

Envision partners with Positive Policing program

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The positive policing program brought in by the Estevan Police Service (EPS) and other agencies continues to attract attention.

Inspector Murray Cowan attended a meeting in Craik last week with the province's joint forces operations non-commissioned officers, along with Saskatchewan General Insurance (SGI) and government representatives. Cowan was asked to speak about the program.

"This positive ticketing program has taken off so well that they want to try to promote it throughout the province and in other communities," Cowan told *Lifestyles*.

He explained how they brought other partners on board, how they distributed the tickets and how it has been received by the public.

"We've had a lot of positive messages coming back," said Cowan.

The Weyburn Police Service has adopted a similar initiative, and SGI is looking to provide funding for the program in other areas.

The EPS announced plans for the positive policing program earlier this year. They have partnered with Estevan EMS, Estevan Fire and Rescue, SMILE Services, the Envision Counselling and Support Centre and the Estevan Family Resource Centre to distribute 1,200 gift certificates for McDonald's two restaurants in Estevan.

People receive the coupons when police or other local agencies spot them doing something positive, or something that encourages safety. The coupons range in value, and can be redeemed for a treat or even a meal.

The program will continue into the fall. The EPS initially expected all the coupons would be distributed before the end of summer holidays. But there are some tickets still to be handed out by police and the other agencies.

"Because school is back in, and a lot of kids are going to and from school, we're optimistic that we're going to have more interaction with the youth of our community now that it's going," said Cowan.

Several hundred coupons have been redeemed, and Cowan estimates they still have a few hundred more to hand out.

"We never expected to get this many coupons, and have this big of a positive outcome because of it," said Cowan. "So I'm not really surprised (it took so long) once we got the program rolling, because there is so many coupons."

The coupons have been handed out to people of all ages, ranging from toddlers to a 58-year-old. Cowan said many of the recipients have been between the ages of 10 and 12. Young people have been saluted to talking to their peers about safety, or for wearing a bicycle helmet.

A daycare centre received 15 vouchers for wearing safety vests while walking from their building to the police station for a tour.

Adults have been recognized for wearing bicycle helmets, too. Police have also handed out coupons to people for crossing at crosswalks or serving as designated drivers.

“We've seen some where people were stopped on the side of the road to talk on their cell phones instead of driving,” said Cowan.

Once all the tickets are handed out, Cowan said they will take a break from the program for the winter. Funding will determine if the program is offered on an annual basis.

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