The numbers of students 'at-risk' are considerable. Approximately 25% of all Ontario

secondary students do not complete their schooling, and just fewer than 40% fail to

acquire 16 credits by the end of grade 10. The reality is that just over 50% of secondary

39

school students will go to university or college, and the remainder will enter the workforce with or without their high school diploma" (Ministry of Education, 2003a, p.15). According to the Chairs of the Expert Panel who worked on the publication of Building Pathways to Success, studies disclose that students whose truancy pattern is 2.2-3.6 days per month are moderately at risk of failure. And students who miss school 3.8 days a month or more are at a high risk of dropping out (Ministry of Education, 2003a).

Students who are known as at-risk have many obstacles in their way. Some of these have been highlighted by The Expert Panel who worked on the Think Literacy Project for Ontario schools. These obstacles are:

- Lack of basic knowledge and skills

- Lack of motivation or guidance

- Personal issues such as social and family

- Feelings that school is unimportant for their future

- Lack of programming for their specific needs

- Lack of courses leading them to their specific career choice

- Language barriers (Ministry of Education, 2003b).

As noted in Think Literacy Success (Ministry of Education, 2003b), according to a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) statement for the United Nations Literacy Decade movement, "Literacy is more than reading and writing – it is about how we communicate in society. It is about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language and culture. Literacy finds its place in our lives alongside other ways of communicating. Indeed, literacy itself takes many forms: on paper, on the computer screen, on T.V, on posters and signs. Those who use literacy take

40

it for granted, but those who cannot use it are excluded from much communication in today's world. Indeed, it is the excluded who can best appreciate the notion of "literacy is freedom" (Ministry of Education, 2003b, p.7).

To all kids, especially those considered at-risk, a caring adult can make the difference. These adults are characterized by the fact that they recognize the needs and interests of youth. They strive to keep youth motivated and engaged, provide them with opportunities to hone in on individual strengths and weaknesses and therefore goal set for their futures. These adults model good citizenship and are the heroes of these young people. "Adolescents are not all the same. They perform differently, experience the world in different ways, and have different attitudes. They respond positively to adults who care about them, encourage them, treat them as individuals, acknowledge their cultural strengths, and are fair" (Ministry of Education, 2003b, p.17).

As Glasser (1984) illustrates in his writings about conflict, people are moved by the following psychological needs:

1. the need to belong;

2. the need for power – achieving, accomplishing, and being recognized and respected;

3. the need for freedom – making choices; and

4. the need for fun.

These needs can conflict with one another, and there is a constant attempt to satisfy all of them.

Schrumpf, Crawford and Chu (1991) state, "Each individual picture differently the things that he or she believes will satisfy their needs. If a person wishes to understand

41

conflict and perceive it positively, the knowledge that no two people can have exactly the same wants is central" (p.6). The exploitation of conflict includes avoidance, confrontation and communication. These battles affect the issue of conflict. When avoidance is the issue, people try to avoid conflict by becoming disengaged from the situation. When people retreat like this it is usually because they do not have the skills to resolve the problem. When conflicts are avoided, basic psychological needs are not being met. When confrontation is an issue, the situation is characterized by threats, aggression and anger. Again, when this is the case, psychological needs are not being met. When a lack of communication is a problem, psychological needs are not being met once again. Effective communications requires empathetic listening. When people listen empathetically, they maintain the psychological need for power. "The actions people choose when they are involved in a conflict will either increase or decrease the problem. Avoidance may temporarily decrease the problem but is ineffective as a long-term strategy. Confrontation may squelch the immediate issues at the price of continued hostility. Communication offers the only possibility for a lasting solution" (Schrumpf et al, 1991, p.9)

Whitelaw, Parent and Griffiths (2006) point out that one of the most important avenues for accomplishing a positive change is within the school setting. Research has exhibited an alliance between school performance and young criminal offenders. School performance is a strong predictor of youth and adult criminality. Offenders tend to be less successful in school than those who do not commit crime. They have lower attendance rates, and they are more likely to drop out of school. Students who leave school early are more likely to be in trouble with the law and are more likely unemployed

42

or underemployed. It is not a stretch to make a correlation between this early departure from school a lifelong conflict with the law.

According to the John Howard Society of Alberta, "There is a growing recognition within both aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities of the need to stress prevention, rather than remedial strategies, if problems such as literacy and low educational levels are to be banished from our society. Within this prevention strategy, two factors are recognized. The first is the communities and families, not experts and government agencies possess the creative energies necessary to find and manage durable community-based prevention initiatives. The second factor is that most human development problems are the result of multiple and intertwined factors or deprivations. Since people are shaped by their total environment, strategies must address this whole environment, not just one specific aspect of it" (John Howard Society of Alberta, 1995).

As the Chairs of the Expert Panel working on the Building Pathways to Success initiative say, "Providing improved educational opportunities is only part of the picture. Attitudes have to change. Hence the need for what we have termed a "re-culturing" of schools so that positive and constructive attitudes prevail around options for students who may be at-risk" (Ministry of Education, 2003a, p.3). The key theme of the Expert Panel has been their vision of giving all students hope for their future.

A Discussion about Community Policing

> *"The police are the public, the public are the police."*
> *Sir Robert Peel*

According to the Task Force on Policing in Ontario (1974) the movement of community policing can be traced back to the 1970s. More than 30 years ago, a task force was

assigned to study policing and found that there was a wide gap between the police and the community. Today, police services across the country are engrossed in many activities created to prevent and respond to crime. Such activities include community police stations, police store fronts, and foot patrols. School-based programs include school liaison officers, safety presentations, the DARE program (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) to combat drug abuse in youth, and several recreational and sport events that bring police officers together with youth in non-confrontational situations. Whitelaw, Parent and Taylor-Griffiths (2006) report preventing and reducing the levels of crime is a priority for the citizens of our communities and for the police services across Canada. As noted by the National Crime Prevention Council (quoted by Whitelaw et al.): "This is due to the economic, social, and human costs of crime. It has been estimated that reacting to crime – apprehending, sentencing, incarcerating, and rehabilitating offenders costs Canadian taxpayers approximately $10 billion annually (about $340 per person). This figure is in fact a small portion of the actual cost of crime. It does not include the cost of property loss, security services, insurance fraud, and crime related hospitalization. Nor does it include the human cost – the impact of crime on victims and their families, the loss of the sense of personal and community well-being, and the fear of crime and the loss of feelings of security and safety. When these impacts are factored in, the cost of crime in Canada is estimated to be as much as $46 billion per year" (2006, p.72.) There were many issues that provided the movement of community policing to have any force. In the early 1970s questions were raised about the effectiveness of present police tactics. Random police car patrol had little impact on social order and crime rates. This is why expanding the duties of a police officer to that of being both proactive and reactive, as

44

well as considering public fear of crime and quality of life issues over and above just responding to calls has gained attention.

There are two pieces of legislation that police forces in Ontario must abide by regarding community policing. These are the Police Services Act (Province of Ontario, 1990,) and the Adequacy and Effectiveness of Police Services Regulations (Province of Ontario, 1999), (as listed by Whitelaw et al., 2006, p. 55).

Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1997) have divided Community Policing into 3 parts. The first part is that community policing is a philosophy and a program that has the police working with the community in order to identify problems and come up with solutions together. Such problems could be crime, drugs, and fear of crime, social disorder, and neighbourhood decay. The objective is to improve the quality of life for the citizens of that community. The second part is that everyone involved in the initiative is to be committed to the philosophy. They need to challenge themselves to find ways to prevent problems before they occur. The final part reveals that community policing should decentralize and personalize the police service. In doing so, the officers can have the opportunity to focus on community building measures so that each neighbourhood becomes a better place to be. Problem solving to prevent the issue of social disorder is the focus of the community policing initiative. The initiative requires officers to take a proactive approach to policing. This is seen in the 3 Ps: prevention, problem-solving, and partnership with the community. The main characters in community policing are elected officials, managers, police officers, their unions and associations and the community. The community is seen as both the root of crime and disorder and as having a main role in preventing and reacting to these problems. Community policing is seen as the

45

evolution of policing, where the philosophy that drives the officers each day has returned to its origin set forth by Sir Robert Peel early in the 19th century. These roots go back to the day where police viewed their role as, "no call too small" (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1997, p. 51.) This approach to policing allowed for the officers to gain close relations with their community members, which offered opportunities to collaborate with the citizens in identifying problems and coming up with possible solutions to the needs and concerns of the residents.

"The goals of community policing are as follows:

- Greater police legitimacy and public acceptance, more responsive, less authoritarian, more inclusive;

- increased police accountability, more open communication, consultation and collaboration with the community;

- More efficient use of police resources, new styles of police management, working relationships with the community, and use of community resources;

- increased police effectiveness through innovative strategies: problem-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing, preventative and proactive strategies;

- decreased fear of crime and enhanced public safety: foot patrols, community police stations, and increased police presence and visibility;

- increased job satisfaction and improved officer productivity: broadening operational responsibilities, reducing bureaucracy, and increasing autonomy of police officers; and

- A reduction in the number of public complaints against the public"

(Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux, 1997, p.49).

Policing today goes with the National Crime Prevention Strategy's (2004) efforts to reduce crime by battling it before it happens. The National Crime Prevention Strategy's principle is that the way to reduce crime is to focus on the reasons that put individuals at risk, such as family violence, school problems, and drug abuse.

The media portrays the job of a police officer as conducting investigations and making arrests; but the reality of the job is that these types of duties account for only 10-25% of their time. The remainder is devoted to performing tasks that do not involve the enforcement of the law. Most of a police officer's job is devoted to non-law enforcement reactions related to maintaining order and providing services. The success of any community policing program lies in the hands of the police officers. If the majority of the officers have a negative attitude, the program is doomed to failure. The officer's role is that of a proactive problem solver who understands the needs of the community rather than being a 'crime-fighter'. This is why it is important that the officers have a full knowledge of the community they work in, and that they are also allowed the time it takes to develop working partnerships with community residents.

Criticisms of Community Policing

Police may not be the most appropriate agency to address social problems in the community. Perhaps it should be left in the hands of other agencies with the mandate to do community development. Some officers with a negative attitude complain that community policing officers are not social workers in uniform. This notion conflicts with the traditional view of police officers as crime fighters, which may cause some confusion. One other criticism is that if the police are dedicated to the community and if the community is given the chance to be partners in crime prevention, it is detrimental to the

47

integrity and activities of the police. Officers and senior police personnel complain that they are too busy fielding calls to focus on community related problems. "The successful development and implementation of community policing requires that police and communities acknowledge and address these criticisms" (Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux , 1997, p.51).

A Discussion about Mentoring

"Mentoring others to greatness is probably one of the finest acts that can be offered from one person to another." Lou Tice

Mentoring by definition is a working relationship between an adult and an older person in which the adult provides guidance, assistance, advice and support. The act of mentoring is the most powerful form of influence. "Most adults can identify a person who, at some time in their life, had a significant and positive impact on them. Mentors can be friends, relatives, co-workers, teachers, as well as historic or contemporary personalities. Mentoring is the simplest way to relay knowledge and wisdom in life, and the fact of the matter is, everyone has experienced it. Mentoring can be informal, and can happen without conscious awareness by either person. A mentor is a more experienced person who acts as a role model, compatriot, challenger, guide or cheerleader" (Peer Systems Consulting Group, 2000). The mentoring focused on in this study is the type intended to prevent school drop-outs and juvenile delinquency, as well as those without a strong role model in their lives. "The most successful strategy ever launched for youth by the Canadian government connected more than 125,000 youth at-risk of dropping out with adult mentors" (Peer Systems Consulting Group, 2000). With today's technology, mentoring is made even easier, as it can take place by phone, fax and email communication. There is also what is known as formal mentoring where a program is

48

created with a certain focus and audience. "The characteristics of formal mentoring programs are: a deliberate, conscious, voluntary relationship; the relationship is sanctioned by a corporation, organization, or association; that occurs between an experienced, employed, or retired person and one or more other persons; where the outcome of the relationship is expected to benefit all parties in the relationship for personal growth, career development, lifestyle enhancement, spiritual fulfillment, goal achievement, and other areas designated by the mentor and partner; will benefit the community where the mentorship takes place; typically focused on interpersonal support, guidance, mutual exchange, sharing of wisdom, coaching, and role modeling; and includes activities such as one-on-one time, small group discussions, or by electronic telecommunications" (Peer Systems Consulting Group, 2000).

There is a plethora of reasons why youths need mentoring. There are many social services that aim to meet the needs of our youth, such as foster care, welfare, public health and juvenile systems that pledge to enhance the well-being of children. Although many of these services exist, they are reactive rather than proactive. Mentoring is a proactive means of reaching our young people before the need for these services arises. One of the main focuses of all of these services, including mentoring programs, is to support children who are considered at-risk. These young people are likely to face early departure from the education system, failure in the workforce, early pregnancy, substance abuse, homelessness and negative involvement with the law (Smith, 2004). The White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth strongly endorsed the principle that public resources must be concentrated on youth who are most seriously at risk. "These special target populations would be those who represent areas of serious concern, and who carry

49

disproportionately negative consequences for them and their communities if not

addressed" (Smith, 2004, p.1).

There are several ways that mentoring benefits the student:

1. Increases personal knowledge;

2. Provides opportunities for supportive criticism;

3. Provides wisdom, advice and encouragement;

4. Provides networking opportunities; and

5. Stimulates reflection and thinking for future goals (Treasury Board of Canada

   Secretariat, 2000).

It is important to remember that successful people started out with a mentor,

because everyone needs an experienced guide who will listen with an empathetic ear.

Mentoring programs grew in popularity in the 1980s as the need for at risk youth

to receive more support was apparent. Another thing that seemed apparent was the lack

of success from the traditional services offered to these children (Jekielek, Moore, Hair,

2002). According to Sipe (1999), there are noticeable changes to the attitudes and

behaviours of youth at-risk. In order for any mentoring program to be successful, both

training and support are necessary. This training should teach the mentors how to cope

with typical adolescent issues and problems. It should also provide resources of contacts

and agencies for help. The recruitment of mentors is an important step to the programs

growth to ensure that there will be sustainability and that the mentors are in tune with the

needs of youth (General Accounting Office, 2004). Research has shown that the

frequency of contact and intensity of involvement is important (Smith, 2004). The

foundation for mentoring should include commitment, needs assessment, expected

50

outcomes, current resources, open communication, confidentiality, training, and coordination. Potential mentors are screened using background checks and references (General Accounting Office, 2004, p. 6). It is important to establish a climate where the mentoring relationship can thrive. Ways of doing this might be to use role playing, rehearsals, and experimental learning activities, brainstorming, as well as going for a walk together, talking over coffee, and attending special events (Peer Systems Consulting Group, 2004). For any relationship to work, it is vital that both parties realize the importance of maintaining and respecting privacy, honesty and integrity. According to Empey (2004), "Mentoring does not need to be a conscious act. Mentoring is a commitment to recognize, encourage and celebrate that which makes us unique."

Mentoring is based on the foundation that if young people have contact with caring adults, they will be more likely to find success as an adult. Research has proven that this commitment from adults has made a huge impact on the lives of some of our youth. Anecdotes from youth who have overcome tribulation in their lives often connect it with a strong relationship they had with a concerned teacher, police officer, neighbour or coach. In 1990, an assessment of the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Association yielded the fact that the organization's objective of bringing youth together with adults works. These youth were less likely to use drugs, attended and received good marks in school, as well as staying out of conflict with friends and family (Smith, 2004). "Research shows that teachers who help their students to develop a sense of competence and self-worth are able to convince their students that they care about them as individuals and want them to learn" (Dillon, 1989). This trend to connect youth with committed adults has proven to

51

succeed as encouraging track records are emerging in evaluation of the programs (Smith, 2004).

"When provided with a vision and purpose combined with skill training and support, adults were more likely to volunteer and this has resulted in more than 65,000 Canadians from all walks of life contributing to the growth of young people" (Peer Systems Consulting Group, 2000). There are many qualities that make a good mentor. Not only do they need to be available and willing to spend time with the young person, they need to be able to give guidance and feedback. Most mentors enjoy helping others, are open-minded, flexible, empathetic and encouraging. They should have good communication skills and be able to impel the student's thinking and reflection. Some of the duties of a mentor include such things as helping the youth set long and short term goals; helping the youth understand life as an adult; creating learning opportunities; providing opportunities for communication, critical thinking, responsibility, flexibility and teamwork; critically criticizing and recommending ways for improvement; answering inquiries; and assisting in employment research (Smith, 2004). It is vital that the mentor and youth have a kind of chemistry for the relationship to work. The mentor is an entrusted individual who will help the youth with challenges and offer a safe haven for inquiry. Since establishing relationships with at-risk youth is challenging, it is imperative that mentors have a high degree of patience, acceptance, and perceptiveness and most importantly the desire to be a good role model.

Mentoring can take many forms. It can be formal or informal. It can be between two co-workers, or between an adult and a youth. Programs like Big Brothers and Big Sisters provide friendships to neighbourhood kids. These children are usually referred by

a family member because they lack good role models. According to a 1995 study of the program, children who participated in it were achieving considerable success in school. They were attending school consistently, and had developed closer relations with peers and family members (Tierney, 1995). Another such program is school-based mentoring which takes place during school hours. The focus of this program is to provide support to an at-risk youth in order to build confidence and esteem in order to see success. The recipients of this program are usually referred by teachers or other school officials who believe the child could benefit from the extra attention and guidance. The impact of programs such as this proved to induce student academic improvement, improved self-esteem, and confidence (Davis, 2003). The final thought on mentoring is that it can develop new leaders, which in and of itself is considered to be a bonus. Leader Warren Bennis talks fondly of his mentors when he says, "They were the handful of people who made a difference in my life" (Peer Systems Consulting Group, 2003). Calgary Police note that only 5% of the graduates of their Youth Education and Intervention Program have committed a subsequent criminal offence after the program was complete. "A testament to its success is that many of the graduates continue to be involved in the program as youth leaders, becoming positive role models for others" (Calgary Police Service, retrieved January 5, 2006).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design and Methodology

      The study employed research design principles and techniques consistent with the traditions of qualitative research. The research is based a case study of the 2005 Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp that took place from August 15 to August 19, 2005 at Camp Cedarwin in Harrow, Ontario. A qualitative approach was selected because it takes place in a natural setting like Cop Camp. The researcher chose to do a case study based on Creswell's (1998) assertions that such a study is an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. The researcher saw the youth to be the 'bounded system' that Creswell refers to. The members of the group were all experiencing similar troubles in their lives which is why they were chosen to participate in the camp. Case studies are when the researcher examines a program, event or activity in detail. This was an appropriate strategy to use because it allowed the researcher to participate and see growth first hand.

      During the week long camp, the researcher attended as a participant observer. This was very advantageous from the standpoint of developing trust. The opportunities that this on-site data collection afforded the researcher were that it gave a great deal of detail about the participants, and the environment they were put in at camp. The researcher was able to observe the activities that built strong relations between the youth and the police officers. The method of data collection involved the researcher actively participating with the campers to get a feel for the rapport that was building. The researcher was looking for improvement and progression of the attitudes and behaviour

54

of the youth from the beginning to the end of camp. The researcher's participation in the camp activities allowed her to build rapport, therefore building credibility with her subjects. The data collected involved pre and post interviews with the youth, observations of them while at camp, participant journals, and follow-up telephone interviews with their parents of the participants.

The Sample

The sample is drawn from attendees of Essex County Cop Camp. All the students are from the Essex County area and all the counsellors and administrators are employed to the Essex OPP. The campers were graduates of the VIP program who have displayed some leadership and teamwork attributes but appeared to need some help in honing these skills especially as some displayed negative attitudes towards authority. Some of these youth were exhibiting signs of at-risk behaviours and in some cases there were concerns that students were on the verge of getting into trouble with the law.

The participating students were selected randomly from a list of students invited to the camp. Letters of permission were sent to the parents and students explaining the purpose of the research and seeking their permission to participate. Initially fourteen students volunteered to participate in the study with one withdrawing on the second day of camp as he had to return home due to illness. This left the sample at 13 participants. There were now 8 male and 5 female participants. A brief profile of each of the participants is presented below.

Camper Profiles

Male 1: An athletic, popular male, very confident when in a group of peers, polite to police officers, but shy with the researcher.

55

Male 2: An athletic, confident male who came across to the adults as arrogant and attention seeking. This participant comes from a high income family.

Female 1: A shy female from low income family. It took her a few days to warm up to her peers. She had trouble keeping eye contact with adults.

Male 3: A spirited male often seeking attention from adults.

Female 2: An outspoken female who was clearly glad to be at camp. She possessed strong leadership traits.

Female 3: A shy female who stood by familiar people for support. She was clearly excited to be a part of the study and was at ease when talking to adults. She was very polite.

Male 4: An insecure male who often blamed others for his problems and failings. He was a loner.

Female 4: A polite female who often thanked the adults for giving of their time so she could have this experience. She had fun with her peers and was very helpful with tasks around the camp.

Female 5: A mature, athletic female who preferred to be with adults rather than her peers. She was very polite.

Male 5: A very over dramatic youth subject to hypochondriac behaviour. He was always seeking attention on the pretext of having an assortment of medical ailments.

Male 6: A confident male who was well liked and accepted by peers. He was very quiet at first.

Male 7: An over confident male from high income family. It appeared that he was trying to test the patience of the police officers and deliberately attempting to get into trouble. He bragged to other campers about the consequences for his misbehaviour.

Synthesis of Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of police mentoring relationships on the attitudes and behaviour of affected youths. The researcher was trying to ascertain the impact of the Cop Camp as a deterrent to delinquent activity due to the formation of close relations with a police officer. Would the camp help the youth to understand the role of the police officer in their community, and in turn lead them to understand the role of other authority figures such as parents and teachers?

The collection of data took place at the Cop Camp which is located at Camp Cedarwin in Harrow, Ontario. The people being observed are the youth/campers and the police officers/counsellors. Upon the arrival of both the campers and the counsellors, the youth were, for the most part, shy and withdrawn. The officers tended to interact more with the youth's parents as they registered their children for camp. The events being observed were the everyday interactions of the youth with the counsellors as well as their peers. The children were split into teams known to them as 'platoons' and named after O.P.P. specialized units such as Marine, ERT (Emergency Response Team), Motorcycle, Patrol and Canine. Each team had one police officer and other adult volunteers assigned to them. The campers were expected to participate in spirit building activities such as making a team flag and cheer, as well as ice breaker games in order to get to know each other quickly in a relaxed setting. After the first day of getting to know each other, the

57

teams competed against each other for 'perks' such as being allowed to stay up the latest, and getting the back of the bus for trips to events. This was to prove to the youth that working as a team and cooperating with others brought shared benefits. The researcher was looking for how each individual participant responded to winning, losing, and taking 'orders' (i.e. advice and counselling) from the officers. The camp was run like a basic training class at the police college which included morning runs, bunk inspections, physical training, and even drill. The youth were taught leadership skills which began with a round table discussion with an O.P.P. Sergeant about leadership. They also observed the officers in the position of leader. They had opportunities to lead the group in prayer at meal times, lead during drill practice, as well as experiencing informal expectations of leadership. The campers even hosted a thank you barbeque for O.P.P. officials, local politicians, news media, and camp sponsors. The campers were expected to do daily chores and keep a detailed log book of their daily activities. On the final day of camp, the kids presented a "March Past", which is a police term for graduation, for their parents that brought together all of their drills practice lessons in the form of a parade. The parents witnessed their children march in formation as a choreographed group carrying their team flags, the O.P.P. flag and the Canadian flag while an officer sang the National Anthem. They demonstrated formation manoeuvres such as 'wheeling' where they turn a corner as a unit while maintaining a serious demeanour. This was an amazing display of teamwork, especially since the children were tired, dirty from cleaning the camp, and sad to be leaving their new found friends. It should also be noted that all of these activities had the secondary and less obvious goal of teaching the youth responsibility and accountability in general.

58

Data Collection

Interviews

The main data collection method was qualitative interviews. Two interviews were conducted – a pre-camp and a post-camp. These interviews asked open ended questions focusing on the child's opinion of authority, their behaviour, and why they think they were chosen to be at the camp. The post interview questions inquired as to how they now felt towards police officers, if they felt they learned anything over the course of the week, and if they felt they were a contributing team member. Interview questions can be found in the Appendices.

Participant Observation

The second type of data being collected was observation. The researcher also participated in the camp and was therefore immersed in the activities and the lives of the campers. This allowed thorough data observations to be completed.

Journals

Method number three of data collection involved the campers keeping a journal in which they wrote reflective notes about their daily experiences. The reason for the journals was to get the child's perspective of the growth of their relations with the officers and their peers, as well as to seek out their outlook on the leadership experiences they incurred.

Parent interviews

The fourth and final type of data collected was follow-up phone interviews with the parents of the participants one month following camp. The objective of this was to

59

ask the parents if they saw their child grow in maturity. The questions to the parents were if, in their opinion, the child was impacted by their camp experiences with the police officers and if their child's attitude and behaviour toward authority had changed.

From speaking to the youth in the first interview, most were aware that they were chosen to attend the camp by their teacher because they displayed some leadership potential throughout their past school year. As well, most understood that the objective of the camp was to develop their leadership skills, as well as develop good relations between the police and future leaders of the community. Surprisingly, some of the so-called "potential leaders" had no idea why they were chosen, nor did they understand the objectives of the camp.

60

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

At the beginning of the camp the participants were shy, and slow getting into the activities until they were able to befriend at least one of their peers. This happened once the larger group was broken up into their smaller platoons of about 8-9 campers and 1 counsellor. At this time, I conducted my pre-camp interviews. For the most part, the participants revealed that they did not know why they had been chosen by their teacher and VIP officer to attend the camp, and therefore did not know the camp's objectives, which were to polish their leadership skills and in some cases to alter their behaviour and attitudes towards authority figures or themselves.

In order to demonstrate the growth of the children, I will display what was observed at the beginning of camp, during and at the end of camp.

At the beginning...

At the beginning of the week, I was unsure that I would see what I hypothesized the outcome to be. Both the children and the counsellors were in their own worlds, and seemed to have come to camp prepared to resist letting their guard down. During registration, the officers all stood at the picnic table known as the registration desk armed with their Tim Horton's coffee. As the campers arrived, they one by one showed up as scared, sceptical 12 year olds waiting to be entertained. Once the parents left, the kids were called together to meet the counsellors and hear the camp rules and expectations. The kids were still pretty quiet, but the researcher could already see some cliques forming. Those who had found someone to cling to remained at the back of the group, while those still feeling alone stood at the front. Some of the kids showed shock when they heard that the camp was going to be run like a basic training class that police

61

officers would go through at the police college. Some even went as far as shaking their heads, indicating that they were not going to take part in such things.

Next, the group was split into smaller platoons with a balance of boys and girls, the team's compositions having been were randomly arranged by the camp's administration team beforehand. The platoons were named after O.P.P. specialized units in order to set the tone of the spirit of the camp. The officer assigned to each platoon explained to the kids what the specialized unit does within the O.P.P. and set the kids off on the task of creating a team flag and cheer that would be presented in a contest later in the day.

It was at this time, a few hours into the camp activities, that I conducted my pre-camp interviews.

Male 1: This participant was unaware why he was chosen to attend the camp. He figured he would make new friends and have fun. His opinion of himself was that he was a leader. He said, "I don't know if I'd call myself a leader, but I'm definitely not a follower". He thought of himself as a good kid, but can be a 'goof' sometimes at home. He thinks his parents would agree with him about this assessment. He told me that he feels comfortable talking to his parents about any 'teenage stuff'. He got along with his teacher this past year because he felt that she was nice and fair to everyone. He did admit to having continuous conflict with his French teacher. He said that she belittled people in front of their peers and wasn't fair. He says he confronted her on this because his parents suggested he do this, but it continued. He has never been in trouble with the police.

Male 2: When asked why he thought he was chosen to attend the camp, the participant answered with, "I was a leader in my class. I was determined to try my hardest to get on

62

the honour role. I did it." It appeared to me that he gathered his response to this question from the beginning round table discussion of the camp's objectives that he attended just before the interview. When asked what he thought he would get out of this week at Cop Camp, he said it would be fun, and he thought it would change him to be even more of a leader. Again, the response had been influenced by the round table discussion he attended. He revealed that he got along with his teacher this past year because he was athletic and therefore they got along well. He admitted that in grade five his teacher "put too much pressure on the class, and I got upset so I pulled back and my marks ended up suffering. I kept it to myself, but finally told my parents about it after they saw my marks had dropped and they told me to just get through the year." He told me that he feels free to talk to his parents about anything. He saw himself as a leader who listens when someone is talking and is respectful. He thought that attending the camp would make him a better person. He said he listens and pays attention more that other kids at school. He said he behaves the same at home, but fights with his sister a lot.

Female 1: This participant had no idea why she was chosen to be at this year's Cop Camp. She said, "I know it has something to do with the fact that my dad doesn't work and we have no money." She figured she'd have fun, meet friends and get to know some police officers. She told me that she has always liked her teachers, and has never been in conflict with any authority figures other than the odd thing with her mom. She said that she and her mom always talk things out rationally. She revealed that she is neither a leader nor a follower, that she "does her own thing". She thought the objective of the camp was to thank good kids for being good. She sees herself as a good kid who works hard at school and home.

63

Male 3: This boy didn't know why he was chosen to attend the camp, but was sure he'd have fun. He said, "I'm not sure why, but the cops won't be sorry they picked me." He said he liked his past teacher. He said, "She was nice sometimes, and other times she was mean, but we deserved it." He said that he always gets along with his teachers. "When I get mad I hold it in. Sometimes I blast at them!" He said that he has never been in trouble except for a couple of detentions for not having his tests signed, and he gets in trouble at home for fighting with his brothers and sisters. When asked if he saw himself as a leader or a follower he said, "Definitely a leader. It's all about me. I'm always right, but I'm not pushy."

Female 2: This participant showed up 2 hours late for camp because her father thought the camp was being held the following week. When she arrived she didn't seem unsettled, and joined the activities without hesitation. Female 2 admitted to not knowing why she was chosen to attend Cop Camp. She thought she'd have fun. She said she liked her teacher this year because she was nice and let them do things for rewards. When asked to tell me about a time when she had a conflict with an authority figure she said, "I always get along with my teachers. Many times I am in conflict with my real mom. If I don't listen she yells and if that doesn't work I get grounded. I get along with my dad and his girlfriend though." When asked to describe her behaviour at school and at home, her reply was, "I'm a good kid. I've never been to the principal's office. My real mom has CAS (The Children's Aid Society) after her. I'm only late for school sometimes." She said her teachers would agree that she is a good kid, but sometimes she forgets her homework at home when she stays with her mother, and then she has to redo it.

64

Female 3: Female 3 also did not know why she was chosen over her classmates to attend the camp. She knew she'd have fun and make friends with the other campers and the officers. She said she liked her teacher this year and felt she could go to her with any problem. When asked if she'd ever encountered any conflict with authority she said that she gets along with everyone because she was taught that adults are usually right. If she doesn't feel something is right she talks to her mom about it. She said if she's frustrated she goes to her room and screams into a pillow, then talks to her mom about it once she cools down. She sees herself as a leader because it seems to her that her friends look up to her and usually come to her with their problems.

Male 4: When asked if he knew why he was chosen to attend Cop Camp, this boy said that it was because he helped out at the fund-raising car wash. He said that Cop Camp should be fun, but "I don't care about making friends, but making friends with the cops is important." When asked if he liked his teacher this year he said, "No, she was mean only to me. I felt bullied by her. I deserved higher marks in math. I couldn't talk to her or she'd yell at me. I hated her." He said that he gets along better with his dad than his mom because she yells a lot. His only run in with the police was when he was making false 911 calls. He saw himself as a leader. He said, "I'm a leader with my friends. I'm smarter than them and I show them stuff so that's why they follow me." He suspected that the objective of the camp was, "for the cops to check if these kids are special or if they need to be looking into crimes that these kids have been involved in. Also for fun." He feels that his parents would say he was a good kid but his teachers would say he had a bit of an attitude.

Female 4: This female thought she was chosen to attend the camp because somebody saw that she was a good leader. She planned to meet new friends, have fun, and challenge herself by rock climbing and doing things she's never done before. She liked her grade 6 teacher because she let the class have freedom and privileges. She feels she always gets along with teachers, and if she doesn't, she always shows respect anyway. She feels her mom is fair. She sees herself as both a leader and a follower because kids younger than her look up to her. She felt she would learn more about leadership at camp, and figure out if she wanted to be a police officer.

Female 5: Female 5 felt she was chosen to attend the Cop Camp because at school she demonstrated strong leadership. She planned on learning about teamwork and meeting a lot of good people at camp. She said, "It's great to be meeting these police officers because they are an important part of our community." When asked if she got along with her teacher this past year she replied with, "Oh ya! She was awesome. She understood me. I went to her for everything." She admitted that she had some conflict with her teacher when she was in grade 5. She recalled, "The teacher had trouble controlling the class. I acted up because I was the youngest in a split class and everyone was bad." Ironically she said that she would never be a follower because people can be bad influences.

Male 5: Male 5 had no idea why he had been picked to attend camp; in fact he said he was surprised because he never gets picked for anything. He thought camp would be fun and said, "I think it's important to get to know cops because the more you know them, the more you can go to them if you ever get into trouble." When asked to tell of a time when he had a conflict with an authority figure he revealed, "I got mad at a teacher when

66

he blamed me for something I didn't do. I just walked away and clenched my fists. I bottled it up. I also get mad at my mom for being unfair. I yell at her, and then we try to work things out with raised voices." He saw himself as a leader. He noted, "I get kids going. I make sure they get confident." He thought the objectives of the camp were to change kids who were going down the wrong path.

Male 6: This participant knew that he was chosen to attend Cop Camp because his teacher thought he had good potential. He hoped the camp would make his leadership skills better so that he can make an impact later in life. He has never had any conflict with authority figures. He said, "I get along with all my teachers. If I didn't agree with one of them I'd make the best of it and go with the flow." He saw himself as a leader because he felt that the kids at school looked up to him because he set a good example. He saw the objective of the camp as "a leadership builder so that when we're adults we'll be people who can lead society."

Male 7: This participant said that he had no idea why he was chosen to attend camp and said, "I may even take off if it sucks." He plans on making friends at camp, and perhaps become a better leader. When asked if he liked his teacher this past year he said, "No, he was mean to everyone and his rules were unreasonable." He saw himself as a kid who doesn't follow others. He said at school he behaves but he has to 'do lines a lot'. He said, "At home I'm pretty good, but I don't like doing chores and I hate my sister so we fight a lot."

During camp...

Male 1: The other kids liked this camper, but the researcher didn't feel he went out of his way to get to know the adults. He had a hard time maintaining eye contact. He didn't

67

feel comfortable during his interviews with the researcher. This participant did not fill out his journal.

Male 2: This participant got into trouble a lot at camp because he had a poor attitude and was disrespectful to his peers. It was the researcher's opinion that this child was a bully at school because he was constantly trying to get other children mad at each other.

Female 1: This participant had difficulty making eye contact with adults in authority. She revealed to the researcher that she never gets to do anything that costs money because her family is poor. She revealed that her father had been in trouble with the police and therefore doesn't work because he doesn't have a drivers licence. She felt happy to be away at camp and proved she was thankful throughout the week. She was helpful when it was time to do chores, but seemed to stick closely to only a couple of girls.

Male 3: This participant sought attention from the counsellors at any opportunity. He often followed them around, tried to sit at their table to chat during meal times, and tried to pal around by giving them all nicknames. He was liked by the other kids, but chose not to participate in activities with them. He revealed to the researcher that he was an only child. This could be the possible explanation for his preference to adult company rather than the company of his peers.

Female 2: This participant was shy around female officers. She was not seen as a leader due to the fact that her behaviour was often influenced by others. She was a fighter who didn't give up when she was challenged by rock climbing. She was so proud of herself for trying and having a successful rock climbing experience.

68

Female 3: This participant seemed very mature. She didn't like to participate with the other kids, as she preferred to watch or be alone.

Male 4: This participant displayed a lot of anti-social behaviour. He didn't try to fit in, and went out of his way to do or say things to bother his peers.

Female 4: This participation often showed appreciation to adults for her experiences at Cop Camp. She was very helpful, and was often found lending a hand in cleaning without being asked to. She revealed to the researcher that she comes from a rough home where her older sister has violent tendencies towards the participant. She ended up winning the "Happy Camper" award which was great for her self-esteem.

Female 5: This participant was a very mature girl. She sometimes preferred to hang out with the adults rather than with her peers. She had a great day when we went out on the boats to go fishing. She had a fear of fish and was not looking forward to going at all. She was even sick before we went out. She ended up fully participating and ended up catching the most fish. She really had fun that day.

Male 5: This participant always seemed to be hurt or sick. He was often seeking attention of his peers negatively.

Male 6: This participant told the researcher during the initial interviews that he was a great leader but these qualities did not show up during his time at camp.

Male 7: This participant had the attitude that he did not have to clean at camp. He sought attention from the girls, and did not care if he upset his counsellor. He was disrespectful to female officers. He often walked around with no shirt on. He seemed very arrogant.

69

At the end of camp...

Male1: When asked to describe how this participant felt now that camp was ending, he said, "I don't want to leave. I wish we could do all of these fun things at home." He said he got to know the counsellors when they participated together in activities. He revealed that he was getting close to one particular officer because they were alike in many ways. He would try to stay in touch with this officer, and would feel comfortable going to him if he ever got into trouble. He said the thing he learned about himself this week is that he can make friends easily. He feels his attitudes towards the officers have changed now because he sees them as friends now. This participant didn't bother entering anything in his journal. When the researcher contacted his mother one month after the camp ended she told the researcher that her son still talked about camp a lot, and she felt lucky that he had such a great opportunity.

Male 2: When asked how he felt now that camp was over he said he was both disappointed and happy at the same time because he missed his girlfriend. He got to know the officers just by being with them. He got to know one particular officer very well because he said, "they connected". When asked if he appreciated the job of a police officer he said that he already had before camp. He thinks his attitude towards the police has changed because he had learned how to be more cooperative with others. He thinks he'll be more respectful to his mother. He plans on doing what he is told to do the first time he is asked. This participant did not bother writing in his journal. When speaking to his mother one month after camp she laughed when asked if he followed through with his plans to become more compliant and respectful.

70

Female 1: This participant had a difficult time saying goodbye to her new friends. She got close to the female officer who was her counsellor for the week. Both she and her counsellor were emotional when she left with her family. When asked if she learned anything about herself she said, "I'm not as shy as I thought I was." This participant did not make any entries in her journal. When discussing this participant's experiences with her mother in the phone interview her mother said, "It changed her life. Now she wants to be a police officer. My husband and I are so thankful to the O.P.P. for doing such great things with our kids."

Male 3: This participant said he was ready to be going home. He didn't feel he got close to any one particular officer, but got to know them all well. When asked what his favourite things he got out of the camp he said, "the pictures I got from the counsellors, his new friends and his new fishing pole. He learned that he is a good runner and he learned how to clean. In his journal the participant listed all of his likes and dislikes of each day. At the end of Day#1 he wrote, "I had the best day of my life!" When speaking to his father one month after camp he said his son mentions certain officer's names and looks at his pictures a lot. He even got off of a speeding ticket because he got pulled over by one of the counsellors and his son was in the back of the car and he was able to strike up a conversation. The father said, "The officer told my son to watch his dad's lead foot and tell me to slow down. He was a really great guy." The father also said he feels his son is more courteous towards his mother.

Female 2: This participant was emotional when she was leaving, but very excited to see that it was her dad that came to pick her up and not her mom. She felt she connected with one female officer, and she said she felt comfortable enough to tell this officer about

71

her mother's troubles with CAS. She told the researcher that "female cops have hard jobs and therefore are good role models." She said, "Now when I'm fighting with my mom, I won't be so mean. Outside my home life my new attitude will help me because I'll keep telling myself to just say no." When asked how she'll handle conflict with authority figures in the future, she said, "I'll walk away and cool down before I face her out of respect for her." This participant's journal had brief notes about the other campers and her opinions of them. When speaking to her father one month after camp, he said that his daughter and he talked a lot about her relations with his ex-wife, and discussed ways to deal with the problems they have. He was very thankful for the opportunities the O.P.P. gave his daughter.

Female 3: This participant was sad to be leaving all of her new friends, but really was homesick for her mother throughout the week, so was quite anxious to get home. When asked what she learned about herself over the course of the week, she said, "I can make friends easier than I thought." She also said, "I'll think twice before doing something stupid because I wouldn't want to disappoint my new cop friends." In her journal she talked each day with a growing fondness for the camp but admitted to being very homesick. When speaking to her mother one month after camp, she said that her daughter learned a lot about police careers at camp. She talks to her friends from camp weekly, and even went to visit her counsellor when she saw her in her police car driving through town on duty.

Male 4: This participant was glad to be going home, as he had a difficult time getting along with his peers. He didn't feel he got close to any one particular police officer, but he liked the one he knew from VIP class. When asked if he appreciated the job of a

72

police officer, he said, "no". He replied with, "Not really" when asked if his attitude towards authority figures has changed. This participant did not bother journaling throughout the course of the week. Ironically, when speaking to this participant's father during the phone interview, he said that his son's life was changed by the experiences he gained while at camp. He said that his son talks about all of his new friends all the time, and is more willing to talk to his mother and him more often.

Female 4: This participant was sad to be leaving, and was hoping to be able to keep in touch with her counsellor. The two of them bonded on the first night at camp, and got quite close. When asked what she liked about this officer, she said, "she was awesome, she gave us privileges like my teacher used to. She made sure everyone felt good about themselves." When asked what she had learned about herself she replied with, "I learned that I'm cool. It's easy to make friends. Usually I'm shy but it was easy here for some reason." In her journal on the first day, she said that she was having fun, but that her bunk was the farthest away from the bulk of the others and anticipated not fitting in because of it. In her third entry she said, "I don't ever want this to end!" When speaking to her mother one month after camp ended she was so thankful for the experience and has been able to stay in touch with her counsellor.

Female 5: When asked how this participant felt now that it was the end of camp she said, "I'm disappointed that it is over but glad for everything I gained from the fun experiences this week." She mentioned that she got to know all of the counsellors by going out of her way to help out and to talk to them. This was definitely observed by the researcher several times throughout the week. When asked what she learned about herself, when referring to rock climbing excursion that the campers and counsellors experienced

73

together, she said, "I'm capable of doing anything if I put my mind to it." She felt that the strongest message the camp provided her was the effects of going down the wrong path. This participant's journal really showed the growth made from the first day to the last day. On the first day she stated that camp 'wasn't too bad', and the girls in her dorm were 'another story'. This continued to day 3 where she faced her fears of being on a boat and had a 'total blast fishing'. On day 3 she also said, "I've met so many cool people, including Katie whose mom knows my mom. I truly believe that everything happens for a reason. All the counsellors are so cool. This has been such an amazing experience." In the phone conversation I had with her mother 1 month after camp, she said she believed her daughter got a lot out of camp. Apparently the participant went home after camp and called a 'family meeting'. At the meeting she apologized to her family for being a moody teenager, and she wanted their help to change. She was particularly sorry to her brother and wanted to make amends to him for being mean to him. The participant's mother told the researcher that her daughter's counsellor suggested she do this during a late night chat they had had at camp.

Male 5: This participant was an attention seeker from the first day of camp. He was constantly coming to the infirmary with ailments. To the researcher it appeared he had a self esteem issue because it would always happen when he was put into a situation that may have been out of his comfort zone. Ironically, when asked what he had learned about himself at camp he said, "I know I have more confidence in myself." When asked if he thought his attitude and behaviour has been altered by camp, he said, "It has made me less of a slouch." When the researcher had him explain his answer, he told her he planned on being more responsible. This participant's journal only spoke about his

74

opinions of other campers, and did not reveal anything about the participant's growth. When speaking to his mother one month after camp, she revealed to the researcher that she was a single mother, and that the participant's younger sister has severe Down syndrome. (This could be the reason that he seeks so much attention). She said that her son tried to be more helpful at first, but unfortunately things were back to the way they used to be.

Male 6: This participant told the researcher, "I've learned so much. I can't wait to show my parents the new me." He revealed getting close to a male officer because, "he believed in me. He set a good example and I want to do something that saves people's lives as my career." He learned that he needs to be more polite when he is around other people, and plans on doing so at home and school. When speaking to his father one month after the camp had finished, he said that he thought his son's attitude and behaviour were just fine when he came to the camp, and he didn't know what I thought one week of camp was going to do.

Male 7: This participant came to camp with a bad attitude, and from his answers in his second interview, he was leaving with a bad attitude. When asked how he felt now that camp was over he said he was glad. When asked what he learned about himself he said, "That people look up to me more than I thought they did." He told the researcher that he planned on respecting his mother and father more. He did not fill out his journal. This participant's parents did not want to be contacted for a phone interview.

75

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

The Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp impacted the youth in the areas of behaviour, attitude, and self-esteem.

Behaviour:

Many of the participants reported that they have been involved in some kind of conflict with authority figures. In most cases, that conflict was with parents such as curfews, added expectations, homework and attitudes. There was also some reported conflict with teachers such as attitude, incomplete assignments, tardiness and inappropriate behaviour. By the end of the week, all of the participants could verbalise the fact that they would do more to resolve such disputes and choose more appropriate ways to avoid future conflicts. More than half of the parents contacted during the post-camp phone interview reported that there was less fighting at home with siblings and authority. There appeared to be more compliance and discussion rather than yelling and arguing.

Attitudes:

All of the participants reported not getting along with their siblings at varying degrees of seriousness. Eight of the fifteen participants reported not being able to tolerate students who they viewed as less popular. All of them said that some of their parent's rules were unfair. When they first got to the camp they thought that the police officers were there to maintain order. During the researcher's observations, it was evident that most of the participants grew more tolerant of each other's strengths and weaknesses as they watched the police officers interact with the campers. They also became tolerant of the strong values and beliefs practised by the O.P.P. as they experienced the many rules involved in the training rituals that officers on the job endure. The children had to run each morning,

76

do push-ups, make beds, and perform various chores. They were also expected to keep an accurate account of their day in a notebook, much like the duties carried out by police officers. Each of these rituals were met with resistance by most campers, but by the end of the week, during the final interview, some youth reported how they'd miss these parts of the camp routine. All but one of the campers became a better team player than they were when they arrived at the camp.

Self-esteem:

At the beginning of the camp, most of the youth were very shy and withdrawn until they became involved in the ice-breaker activities designed to get the children working together as a team. From the researcher's observations, it was evident that at the age of eleven and twelve, most kids are unsure of themselves as leaders. It was interesting to watch most campers stood back and let things happen. It took about a twenty-four hour period for the youth to warm up and rise to the challenges of the camp's objectives. Most of the campers, who sought negative attention by way of seeking adult intervention, became more independent. Once they learned the routine and realized that they had responsibilities and chores to complete, they took control of the job at hand and began working without constant supervision. During the initial interview, ten of the fifteen kids showed they were uncomfortable talking to me (difficulties maintaining eye contact, rushing, giving closed-ended answers). By the end of the week these same children were hugging the police officers and becoming quite emotional when saying their good-byes. Most of the participants showed great strides in their respect for others. At the beginning, each person seemed to be out for themselves. After the many bonding experiences, a great respect for each other emerged.

77

It was noted by the researcher after a week long observation of the youths' interactions with each other, and with authority figures, that in order for them to become strong leaders, there needed to be a change in behaviour, a shift in attitude, and a growth of self esteem. This can be accomplished by providing strong role models. Self esteem can be boosted by helping a child determine their strengths and talents and building upon them. This came together for some of the children at the camp, but due to the short length of time spent at the camp, not all of the participants reached this ideal state of development. When following up with the parents, all but two of the participant's parents reported growth.

78

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In conclusion, what has the study revealed? The writer believes, simply put, that it has proven the idea that youth interacting with police in a positive manner has a great deal of merit. Although the literature seems somewhat divided, at least on the merits of community policing in general, for the most part it appears supportive of the concept of community policing proactively and engaging youth and giving them at least a measure of control over their destiny. This particular study of Cop Camp overwhelmingly indicates to me that even a short, week-long program made a difference in the attitudes and perceptions of the involved youth with regards to police officers.

One facet the researcher found extremely interesting was the concept that although youth may form attachments to a particular officer they see in their school or community on a regular basis, this attachment may not necessarily translate to a positive impression of all associated police officers. Indeed, anecdotal evidence gathered by the writer through informal interaction with police officers indicates that youth can, and do, quickly change perceptions of police in general if they have a negative experience with any officer, regardless of their good feelings toward a particular community policing officer. Examples of such negative experiences could be as simple as a change in officers assigned to their school (who they then find boring, arrogant, etc.) or as drastic as a very serious encounter resulting in search and seizure, detention, or arrest. One officer who spoke to me on conditions of anonymity put it succinctly: "I love my job as a CSO (Community Services Officer) and as a cop and I feel that I've built an excellent rapport with my community. But it all goes to hell if some other idiot on the job decides he's going to play the big man with a group of kids. In the course of one weekend all the

79

goodwill I've built up can be destroyed. I police in a small town and it doesn't take long for a story about a 'bad cop' to make the rounds of the youth. Then I'm looking at starting from square one again."

Most of the officers the researcher spoke to over the course of this study were extremely dedicated to the concepts inherent in community policing and school mentoring. All the officers who were involved with the Cop Camp indicated that they thoroughly enjoyed the experience with the young campers. The enthusiasm turned out to be a two way street. It was obvious that the dedicated officers who received no monetary reward for their time and effort were paid back many times over in the great deal of satisfaction that they gained by watching the positive interaction and increased maturity of most of the young people involved in the project. This also seems to be a crucial factor in the success of such programs. If individual officers, or even the police service itself, are simply paying political 'lip service' to community policing, it will not work. The officers who were obviously enthusiastic and eager to work with the youth seemed to garner better results in their interactions and were able to pass their morals and ethics on. This in turn was noted by the youth, who then unconsciously indicated their approval to the officers, resulting in a pleasant cycle of stimulus and feedback. Or, put simply, everyone had fun.

It is the writer's opinion that community policing programs are an important part of youth upbringing in today's society. In an age where family breakdown and splintering is more and more the norm; where schools are taxed to their limits by high numbers of students and insufficient resources; and where youth are incessantly assaulted with media figures and 'instant heroes', one constant in that police officers will be

80

needed. Although they are ostensibly upholders of the law and protectors of the public, the writer believes that police officers, and their associated 'goodness' can also be a powerful force to counteract the above influences.

My recommendations would be for the creation of more school/community policing programs that focus their objectives on grooming a youth's attitude, self esteem, and behaviour and by providing more opportunities like Cop Camp for children to work side by side with police officers in a leadership setting. It would be beneficial that more research in this area be done in order to observe the long term effects of police/mentoring relationships

Sir Robert Peel, who is considered by most to be the father of modern policing, had nine principles which he felt should apply to all officers and police services. Number seven states:

> "Police, at times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interest of community welfare and existence"

> (New Westminster Police, retrieved December 17, 2005).

It is apparent that what was evident to Sir Robert in the early 1800s is still true today.

81

References

Adelman, Howard S., PhD and Linda Taylor, PhD, (Aug-Sept.1983). *Enhancing Motivation for Overcoming Learning and Behaviour Problems.* Journal of Learning Disabilities, Vol 16, Number 7.

Beardslee, William R., M.D., (April 1989). *The Role of Self-Understanding in Resilient Individuals: The Development of a Perspective.* The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 59(2).

Benson, Garry F. *Developing Crime Prevention Strategies in Aboriginal Communities.* Public Safety and Preparedness Canada. Retrieved June 1, 2005, from www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/publications/abor_policing/Crime_Prevention_Strategies_e.asp

Bovasso, Gregory; Jacobs, John; Salomon, Rettig. (1991). Changes *in Moral Values Over Three Decades, 1958-1988.* Youth & Society, Vol. 22 No. 4, June 1991 468-481.

Brooks, Robert, PhD. (February 2005). Links to Learning Conference. OISE. Toronto.

Brooks, Robert, PhD. (1994). *Children At Risk: Fostering Resilience and Hope.* The American Orthopsychiartry, Vol. 64(4), October 1994.

Chaiken, M.R. (June 1998). Kids, Cops and Communities. *Issues and Practices in Criminal Justice.* (Executive Summary). Retrieved Jan 2, 2005 from www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles/169.599.txt

Chappell, Allison T., Lanza-Kaduce, Lonn. *Integrating Sociological Research and Theory with Community- Oriented Policing: Bridging the Cap between Academics and Practice.* Journal of Applied Sociology, 2004, Fall, 80-98.

Clutterback, D. (Nov.2003). Making the Most of Informal Mentoring. *C/A Article Series.* Series 3-11. Retrieved January 4, 2006, from http://www.forbes .com.

Cohen, Jonathan. (1999). *Educating Minds and Hearts: Social Emotional Learning and the Passage into Adolescence.* New York. Teacher's College Press.

Coleman, Sarah; Otten, Allyson. (April 1999). *The Safe Schools Act and the Youth Criminal Justice Act: Different Approaches to Justice for Youth.* Education and Law Journal. Vol.14, no.3. 287-299.

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. (2nd ed.).*University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

Critchley, T. (1978). *A History of the Police in England and Wales.* Constable, London.

Culbert, Lori. (2004, February 28). Breaking Teenage Stereotypes. *The Vancouver Sun.*

Deci, Edward L. (1995). *Why We Do What We Do: The Dynamics of Personal Autonomy*. New York, Grossett Putnam.

Delta Police. (March 1997). *Youth Squad*. Retrieved October 13, 2005 from http://www.police.delta.bc.ca/slo/index.php

Dewalt, K; Dewalt, B (2002). *Participant Observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Alabama Press, Walnut Creek, CA.

Dillon, D.R. (1989). *Showing them that I want them to learn and that I care about who they are: A micro ethnography of the social organization of a secondary low-track English classroom*. American Educational Journal, 26, 227-259.

Dukes, Richard L; Hughes, Robert H. *Victimization, Citizen Fear, and Attitudes toward Police*. Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology, 2004, 32, 1, May, 51-58.

Eck, J., Spelman, W., (1987). *Who Ya Gonna Call? The Police as Problem-Busters*. Crime and Delinquency. 3:31-51.

Empey. C. (2004). Heart to heart. *Canadian Living Magazine*, vol. 29, issue 9, 4.

Essex O.P.P. (2004).*Business Plan for Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp*.

Essex O.P.P. (2005).*Business Plan for Essex O.P.P. Cop Camp*.

Fisher, Ronald. (1989). *The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution*. New York.

Forman, James. (2004). Community *Policing and Youth as Assets*. The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology. Vol.95, No.1, 1-48.

General Accounting Office. (June 2004). *Student Mentoring Programs: Education's Monitoring and Information Sharing could be improved*. Retrieved October 23, 2005 from http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04581.pdf#search='education%27s%20monitoring%20and%20information%20sharing'

Glasser, William. (1984). *Control Theory*. Harper and Row. New York.

Glasser, William, M.D. (April 1997). *A New Look at School Failure and School Success*. Phi Delta Kappan, 597-602.

Glover, Richard L. (2002). *Community and Problem Oriented Policing in School Settings: Design and Process Issues*. Columbia University School of Social Work, New York.

Gonda, G. (2005, October 29). Cops, courts and kids. *The Toronto Star*, B4.

Guelph Street Safety Patrol. (2005). Street *Safety Patrol and Bus Safety Patrol Supervisor Manual.* [Electronic version].

Haley, F. and Canabou, C. (Oct. 2003). *Fast talk: The mentors' mentor.* Fast Company, vol. 75, 59.

Hefferman, M and Joni, S. (Aug, 2005). *Of protégés and pitfalls: A complete plan for getting the mentor you need. Fast Company: How Smart People Work, 97, p.81-83.*

H.B. McMannus School. (April, 2001) School newsletter.

Hopkins, Nick; Hewstone, Miles; Hantzi, Alexandra. (1992). Police-*Schools Liaison and young people's image of the police: An intervention evaluation.* British Journal of Psychology. Vol.83, 203-220.

Hundertmark, Susan. (2005, January 8). SPS Student Attends O.P.P. Youth Camp. *Huron Expositor.*

Jekielek, S., Moore, K. and Hair, E. (2002). *Mentoring programs and youth development: A Synthesis.* Child Trends. Washington D.C

John Howard Society of Alberta. (1995). *Crime Prevention through Social Development: A Literature Review.* Wild Rose Foundation.

Juliani, T., Talbot, C., Jayewardene, C. (1983). *The Thin Blue Line: A Historical Perspective of Policing in Canada.* Crimecare. Ottawa.

Juliani, T., Talbot, C., Jayewardene, C. (1984). *Municipal Policing in Canada: A Development Perspective.* Canadian Police College Journal. 8(3), 315-85.

Kerley, Kent R., Benson, Michael L. (March 2000). *Does Community-Oriented Policing Help Build Stronger Communities?* Police Quarterly, Vol.3, No.1, 46-69.

Kidder, Karen and Rogers, Dianne. (April 2004). *Why Canada Needs a National Youth Policy Agenda.* [Electronic version]

Kohn, Alfie. (September 1993) *Choices for Children: Why and How to Let Students Decide.* Phi Delta Kappan. 9-19.

Lee, F.W. (2002). Encounters between Police and Unattached Youth and the Occurrence of Juvenile Delinquency. *Police Practice and Research.* 3(2). Retrieved Jan 2, 2005, from ERIC database.

Maher, K. (2004, May 31). Reverse Mentoring: Executives pump junior staff for the wisdom of youth. *Globe & Mail*, B18.

McClelland, S. (Sept, 2004). Friends for keeps. *Canadian Living Magazine*, vol 29, issue 9, 186-193.

Menter, Ian. (1988). *The Long Arm of Education: a review of recent documents on police/school liaison.* Critical Social Policy. Vol.7, p.66-77.

McShane, F.J. (1996). *The Long Term Effects of a Police-School Program on Attitudes toward Police.*

Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation. (1999). *Youth Investment and Police Mentoring.* (Executive Summary). Retrieved Jan 2, 2005, from www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/frames/main_frameYI.html.

Ministry of Education. (2003a). *Building Pathways to Success: The Report of the Program Pathways for Students At Risk Work Group.*

Ministry of Education. (2003b). *Think Literacy Success: The Report of Expert Panel on Students At Risk in Ontario.*

Ministry of Education and Training & Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services. (1996). *Values, Influences, and Peers Resource Guide, Revised Edition.* Retrieved Jan 2, 2005 from www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/resource/vip.html.

Ministry of Public Safety and Security. (July 4, 2003). *Ontario Provincial Police Youth Summer Program.* [Briefing Note]. Mansell, N. Author.

Moses, B. (2005, November 11). Mentoring match: Choose one right for you. *Globe and Mail*, C1.

National Crime Prevention Centre. (1998). *Safer Communities: A Parliamentarian's Crime Prevention Handbook.* Department of Justice Canada. Ottawa.

National Institute of Justice. (1994). *Past and Future Directions of the D.A.R.E. Program: An Evaluation Review.* Ringwalt, C.L., Greene, J.M., Ennett, S.T., Iachan R., Clayton, R.R. & Leukefeld, C.G.: Authors. Retrieved Jan 2, 2005, from www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles/darerev.txt.

Ontario Provincial Police. (1997). *The "How do we do it" Manual.* Community Policing Development Centre. Orillia, Ontario.

Osofsky, Joy D. (1997). *Children in a Violent Society.* The Guilford Press, New York.

Osofsky, Joy D., Rovaris, Michael; Hayes Hammer, Jill; Dickson, Amy; Freeman, Nancy; Aucoin, Katherine. (2004). *Working with Police to Help Children Exposed to Violence.* Journal of Community Psychology, Vol.32, No.5, 593-606.

Owens, Timothy J. (1991) *The Effect of Post-High School Social Context on Self-Esteem.* The Sociological Quarterly, Vol. 33, No. 4, 553-578.

Peel Board of Education. (1991). *Values, Influences, and Peers (VIP) Program Review.* Fine, J.: Author.

Peer Resources. (October 19, 2003) *The Mentor News.* Retrieved November 18, 2005 from http://www.mentors.ca/thementornews08.html

Peer Systems Consulting Group. (2000) *Mentoring Rationale, Examples and Our Expertise.* Retrieved November 18, 2005 from http://www.mentors.ca/mentorrationale.html

Peer Systems Consulting Group. (2000) *The Myths of Mentoring.* Retrieved November 18, 2005 from http://www.mentors.ca/mentormyths.html

Peer Systems Consulting Group. (2000).

Proaction. (Summer 2003). *Bell Canada & Proaction Support Police for Safer Schools.* Retrieved September 09, 2005 from www.copsandkids.ca/newsbrief_summer_2003.html.

Rademacher, Joyce A., Callahan, Kevin; and Pederson-Seelye, Vicki A. (May 1998). *How Do Your Classroom Rules Measure Up? Guidelines for Developing an Effective Rule Management Routine.* Intervention in School and Clinic, Vol. 33, No.5, 284-289.

Reisig, Michael B., Parks, Roger B. *Can Community Policing Help the Truly Disadvantaged?* Crime and Delinquency, 2004, 50, 2, April, 139-167.

Reiss, A. (1992). *Police Organization in the Twentieth Century.* Modern Policing: Crime and Justice, vol.15, pp.51-95. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Rutter, Michael. *Resilience in the Face of Adversity: Protective Factors and Resistance to Psychiatric Disorder.* British Journal of Psychiatry, Vol.147, 598-611. (1985).

Schrumpf, F., Crawford, D., Chu Usadel, H., (1991). *Peer Mediation – Conflict Resolution in Schools.* Research Press Company, Illinois.

Shaw, G. (2004, November 12). Help is just around the corner. The Minerva Foundation eases women back into productivity. *Vancouver Sun*, E1-E2. Retrieved November 20, 2005 from www.canada.com/vancoversun/index.html.

Singer, Ming S., Singer, Alan E. (1984). *The Effect of Police Uniform on Interpersonal Perception.* The Journal of Psychology, Vol.119, No.2, 157-161.

Sipe. C. and Roder, A. (1999). Mentoring school age children: A classification of programs. Public/Private Ventures.

Sir Robert Peel, The Founder of Modern Policing. (n.d.). Retrieved December, 17, 2005 from http://www.newwestpolice.org/peel.html

SJB Research Consulting, Inc. (April, 2004). Retrieved Oct.5, 2004 from www.mentornet.net/documents/about/results/evaluation.

Smith, T. (June 2004). Guides for the Journey: Supporting High-Risk Youth with Paid Mentors and Counsellors. Retrieved October 12, 2005 from http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/173_publication.pdf

Stewart, Eric A. (September 2004). School Social Bonds, School Climate, and School Misbehaviour: A Multilevel Analysis. Justice Quarterly. Vol.20, No.3. 575-599.

Task Force on Policing in Ontario. (1974). The Task Force on Policing in Ontario: Report to the Solicitor General. Ministry of Attorney General. Toronto.

Tierney, Grossman. (1995). Making a Difference, an Impact Study of Big Brothers and Big Sisters. Philadelphia, PA.

Thurman, Quint C., Giacomazzi, Andrew; Bogen, Phil. (October 1993). Research Note: Cops, Kids, and Community Policing – An Assessment of a Community Policing Demonstration Project. Crime & Delinquency, Vol.39, No.4, 554-564.

Treasury Board of Canada. Guide to Mentoring Students. (n.d.). Retrieved 13 October, 2005 from http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/tb_856/agtms1_e.asp

Trojanowicz, R., Bucqueroux, B., (1997). Community Policing. How to get Started (2nd ed.). Anderson Publishing. Cincinnati, OH.

United States Department of Justice. (1995). Police and Urban Youth Relations: An Antidote to Racial Violence. A Guide for Police, Youth and Community Leaders to Improve Police/Urban Youth Relations. Borgquist, D.S., Johnson, T.J., Walsh, M.A.: Authors. Retrieved Jan 2, 2005, from http://www.usdoj.gov/crs/pubs/50urbanrace.htm.

Waterloo Regional Police Service. Partner Programs/School Resource Officer. [n.d.]. Retrieved April 2, 2005 from www.wrps.on.ca/partners_schoolresourse.html

Watson, J. (Dec.2005). Help Wanted: Mentors. Retrieved December 23, 2005 from www.forbes.com.

Weissbourd, Richard. (1996). The Vulnerable Child. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Whitelaw, B., Parent, R., Taylor-Griffiths, C. (1999). *Canadian Police Work.* Nelson, Toronto.

Whitelaw, B., Parent, R., Taylor-Griffiths, C. (2006). *Community-Based Strategic Policing in Canada.* (2ⁿᵈ ed.) Nelson, Toronto.

Wilson, J., and Kelling, G. (1982). *Broken Windows: The Police and Neighbourhood Safety.* Atlantic Monthly. 249:29-38.

Windsor Star staff. (2005, November 1) NDP rips Safe Schools Act. *The Windsor Star*, A1.

Wright, I. (2001). *Elementary Social Studies – A Practical Approach to Teaching and Learning.* Toronto, ON: Pearson Education Canada.

Zhao, Jihong S., He, Ni' Lovrich, Nicholas P. (December 2003). *Community Policing: Did it Change the Basic Functions of Policing in the 1990s? A National Follow-up Study.* Justice Quarterly. Vol.20, No.4, 697-717.

Pre-Camp Interview Questions for Youth

First explain to the participants that they have to right to withdraw from the study at any time. They also have to right to not answer any question.

1. Why do you think you were chosen to attend this year's camp?

2. What do you hope/expect for your week here at camp?

3. Did you like your teacher this year? Why or why not?

4. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a teacher. What about your parents? A police officer?

5. Do you consider yourself to be a leader or a follower? Explain.

6. What do you think is the objective of this camp?

7. How would you describe your behaviour at school and home?

8. How would you teachers and parents describe your behaviour and attitude?

Post-Camp Interview Questions for Youth

1. Can you describe how you feel now that the camp is finished and you are going home?

2. Explain how you got to know the counsellors. Was it easy or difficult to get to know them?

3. Did you get close to one particular officer?

4. Tell me what you liked about your favourite officer.

5. Will you try to keep in touch with him/her? How?

6. Do you appreciate the job of a police officer now that you have lived with some and shared their stories? Explain.

7. Do you think your attitudes towards the police have changed? Explain.

8. Do you think your attitudes towards your teachers and parents have changed? Why or why not?

9. What specific steps will you take to improve your relationship with authority figures?

10. What did you learn about yourself this week?

11. What is the most important thing you will take with you from this camp?

12. How will this camp experience impact on your attitude and behaviour now?

Appendix C

Post Camp Phone Interview Questions for Parents

1. Could you please describe to me the mood of your child in the car on the way home from camp? Was there any discussion?

2. Do you think the camp had any impact on you child? Please explain.

3. Did your child fulfill what they had set out as a goal for self improvement?

4. What was your impression of the camp and its objectives? Do you think the objectives were met?

Any comments

Vita Auctoris

Cathy Knowler was born in Chatham, Ontario. She moved to Windsor Ontario where she obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology in 1995 and then obtained her Bachelor of Education in 1996. In September 2003 she enrolled in the Masters program in Education, and has recently achieved her goals of becoming an elementary school principal.