

Investing in Project R.I.S.E. to Protect Vulnerable Youth in Durham Region

DURHAM — The Durham Regional Police Service is receiving \$389,597 as part of the Ontario government's continued investment to help protect families and communities across the province. The funding is being delivered through the Victim Support Grant Program and will support Project R.I.S.E. — Resilience, Intervention, Support and Engagement for Vulnerable Youth. Led by the Durham Regional Police Service in partnership with Victim Services of Durham Region, Bethesda House and the Durham Children's Aid Society, Project R.I.S.E. responds to the increase in youth victimization by strengthening and sustaining three proven initiatives: the Missing Persons Project, the Human Trafficking Crisis Counsellor program, and the development of a Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. Together, these initiatives will enhance early intervention, improve coordinated responses for at-risk youth, and provide critical supports for young people and their families.

"Strengthening and sustaining initiatives that support vulnerable populations remains a top priority for our Government," said Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Colleges and Universities, Research Excellence and Security. "Through this investment, we are delivering critical support for young people and their families, while ensuring the Durham Regional Police Service has the resources needed to protect at-risk youth and work alongside community partners to build a safer, stronger, and more inclusive community for all."

"Since taking office in 2018, our government has taken action to protect vulnerable youth and families by investing in community police services with programs like the Victim Support

Grant to combat human trafficking and youth victimization" said Todd McCarthy, MPP for Durham. "By providing funding toward projects like R.I.S.E. — Resilience, Intervention, Support, and Engagement for Vulnerable Youth, we are providing the Durham Regional Police Service and our community partners like Bethesda House and Victim Services of Durham with the tools to make our community safe".

"By investing in programs that address youth victimization and human trafficking, this funding strengthens the frontline response across Durham Region," said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Member of Provincial Parliament, Pickering-Uxbridge. "Projects like R.I.S.E. show how targeted funding and strong local partnerships can protect vulnerable youth and deliver real results for families."

The Durham Regional Police Service project is one of several initiatives being supported across Ontario through the Victim Support Grant for 2025–26. These projects address both local and provincial priorities, including human trafficking, youth victimization, gun and gang-related violence, mental health and addictions, hate-motivated crime, and community safety.

The Victim Support Grant supports police services in collaborating with community-based agencies, organizations, or Indigenous communities to develop new initiatives or enhance existing community-based supports.

"Project R.I.S.E. reflects our shared commitment to protecting young people and supporting them at critical moments in their lives. This investment allows us to strengthen proven initiatives that respond directly to the needs of at-risk youth— from missing persons and human trafficking to trauma-informed advocacy and early intervention. By working alongside our community partners, we are ensuring young people

and their families have access to coordinated, compassionate, and effective supports when they need them most."

- Chief Peter Moreira, Durham Regional Police Service

"Victim Services of Durham Region is proud to stand alongside our dedicated partners at the Durham Regional Police Service as part of Project R.I.S.E. Every day, we see the powerful impact that coordinated responses can have in the lives of young people who are at risk or experiencing crisis. By enhancing initiatives such as

the Missing Persons Project, the Human Trafficking Crisis Counsellor program, and the recently development Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, we are building a stronger safety net, one that responds early, supports recovery, and empowers youth on their path to resilience"

- Sydney Marcoux, Acting Executive Director, Victim Services of Durham Region

"It's critical that we're able to respond in the exact moment support is needed. Project R.I.S.E gives us the flexibility and capacity to do just that— delivering support quickly,

when it matters most."

- Riley Spigarelli, Executive Director, Bethesda House

"This collaboration reflects Durham Children's Aid Society's (CAS) Strategic Plan in action. Specifically, it advances our Indigenous and equity-affirming, trauma-informed supports so that all children and youth in Durham Region are safe and thriving in their families, identities, cultures, and communities. By strengthening government and cross-sector partnerships and coordinated responses for vulnerable young

people, we are building the trust, accountability, and community-centred engagement to which Durham CAS is wholeheartedly committed."

- Ramona Chereches Executive Director, Durham Children's Aid Society

QUICK FACTS

- The Durham Regional Police Service has received more than \$16-million dollars from the Government of Ontario since 2018

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