

POLICE: Building trust

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New immigrants settling in the municipality now have a guide to help them foster a positive relationship with police.

The Chatham-Kent Police Service teamed with the Cultural Coalition of Chatham-Kent for the project, which was officially launched yesterday.

Chief Dennis Poole said many cultures have a fear or distrust of police and the justice system.

"They have a very different perception of police officers and what they represent," he said. "We want them to partner with us."

For the past year, the cultural coalition has worked with the police service in researching and developing the 22-page guide, titled Chatham-Kent: A Welcoming Community.

The guide is available at the police service.

It discusses how to interact with police, explains hate crimes and also provides ways to create an inclusive community.

"Hello," "goodbye" and "thank you" are also presented in 17 languages.

Teresa Fysh, cultural coalition executive director, said the idea has been well received by the public.

She said the guide can be a starting point for further research.

"It has a lot of community resources in it and where to look online for information," she said.

Also supporting the initiative was the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Ontario Trillium Foundation and Council of Agencies Serving South Asians.

Const. Bernie Louwerse said all residents can benefit from the tips in the guide.

"If police stop you, it's not an intent to get in your face," he said. "We're looking for information and sometimes for witnesses.

"We've got a job to do," he added.

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