



Mayor's Task Force on Community and Family Violence Backgrounder – Oct. 30, 2007

Former Calgary Mayor Al Duerr is recognized as the 2007 Calgary's Bravest Man award recipient for moving domestic abuse onto his political agenda, and by doing so placing it on the both the municipal and provincial radar screen. In 1990 Mayor Al Duerr established an action-oriented task force called the Mayor's Task Force on Community and Family Violence, headed by former MLA Ron Ghitter to address forms of violence in Calgary.

The Task Force was created specifically to investigate all forms of violence including family violence, street and gang violence, cultural and community violence, and violence against children and the elderly.

After several months of public hearings, the task force issued 66 recommendations for a proactive action plan within the community to address violence. All costs incurred were generated from the private sector. After only a year, 25 of the 66 recommendations were accomplished.

Al Duerr's work in creating the Task Force ultimately laid down the groundwork for a cooperative coalition of organizations dedicated to preventing forms of violence. In December 1991, a new committee, Action Committee Against Violence, was established by City Council to implement task force recommendations. ACAV is a coordinating body of agencies, organizations and service providers dedicated to providing a fast and efficient community response system towards domestic abuse. In 2006 ACAC joined a strategic merge of independent organizations to become the Alliance to End Violence, a standing committee acting as a community representative dedicated to providing public education on violence and identifying existing gaps in violence response services.

Due to a larger public awareness of violence, the number of assaults reported has steadily increased, enabling Calgary Police and other response services to take immediate action. As a result, between 1998 and 2006, Calgary Police Services have seen a 9% decrease in domestic offences in the city.¹ Al Duerr's persistence and dedication to the cause back in 1990 has caused a ripple effect throughout the community, opening the door to new and innovative approaches to violence prevention, enabling Calgary to operate effective committees and programs to raise awareness for forms of abuse and prevention initiatives and to be a leader in prevention and treatment in Canada.

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Sources

¹ Calgary Police Services Annual Statistical Report 2002 - 2006