



## Ontario Protecting Young Victims and Witnesses of Crime

OSHAWA — The Ontario government is investing \$600,000 over three years to help protect child victims and witnesses of crime in Durham Region. The funding is part of the government's \$4.2 million investment to expand the Child Victim Witness Program to more communities across the province.

"This critical funding for the Child Victim Witness (CVW) program ensures that young survivors and their families receive the support they need while navigating the justice system. At the Durham Child and Youth Advocacy Centre, we are proud to deliver services that are truly child and youth-centric—designed with their unique needs at the

forefront," said Krista MacNeil, Executive Director Victim Services of Durham Region; Durham Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. "This investment helps us continue to build a justice system where every young person feels safe, seen, and supported."

Victim Services Durham will deliver the Child Victim Witness Program to help empower young victims and witnesses, under the age of 18 years, by reducing the potential trauma associated with testifying in court. The Child Victim Witness Program is available in 15 communities across the province. The program's services

include:

- Providing information about the court process
- Preparing children and youth to testify in court
- Accompanying children and youth to court
- Assessing any special needs during the court process (i.e., testimonial aids)
- Referrals to other services
- Support and guidance for caregivers

"Reliving traumatic experiences in a courtroom can be incredibly difficult – especially for children and youth," said Attorney General Doug Downey. "That's why our government is expanding this vital program to more communities, so young victims and witnesses across Ontario

have the support they need, closer to home."

- The Victim/Witness Assistance Program provides services and supports to victims and witnesses of crime. It also supports children and youth and their guardians in regions where the Child Victim Witness Program is not available.
- Ontario is committed to protecting communities and victims of crime and is taking action through the Protect Ontario Through Safer Streets and Stronger Communities Act and related measures.

"This expansion of the Child Victim Witness Program means children and families in Whitby and other parts of the Region of Durham will

now have access to vital, specialized support close to home. It's a powerful step toward a more compassionate and accessible justice system for our youngest and most vulnerable residents and reflects our government's commitment to ensuring all victims—especially children—receive the respect, guidance, and protection they deserve."

- Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby

"Our government made a promise to protect Ontario and that includes taking decisive action to help those who have been victims of crime. This investment over three years will assist young victims and witnesses of crime with the vital support services they need to overcome the trauma

they have endured and the confidence to move forward."

- Todd McCarthy, MPP for Durham

"Our government is committed to strengthening our justice system and protecting victims and witnesses of crime. That is why Ontario is investing \$600,000 over three years to expand the Child Victim Witness Program, enabling Victim Services Durham to deliver vital services for young victims and witnesses in Pickering, Uxbridge, and across the Region, empowering them and reducing the potential trauma associated with testifying in court." - Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP for Pickering-Uxbridge

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