



ProAction Cops & Kids Media Kit 2009

Guiding kids to a brighter future

MISSION

At ProAction Cops & Kids, we believe that establishing a positive relationship between cops and kids at risk will strengthen our community today and for the future. By funding programs that bring local cops and kids together, we help create an environment of mutual understanding and respect.

OBJECTIVE

To provide funding and support for Toronto police officers in their effort to reach out to at-risk youth

FACTS

In 2008...

- ProAction funded over 90 different programs totaling over \$425,000
- Programs included: sports, educational, leadership and arts programs
- Over 16,000 youth participated in the programs run by over 500 Toronto Police Officers

Since 1991...

- ProAction has funded nearly 1000 programs with over \$4,000,000
- Over 300,000 youth have participated in the programs run by more than 6000 Toronto Police Officers
- ProAction Cops and Kids is the largest private funder of Toronto Police programs for youth at risk

For more information or to request an interview, please contact:

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BACKGROUND

ProAction Cops & Kids is a charity that funds programs, developed and run by police officers, to help at-risk youth. Our goal is to build mutual trust and respect between cops and kids, breaking down stereotypes and improving the safety of our communities for everyone.

ProAction was founded in 1991, when John Bitove Sr. saw an opportunity to create an organization that would enable officers to make a positive connection with youth.

Over the years, ProAction has helped over 300,000 youth in Toronto and funded over 1000 police-initiated programs. ProAction Cops & Kids is the largest private funder of Toronto Police programs for youth at risk. ProAction also supports Chapters in Durham Region (est. 2007) and Hamilton (est. 2008).

By working with a variety of generous corporate donors and sponsors, ProAction continues to fund police-run programs that create fun and safe environments for youth. With a mandate of promoting positive relationships and mutual understanding between these two groups, ProAction works to ensure that the communication gap between them is reduced each time a ProAction-funded program is implemented.

Toronto's Community Policing Units and individual officers who donate their time nurturing these relationships and programs can be found camping on weekends with ProAction kids, playing ball on local courts with teams of at-risk youth and spearheading after-school activities designed to keep kids engaged, optimistic and motivated.

To qualify for ProAction funding, officer-initiated programs must involve both youth and officers and they must promote improved relationships between police officers and at-risk youth. When these criteria are met, a program or project can be implemented, ensuring that we are making important steps to guide youth to a brighter future.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Need?

- Police officers across Toronto report that kids are at-risk from negative peer pressure, dysfunctional families, criminal tendencies, drug-abuse and other environmental factors
- Three distinct and alarming trends have appeared in Toronto: the growth of gang-type or group violence, the rapid escalation to weapons in conflicts and an increase in female violence

How does ProAction Help?

- Programs are initiated by members of the Toronto Police Service who identify the needs of the youth in the communities they patrol. Police officers design programs to address those needs and approach ProAction for funding.
- In Toronto, the number of arrests of young people aged 12-17 for violent crimes has remained stable since 1999, even dropping by about 200 arrests since peaking in 2000

What are the Benefits?

- The programs offer youth a safe place to go after school, in the evenings, and on the weekends
- The programs can provide a great socializing experience for youth
- Youth can develop leadership, cooperation and social skills that will help them in the future
- Youth feel more comfortable around police, and begin to think of them as friends

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