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ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Fellow Members,

I state the obvious when I say that 2020 proved to be a year unlike any other due to the great challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was no different at the Ottawa Safety Council – the disruptions to the organization were significant and will continue to be felt for some time.

When the pandemic struck, the first priority was to make the necessary operational adjustments to ensure that all staff and volunteers were safe, and I am proud to report we were able to provide a working environment that ensured this. The second priority was to navigate through the financial uncertainties posed by the pandemic and stabilize the organization's finances. The careful financial stewardship of the organization over the past number of years left us in a good position to weather the storm. Along with careful financial management during the pandemic, I am pleased to report that the OSC is in healthy financial shape.

We are in position to emerge stronger as the pandemic subsides, with the necessary funds in place to invest in growth and continuous improvement.

We were able to safely re-start our two flagship programs – the Motorcycle Training Program and the Adult Crossing Guard Program, as well as the Walking School Bus program. I cannot offer enough praise and gratitude about the amazing work done by staff and volunteers to ensure that these programs could be delivered safely while protecting the health of everyone involved. Whether the MTP volunteer teachers and their students, the crossing guards and the school-age children they serve, or the walking school bus leaders and the children they guide to school were all able to operate in a safe and healthy environment comfortable in the knowledge that the OSC had taken all of the necessary measures to ensure their safety. While we were not able to restart the other program offerings, I am confident the organization is in a good position to do so once circumstances will allow.

I will shortly be completing my third and final year as the Board Chair. It has been an honour to serve as Board Chair and to have the opportunity to contribute to the safety of fellow members of our community. As I look back over the past three years, we have accomplished much together and progressed many of the items from the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. Despite the setbacks delivered by COVID-19, the organization's future is as bright as ever. We have been careful to recruit a very diverse and qualified group of Board Directors. As such, I have every confidence that the incoming Chair and the Board will continue the strong stewardship of the organization.

I'd like to thank all the members for supporting our Board, as well and extend my appreciation for the employees, volunteers, board members and friends of the Ottawa Safety Council who have helped us through a challenging 2020. Working together, we will be as strong as ever in keeping our communities and roads safe, no matter how travelled!

Yours sincerely,
Ziyad Rahme



LETTER FROM THE CEO

Like many non-profit organizations, the Ottawa Safety Council (OSC) responded to the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic quickly to ensure the safety and well-being of employees and volunteers.

Our team worked together carefully and remotely to ensure to the best of our abilities that Crossing Guards (ACG) were provided with as much information, collaboration and support that we could reasonably provide given that all schools moved to virtual learning as of mid-March 2020. We provided information and links to resources, created a closed Facebook Group for communication, and provided ongoing direct calls to guards whom we knew were living alone or were particularly isolated.

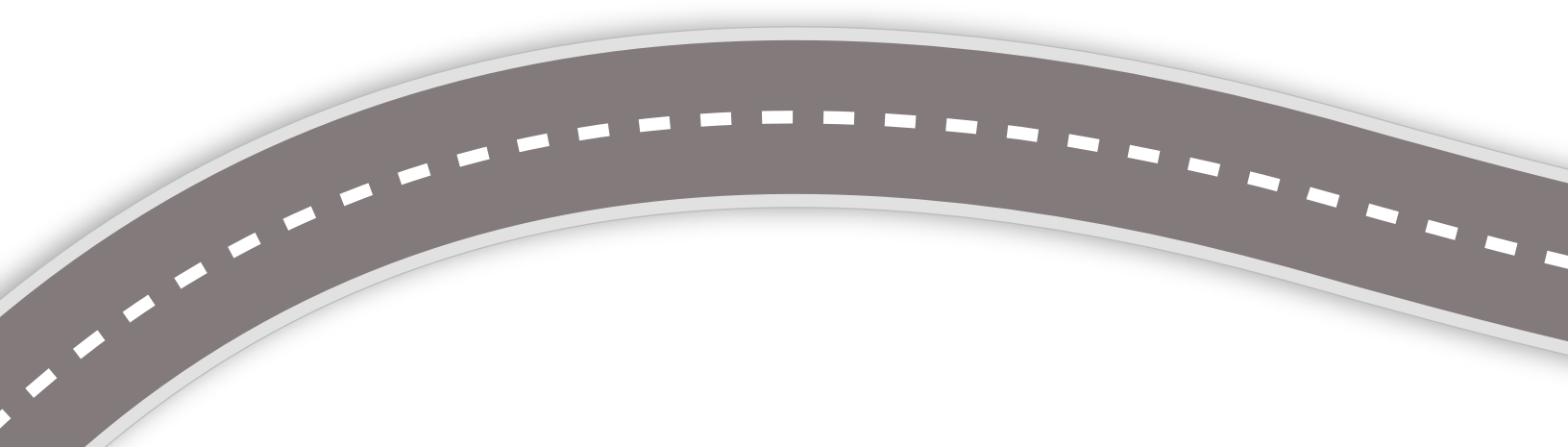
Between education worker strikes and the pandemic, 2020 was a disruptive year for the ACG Program; however, it also saw a lot of growth, with a total increase to 261 intersections by the start of this year. September 2020 introduced a broad rollout of time and attendance software that allows us to provide greater accountability and transparency to the City of Ottawa.

The opening of the 2020 Motorcycle Training Program (MTP) was delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. However, in June, we were able to offer reduced M1X courses as well as M2X courses. I'm very proud to say that we were able to continue to deliver these programs to riders in the community with well-coordinated safety precautions. The volunteer leadership and instructors of these programs worked collaboratively and with prudence and patience to continue our legacy of motorcycle instruction. MTP leaders and instructors continue to think and plan outside the box with resilience and patience.

The pandemic shined a spotlight on where we can better serve our community and spurred new initiatives, such as making our programming and educational material accessible through digital means. It also allowed us to focus on launching a new, more responsive and user-friendly website and MTP registration system.

Unfortunately, it also meant the temporary or permanent suspension of some of our in-person programs such as BestFit, CycleSafe and WalkSafe and, with that, a change in staff.

As always, people are the heart of our organization. Through these challenging days, I only need to check-in with our Crossing Guard Facebook Group to see upbeat, and kind posts shared openly amongst colleagues and friends and to read about thoughtful



gestures from individuals within the community who routinely offer tokens of gratitude and kind words of encouragement to Crossing Guards.

Our Board of Directors provided additional time, support and thoughtful consideration as we worked through the early days, weeks and then months of ensuring that the organization remained financially stable and able to turn programs back on with short notice even though they, like everyone, were learning to navigate the pandemic both professionally and personally.

Our partners within the City of Ottawa, Safer Roads Ottawa, the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, Envirocentre, the Ontario Traffic Council and Canada Safety Council collaborated openly and proactively with us to ensure continued communication and safeguarding of students, staff and volunteers.

At the very heart of this organization is our operational team. During this tremendous year of challenge, this gang showed up every day. Through social distancing, social isolation, and unpredictable

ups and downs in programming, our team continues to work and support the OSC's efforts with commitment, dedication and kindness.

Through homeschooling, closed daycares, worries about young children and ageing parents, this team continues to support our programming, operations, and, of equal importance, each other. I look forward to the day where we can once again safely work together in person.

Road safety in our community is more important than ever. One only needs to look outside a window to see kids playing, people walking, and families cycling. This is a silver lining to this dark pandemic to which the Ottawa Safety Council can bring a voice of safety and forethought to through continued and future programming.

Shari Black
CEO, Ottawa Safety Council

An illustration of a road with a dashed white line curving from the bottom left towards the top left. A red octagonal stop sign with the word "STOP" in white is on a pole at the curve. In the bottom left, a yellow car is shown from the side, with a person with dark skin and curly hair waving from the driver's seat. The background features stylized green trees and a light blue sky with a large teal circle in the top left corner.

SCHOOL ZONE SAFETY

Adult Crossing Guards (ACG)

Between education worker strikes and the pandemic, 2020 was a disruptive year for the ACG Program and our dedicated Guards. However, the ACG program also saw a lot of growth. Our Guards have seen an overall increase in the number of kids walking/cycling to school. Despite the decrease in students attending school in person, there was about an 8% increase in terms of students crossing with our Guards every day when schools reopened in the fall of 2020.

The ACG program started 2020 with 239 intersections and ended the year with 260 intersections. As Ottawa continues to experience population growth and expansion, the demand for crossing guards remains high, and the program continues to grow substantially with each school year. This growth in the program is also attributed to the increasing popularity of active transportation as parents' preferred mode of transportation to and from school every day – even throughout the winter months.

The continued demand for Crossing Guards and the fact that some of our older Guards were not able to return after the initial closures in 2020 meant that recruitment was a very large focus in the latter half of 2020. When the schools closed in March, we were rolling out a more grassroots recruitment strategy, which included more targeted activities that would allow us to reach out to specific demographics of people (i.e., retirees) on a more personal level (i.e., presentations, tables, lunch and learns, etc.) With the pandemic eliminating the ability to do in-person recruitment, we pivoted again and modified our recruitment strategy to include more traditional advertising, flying/

+360
GUARDS

START OF 2020

170
INTERSECTIONS



door hangers, lawn signs, job sites and social media to spread the word. We tapped into and targeted new demographics and created campaigns to attract those working or studying from home who now have the flexibility to take on a Crossing Guard shift near them.

Operationally, we implemented a large-scale software solution for scheduling and payroll. All of our Guards are now required to clock in and out of their shifts on location, using smartphones with GPS services. This has allowed us to be proactive and provide real-time data that backs up our 100% coverage guarantee. We have digitized a lot of our recruitment, screening and onboarding process, creating and launching an online ACG training module and virtual interviews/welcome sessions that replace the necessity of bringing in new recruits to the office for training.

We want to thank our more than 360 Crossing Guards that stuck with us through this crazy year and have remained dedicated to keeping the kids in our community safe. We have an amazing team, and we all remained engaged throughout the lockdowns, running weekly Zoom socials and launching a private ACG Facebook Group that is still going strong. Each and every one of you make a difference every day.

END OF 2020

+260
INTERSECTIONS



WALKING SCHOOL BUS

Active transportation has been steadily increasing in popularity as a preferred mode of transportation for the past several years and became an essential transportation mode for many families looking to avoid increased exposure or traffic jams in school zones during the pandemic. During this time, the Walking School Bus (WSB) program has helped promote active transportation to all students, regardless of whether they are registered for WSB, by modelling safe pedestrian behaviours to young students.

As a partnership between the Ottawa Safety Council (OSC), the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA), and the City of Ottawa's Transportation Demand Planning Department, and funded by Green Communities Canada through the Government of Ontario's active transportation grant, "hybrid" walking school buses are the same as the paid leader model, except for the addition of volunteers to assist with walking the students to school.

As in 2019, a paid leader continues to be on the hybrid routes for consistency and reliability until volunteer recruitment is possible. OSTA is in charge of recruiting the volunteers, and the OSC's role in this pilot program continues to be assisting with the administration of hybrid routes by scheduling, equipping, training, managing and recognizing the volunteer Leaders. There are currently five routes that are a part of the pilot.

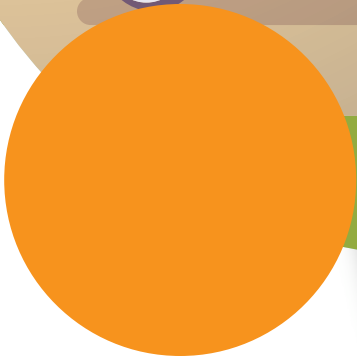


70
STUDENTS
WALKING ON
12
ROUTES





Cycle**Safe**



Walk**Safe**



CYCLESafe & WALKSafe

Since in-person programming became challenging in 2020, we took this time to re-evaluate how to effectively deliver our CycleSafe and WalkSafe programs not only to schools, but to a larger audience as well.

As more time was spent at home, we wanted to make sure students still had access to our “bike rodeo” program so we created a DIY at-home bike rodeo on our website and shared it on our social media networks. Similar to the in-person CycleSafe program, the DIY program, focuses less on cycling skills and more on important concepts that will increase children’s safety awareness, equipping them with the knowledge they will need to face the realities of sharing our roads while cycling.

Similarly, we created pedestrian safety scavenger hunt and “dangers of distraction” activities that were housed on our website and shared on our social media networks. The objective of these activities are to work with the kids to find each item and/or discuss what each of them means (i.e., traffic lights are for drivers, pedestrians lights are for pedestrians).

These activities have since expanded to include the creation of an online WalkSafe and CycleSafe portal for teachers and parents. To be launched this spring, this portal will house CycleSafe and WalkSafe educational materials suitable for children in grades 3 to 6 including colour sheets, word searches, crossword puzzles, instructional videos, and more. The portal will also be accompanied by an app that will host active transportation challenges using a step counter, and more.

Teachers will sign up to access the curriculum-friendly CycleSafe and WalkSafe educational material and will be notified via email when new material is available (bi-weekly). There will also be a version of this information for the use of parents and guardians.



BESTFIT

After a solid year of growth and stability in 2019, the BestFit Program came to a sudden halt in March 2020 due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. After careful consideration and research into the time and resources involved in each installation clinic, we decided to terminate the in-person component of the BestFit program.

Because car seat and booster seat safety are an integral part of road safety, we are continuing to offer credible BestFit resources on our website and through our social media networks. This coming year, we will be working on the production of installation videos hosted by certified installation technicians for both car seats and booster seats. These videos will be accompanied by other online resources designed to provide parents and guardians with reliable and accurate car seat and booster seat information.







MOTORCYCLE TRAINING

The start of the 2020 Motorcycle Training Program (MTP) was delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Upon course cancellation, we immediately set up an email waitlist for students currently registered, giving them the option to remain on the list for priority registration or to receive a refund. We also created an email waitlist for those who had not registered, but were interested in doing so once course registration opened. Nearly 400 people signed up to the 2020 MTP waitlist.

Once course registration opened in June, we were able to offer M1X and M2X with reduced enrollment. We worked to ensure each training course kept the health, safety and wellbeing of our students and instructors in mind with the implementation of strict COVID-19 prevention measures including PPE for all instructors, social distancing requirements and hand sanitizing stations. Even though the season was challenging and abbreviated, it was successful with 279 registered students.

2020 also welcomed a new Motorcycle Training Program Coordinator, Christine, who brings with her vast customer service experience, marketing experience and is an avid motorcyclist (and past MTP student).

We look forward to welcoming back more students this year as we once again open up our regular courses, our Experienced Rider Course, and our Gearing Up Intro course.



M1X STUDENTS

212



M2X STUDENTS

67



GEARING up
intro

GEARING up
M1 EXIT

M2 EXIT

EXPERIENCED
rider



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