

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

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DATE 21 May 1998

TO/DEST. 9-1-1 Management Board

FROM/EXP. Co-ordinator, 9-1-1 Management Board

SUBJECT/OBJET **9-1-1 YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

For discussion.

BACKGROUND

On 6 February 1998, the Management Board discussed the children's awards and how this event could be staged. To this end, staff was directed to bring forward a communication strategy to address this proposal and is attached for your consideration.

*Approved by
Rosemary Nelson*

att.

9-1-1 YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

MEDIA AND CEREMONIAL EVENT

OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAM – BRIEF SUMMARY

The 9-1-1 Youth Achievement Awards began in December of 1994 and were created to recognize children 12 years and under who called the 9-1-1 Centre in an emergency situation relating to a medical, domestic or criminal crisis.

In order to recognize a child for her/his brave efforts, an operator must first record the call and then the appropriate agency or police department is contacted and additional details are collected. If the call meets the awards criteria the parent or guardian of the child is called. The child is invited to come and visit the Communications Centre and meet the 9-1-1 Operator that took the call initially. They are given a tour of the Centre, presented with a Youth Achievement Award certificate and receive a 9-1-1 pin.

The Selection Committee of the Youth Achievement Awards is made up of volunteers from the 9-1-1 Bureau. They meet on a regular basis and determine the candidates who are to be awarded a 9-1-1 certificate based on certain criteria.

OBJECTIVES

On 6 February, 1998, Staff were mandated by the 9-1-1 Management Board to develop a Communications Strategy which would highlight the awards annually thereby permitting children, who had been recognized by the 9-1-1 Communication Centre for their brave efforts, to become role models for other children in the Community, and by doing so, would in essence demonstrate the proper use of 9-1-1.

By becoming more knowledgeable in regard to the proper use of the 9-1-1, children may become less fearful when faced with an emergency situation.

This ceremonial event would allow an opportunity to highlight the importance of the 9-1-1 in a positive manner, taking into consideration a very important

portion of our population who also need to be made aware that help is available out there for - the children of Ottawa-Carleton.

Children today lead very busy lives. They are exposed to many different types of situations and perhaps more demands are made on children today than ever before. They are knowledgeable about so many crisis situations through television viewing and acquire information very quickly through the use of the internet and other electronic-related technologies.

This event would complement the yearly visits that some emergency services make from time to time in schools across Ottawa-Carleton.

The awards ceremony will allow to once again re-educate the general public on what 9-1-1 is and its proper use. It could possibly be tied into the 10th Anniversary celebration.

As the 9-1-1 continues to become more sophisticated in its approach in terms of service delivery with new and improved state-of-the-art technology, so too should its approach to communication as public messages evolve.

TARGET GROUP - "THE UNSUNG HEROES"

Initially, children under 12 are the targetted group within the 9-1-1 Youth Achievement Awards Program. When developing this awareness program, it is important to design messages with this group in mind.

Children under 12 years of age are essentially in elementary and intermediate school levels. They can also be Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Cubs or Brownies. They may be part of a soccer, baseball or hockey team. Perhaps they are students of music, dance or theatre. We are quick to recognize the most valuable player of the hockey team or the young student who was the top public speaker. These children are part of a group or a team and have received the proper training to reach high levels of success. They already understand the meaning of being recognized with badges or trophies when they or their team wins a game.

The children of 9-1-1 have not received any training. It will probably be a "once in a lifetime experience" dealing with an emergency situation. Through the Youth Achievement Awards we will take the opportunity to recognize

these individuals who, through courage and determination, unselfishly may have saved a human life. It is not your everyday type of event. These children have been involved in an extraordinary situation and had to react in an extraordinary manner.

It is very important that each child who becomes knowledgeable of the program clearly understands the concept and reacts accordingly when faced with an emergency situation.

KEY MESSAGES

To begin, the 9-1-1 Youth Achievement Awards should focus on the following messages :

1. Clearly identify the proper use of 9-1-1 or when to use 9-1-1.
2. Publicly recognize the children who have through their brave efforts, been chosen as role models in our community in relation to their positive behaviour in an emergency situation dealing with a medical or criminal situation.
3. Allow parents or guardians along with teachers, principals, peers and the community as a whole to be informed about these young heroes.
4. Indicate that the Awards Ceremony complements the work already being done in schools through the emergency services visits and presentations.

COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

The transmission of these key messages must be done in a way to ensure that the target group understands clearly what is being communicated. Therefore, the following methods are being proposed :

To record 4 or 5 children calls at the 9-1-1 Communications Centre that clearly exemplify the proper use of 9-1-1 and would qualify in the 9-1-1 Achievement Award Program;

Take these exemplary calls requesting assistance as a basis to create public service announcements for a potential 9-1-1 web site, radio and or television spot.

Create a poster that would be distributed across the Ottawa-Carleton School Board displaying the proper use of 9-1-1, using examples of the children of the 9-1-1 Youth Achievement Awards Program.

MEDIA RELATIONS

In an effort to promote the recipients of the program and heighten the profile of 9-1-1, a ceremonial event could be held to recognize the 9-1-1 Youth Achievement Awards of 1997. Members of the media would be invited to attend along with parents or guardian of every child.

Awards would be distributed and lunch would be served for all present. A fact sheet on each individual could be included in the media kit along with an explanation of how the program works and why it is so important for children under 12 to understand the proper use of 9-1-1.

TIMING

After reviewing the school calendar, staff would like to recommend Friday, 9 October, 1998 as a possible date for the Ceremonial Awards Luncheon.

This time of the year is in keeping with last fall's launch of "Hard To Find is Hard to Help" and works nicely with the beginning of the new school year. Holding the event at lunch time allows parents and children to take time from work and school almost uninterrupted and also allows for coverage on the 6:00 o'clock news.

EVALUATION

To evaluate this safety awareness campaign, the following will be used :

- ◆ Media coverage.

- ◆ General response or feedback from public, schools, children, number of hits on the web site, etc.
- ◆ Request from schools for visits or presentations of the emergency services.

SUB-COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS

A Committee formed of the 3 emergency services including a representative of the 9-1-1 Youth Achievement Awards Committee would be required to assist in the development of this event for the fall. The Committee would meet every two weeks or as required from now until the event. (A similar model to last year's safety awareness campaign.)

BUDGET

A budget amount of approximately \$10,000 to \$25,000 would be required for this event. Staff could look for local sponsorship or services in kind in order to help defray some of the costs.