

For Immediate Release
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ATTORNEY GENERAL SUPPORTS FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT *Unique Project Houses Crown, Police And Community Agencies Under One Roof*

KITCHENER-WATERLOO — The McGuinty government is placing a Crown attorney and a victim service worker to work full-time on site at a local community domestic violence program, as well as providing the program with funding to improve the efficiency of its services, Attorney General Michael Bryant announced today.

The Crown attorney and Victim/Witness Assistance worker will be based at the Catholic Family Counselling Centre's Family Violence Project in Kitchener-Waterloo — a non-denominational project that offers comprehensive services to victims of abuse and their families. This is the first time this novel approach is being used in Canada.

"I am pleased that the province is working in partnership with CFCC to provide the Family Violence Project of Waterloo Region with additional resources," stated John Milloy, MPP for Kitchener Centre. "Through this project, CFCC and its community partners are providing the victims of abuse with the best possible access to services."

"We are in a victim-focussed environment, working side-by-side with community agencies and the police to fight domestic violence," said Bryant. "This unique project takes an innovative approach to helping victims by bringing everyone together under one roof."

Beginning in January, on a pilot basis, a dedicated Crown will work out of the centre five days a week, engaging in pre-charge consultations with police, consulting with victims and conducting seminars on the court process.

A victim services staff member will also be based at the centre full-time, helping to meet the safety concerns of victims and their families, keeping them up to date on the court process and liaising with the Crown attorney and community agencies at the centre.

The government is also providing the centre with \$150,000 to hire a project coordinator for two years. This coordinator will collaborate with local and provincial partners, and will help to increase access to the centre's services.

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“I would like to thank the ministry for helping to meet the needs of domestic violence victims in Kitchener-Waterloo,” said Cathy Brothers, executive director of the Catholic Family Counselling Centre. “A full-time Crown attorney and victim services worker are major boosts for our program, and the funding will allow us to further improve our services.”

The Family Violence Project has been operating since January 2006, and is modelled on the successful San Diego Family Justice Center. The project takes a holistic approach to family justice, helping victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Its resources include victim services, counselling, children’s aid services, the Waterloo Regional Police Service’s domestic violence unit and the Crown attorney, all under one roof.

Since the project began, a Crown attorney has been on site one day per week. Due to the project’s tremendous success so far in supporting the prosecution of domestic violence cases, there was a significant growing need for more of the Crown attorney’s time, as well as increased victim services.

The police service’s domestic violence unit expects to serve more than 6,200 people operating out of the centre this year, an 18 per cent increase over 2005.

“This groundbreaking project is showing many signs of success,” added Bryant. “An increased Crown and victim services presence at the centre, not to mention additional support for the program’s services, will serve to benefit even more victims and their families in the community.”

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