

April 23, 2008

Chief Vern White
Ottawa Police Service
474 Elgin St.
Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 2J6

Re: Ottawa Police Service's 2007 Activity Report - Insert in the April 8th, 2008 Ottawa Citizen.

Dear Chief White,

OCTEVAW members would like to express our surprise and disappointment that the Ottawa Police Service's 2007 Activity Report, did not, in either text or in the display of statistics, cite the extent of domestic violence and sexual assault in our city and the response policies and initiatives of the police. This omission occurred despite the fact that such events are the single largest category of police intervention. Instead this frightening yet valuable information on violence against women (VAW) was buried in the 2% increase in violent crimes.

Over the years, the Justice Committee of OCTEVAW has made productive progress by bringing together the police, the court system, victim services and women's agencies. Representatives of the Partner Assault Unit, the Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Unit and the Victim Crisis Unit have been and continue to be around the OCTEVAW table.

We should all be proud of this collaboration that has produced effective and measurable results for women and children in our community. Together we have also improved the breakdown of statistical reporting so that we can better discern VAW trends and outcomes.

This omission is troubling as it seems to indicate a lack of consideration being made at the corporate level considering the serious and endemic nature of violent crimes against women. Moreover, these omissions are a missed opportunity to educate and sensitize the public about the extent of the woman abuse problem and the protective and collaborative role of the police which the OCTEVAW community values.

We would like to be made aware as to why VAW issues were not part of the report and request that the next 2008 report reflect domestic violence and sexual assault.

Thank you very much for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Joan Gullen, Founder of RCCEVAW

Erin Williams, Executive Director of OCTEVAW